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Introduction: The State of Affairs from the Window of a Ghanaian Tro-Tro

"To lament is to be disappointed at the premature departure of something—or someone—for whom we have great expectations" says Oscar the Tour Guide at Cape Coast's whitewashed and wave-whipped castle, the sound of the sea churning tumultuously at his back: "whoever he was, he was lamented sincerely." He stands over the tombstone of a name without a contextual face in the cobblestoned, visually appetizing courtyard—the tombstone of some British corporal, the record of whose exploits has long been lost or simply forgotten. All that is left is his grave.

Oscar's voice complements well the pounding of the surf, his accent guttural, but his English exact. Seven days of the week, he leads a group of ten to fifteen listless tourists throughout the cavernous castle, depicting with his words images of the utter anguish that was the slave trade, the suffering of those whose lives were devalued to such a degree that they were treated as lesser beings than cattle, forced to live in piles of flesh, filth and excrement and damned to depths of despair so profound, even the slightest hope of eventual escape was foolish to entertain. At the end of the tour, he petitions the sweating and heat-stricken herd of gaping tourists to remember that the problems precipitated by the injustices of our forefathers are far from solution, that our consistent commitment to the settlement of those problems is pivotal and that those problems will only be perpetuated through our ignorance. He is painfully right.

Rivers of rubbish and flocks of flies overrun the streets of Cape Coast. The same scene prevails equally in the countryside, where not a sole receptacle for even gratuitous amounts of trash lies anywhere in sight. Alongside the busiest avenues of commerce are scattered the ugly artifacts left in the absence of adequate recycling facilities and the infrastructure upon which even the most elemental sanitation is contingent. Running water is considered a luxury and the availability of electricity is always a matter of timing, even for the wealthier members of the Ghanaian bourgeois. Abhorrent drainage systems ensure that sewage and any other fluid waste finds its merry way to the nearest water source. Carburetors and exhaust pipes archaic enough to be footnoted in history books are standard issue; air pollution and excess quantities of carbon monoxide are guaranteed.

Some might say the extent to which a radical transformation is necessary is, of course, subject to the discretion of the alien observer. But the testimonials of administrators and the statistics of the bureaus do oftentimes contest even the most radically apathetic interpretation given to the evidence on the ground. Room for improvement is relative to the eyeing of the beholder, but to deny the disease is to deny a prescription. To deny a prescription is to deny the cure, and no amount of equivocation

could negate the fact that Ghana's standards of environmental health are far from hale and hearty. The question is: how to deliver the pill?

The most comprehensive, yet bewilderingly the most marginalized of all approaches, is the cultural approach to a cure. Young Turkish students in Francophone primary schools are given French translations of classic Nasrettin Hoca tales. The familiar "Kimin içinin sıyrıldığını, Allah biliyor" suddenly becomes "Dieu te connait—dehors et dedans!". Through such cultural inroads as these are the educational associations formed. From these fundamental bases, students are then encouraged to adopt as part of themselves the culture of "La francophonie", which places the accent more on belonging to a collective consciousness than on following the flicking of foreign tongues. The adoption is not a replacement, but is instead a synthesis.

What models may we form such that educating others in the culture of sustainable development is approached as such—as a culture to be adopted in a fashion auxiliary and not anathemic? Sustainable development has always been more of a mindset than a method. It should, therefore, be taught as such. Elsewhere we have seen destruction where Western culture has proven more catastrophic than constructive; limbs amputated in the fury for control over cash crops and lives lost in the bloodthirst for alluvial diamonds are evidence enough that the prescription of Western culture has not always been beneficial to others. It is here I insist it is not our duty not to prescribe, nor even to be promotive. Perhaps, I suggest, it is time we think outside our own cultural box, as burdensomely angular and constrictive of progress as it has now proven. It is possible that we, in the West, do not know it all. All we know for certain is that we need to back-peddle—and quickly, for that much—if we wish to leave anything in our wake once we are gone.

The purpose of the research to follow forthwith in this paper has been to analyze the means and measures, by which we might appreciate the culture of others more profoundly and pointedly, and in doing so, find inroads to environmental health and sustainability better attuned to indigenous understandings and inborn predilections. An old Akan expression captures well the essence of this research: *Se ihu de obi n'a abodwese reshew a na asaw nsu doze esi wodze ho"* (cited in Willson, 2000). "If the beard of the man next to you is aflame, you will not pause to put it out." Understood in context, it is a phrase that does not insist we petition the man to cut off his beard, nor even to trim it, nor do anything with it other than what he wishes to do with it himself. It is a phrase that does not ask us to bargain with the man before we aid him. It is a phrase that pleads for immediacy in action and surety in the search for a solution—lest we all burn otherwise.

Statement of Purpose: The following research has been conducted in the search for answers as to how sustainable development might better be understood and embraced by those who need it most. In this respect, it is the cultural aspect of sustainable development that has been studied most intently, as culture, defined here as the values, norms and behaviors that give character and contour to a given social group, is the fundamental facet of our shared humanity, unique as it may be to each and every one of us. Through the analysis of culture, the all-embracing aim of this research was to find the manner in which indigenous culture might be harnessed in the education of others on sustainability in all its manifestations—agricultural, industrial, or developmental.

Methods: The primary modus operandi in the gathering of the information hereinafter was that of the interview. The information provided in the interviews will be divulged much as it was discussed and with the same affect the interviewees displayed in discussing it; this should sufficiently serve the interests of the authenticity in cultural and ideational sentiment the author hopes to convey throughout the essay. Quantitative analyses were conducted via the survey, both verbal (i.e. for students in primary school) and in written form (i.e. for secondary senior high school students). The results of this analysis were not included in this issue of the text, but will be included in a text correlative to this one.

Review of Relevant Literature: Sustainability is an abstraction. To the authors that seek to capture its essence quintessentially—no tautology intended—the battle is a losing one; rarely if ever, has any one been able to penetrate the concept in such a fashion as to render it accessible to everyone. Oxford American Dictionary offers three definitions, the second of which is the ability "to conserve an ecological balance by avoiding depletion of natural resources". Sustainability, in this sense, came to the fore following the report published by the World Commision on Environment and Development, entitled "Our Common Future", but popularly referred to as the "Brundtland Report" (Dresner, 2002). The conclusions reached in that commission gave rise to the following "definition", as it were, of sustainability: "economic and social development that meets the needs of the current generation without undermining the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". In what is a preferable approach to so nonpictorial a topic, UNESO's "Teaching and Learning for a Sustainable Future" (2010) attempts to circumvent the stringency of definition, focusing instead on the interpenetration of environmental protectionist programs with the palliation of poor standards of living and labor as the core concept of sustainability. To this note, UNESCO cites an article of Dowdsell (1995), which states:

> No long-term strategy of poverty alleviation can succeed in the face of environmental forces that promote persistent erosion of the natural resources upon which we all depend. And no environmental protection programme can make headway without removing the day-to-day pressures of poverty that leave people little choice but to discount the future so deeply that they fail to protect the resource base necessary for their own survival and their children's well-being.

Throughout the course of the following essay, this is the crux of the crisis implied whenever there the word "sustainability" may seem used too readily. Given the abstraction of the concept, no approach other than the abstract may be taken in the endeavor to quantify and qualify the character of so elusive an idea. Given the abstraction of the concept, and for the purposes of simplicity, let us understand as sustainable in this essay whatever practice mitigates the aforementioned crisis as effectively as possible.

As 'complex' as it may be, UNESCO (1997) maintains that "culture…is an inextricable part of the complex notion of sustainability," saying "it can be seen as an arbiter in the difficult trade-offs between conflicting ends with regard to development goals…" and that "it is not only the 'servant of ends but (...) the social basis of the ends themselves', a factor of development but also the 'fountain of our progress and creativity'". All belief systems come inherently equipped with values of social justice and environmental conservation (UNESCO, 2010); if not considered mainstream, however, or trivialized as retrograde, these belief systems are given to collapse (Eshun, 2009), leaving a void in which can only surface environmentally deleterious survivalism and extremity of measure. "In this time of globalisation ... the poor are the most vulnerable to having their traditions, relationships, and knowledge and skills ignored and denigrated ... Their culture ... can be among their most potent assets, and among the most ignored and devastated by development programmes." (Wolfensohn, quoted by UNESCO). Scholarship into the issue of development has largely undermined the value of cultural tradition in sustainable futures, particularly through the use of poor adjectival descriptors, such as "primitive" (see Eshun, 2009; Harvey, 2006). To this note, Hsu (cited in Eshun, 2009) writes:

> "The most troublesome meaning of the word primitive is that connected with various shades of inferiority. Sometimes we can unquestionably determine that some items or usages of a culture are more inferior or less inferior to others in the same culture or in other cultures. In this sense, we can describe hand-pushed carts as more primitive than horse carts and horse carts as more primitive than automobiles... But the primitiveness of other single items is by no means easy to

> settle. Is a religious system based upon monotheism with a history of heresy persecution, witch hunting, and holy crusades more or less primitive than another with [a] Laizzez-faire attitude towards different creeds and ritual practices?"

The classifying of non-occidental culture as inherently regressive is perhaps one of the ugliest artifacts of colonialism to remain intact as well as one of the most obstinate obstacles to sustainability still left standing. Some, however, have begun to realize that the most expedient means of enthusing a populace to the adoption of sustainability is to adjust the meaning of sustainability to better fit the cultural context of that populace.

This has rung particularly true in studies on the imperative for the involvement of indigenous institutions—defined by Kendie & Gurr (2007) as the "structures and units of organization in a community…encompass[ing] the norms, values, beliefs and cosmovision that guide social interaction"—in the advocacy and active implementation of sustainable practices. Describing a drastic, but necessary, transmutation of othrodox views on sustainability, Gohlert (1993) emphasizes "empowerment of people at the grassroots" as well as "respect for local culture and traditional knowledge and wisdom" as two cardinal tenets of any successful developmental model in the contemporary context (cited in *Kendie & Gurr, 2007)*. "Locally grounded organisations are indispensable for durable initiatives to improve the quality of life—wherever in the world those initiatives might be" (Bergdall, 1988)

The paramount advantage of any indigenous institution is its innate access to a wealth of indigenous knowledge and the wisdom therein. Writing to this same tune, Nakashima & Prott (2000) suggest: "Sophisticated knowledge of the natural world is not confined to science. Human societies all across the globe have developed rich sets of experiences and explanations relating to the environments they live in." Indigenous knowledge, left alone, is more than sufficiently sustainable; "formal education", however, has abandoned the practicality of traditional knowledge in favor of the ratiocinative and academic, not always to the benefit of the learner (UNESCO, 2010). The threat prototypically occidental impositions pose to indigenous knowledge is nothing less than immense—and is by association, on the verge of being nugatory or noxious to the environment that indigenous knowledge might otherwise help conserve. Oftentimes, indigenous knowledge is accompanied by a spiritual element, one that commonly holds the "material and spiritual worlds [to be] woven together in one complex—all living things imbued with sacred meaning" (*ibid).* The law of the land and the spirits of the ancestors that continue to haunt it ensure that man consider himself merely a "trustee" of his environment, responsible for its delivery to progeny and posterity intact. Too often has

Western culture been hasty to decommission the moral value systems of the indigenous. Confronted with traditional religion, which—more commonly than not—keeps at its core the obligations of environmental stewardship, Western "pioneers", scholarly and colonial, typically described such beliefs "in a derogatory sense, because [they] was seen as part of a continuum of human progress" and not ends in of themselves (Eshun, 2009). It should be noted that conversations on sustainability, immobilized by an excess of occidental ingredients, have almost categorically excluded religion in dialogues on development (Awuah-Nyamekye, 2007), despite whatever provisions various UN resolutions and world reports have enlaced in the name of indigenous knowledge. Indeed, western culture has consistently proven the bane of the traditional, and with it, the wisdom that generations after generations of individuals living both with and on the land passed down to those that followed. The tragic outcomes are gaining in gravity on a daily basis.

Both the concept of indigenous institutions and indigenous knowledge does beg for a definition of what can and cannot be considered indigenous. According to UNESCO, the United Nations accepts as indigenous:

> "communities, peoples and nations…which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems" (University of Denver, 2009)

The U.N. Declaration on Indigenous Rights was ratified by 143 countries and voted against only by four (UNESCO, 2010), the question of sovereignty and self-determination offered as rationale in the cases of the latter. The term "indigenous"—as "deconstructed" by Awolawu as early as 1976 (Eshun, 2009)—should ideally mean something "aboriginal and foundational, upheld and practiced…today." It should, furthermore, be conceived of as a "heritage from the past, but not treated as a thing of the past, but as that which connects the past with the present and the present with eternity." In a similar circuit, traditional religion should not be thought of as "fossil[ized] religion, a thing of the past or a dead religion", but as "religion practiced by living men and women".

At this interval, particularly in the discussion on indigenous religion, it would, of course, be prudent to narrow the context of "indigenous studies" to that of Africa,

eventually to that of Ghana and finally to that of the Akan, who happen to be the focus of this research. In terms of the African context to which sustainability is subject, "research by AICDD (African Itinerant College for Culture and Development) [implicates] the unsuitability of developmental models from industrial societies" as one of the primary culturally-based rationales for the stagnation of developmental progress in the Sub-Saharan contingent of the continent (UNESCO, 2010). The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) has also regularly cited the incompatibilities of Western sustainability models amongst a more communalistic and agrarian society (Kendie & Gurr, 2007). "As far as Africa is concerned" claims Hagan (1992), "culture will continue to be important as the focus of development."

Ghanaian idiosyncrasies in the debate over sustainability are not few and far between. As regards the permissibility, promotability and potentiality of indigenous authorities to participate in the development of the nation, clause one of Article 39 of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana is quite clear: "the state shall take steps to encourage the integration of appropriate customary values into the fabric of national life through formal and informal education, and the conscious introduction of cultural dimensions to relevant aspects of national planning." Clause two expounds upon the previous in declaring "the state shall ensure that appropriate customary and cultural values are adapted and developed as an integral part of the growing needs of the society as a whole." In the interest of these clauses runs an ongoing process, referred to as "decentralization". As it stands, decentralization dominates the affairs of the national government, which has recently sought to revitalize and re-enfranchise local and traditional authorities for the sake of lubricating the output of policy and the simplification of governmental strata. 170 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs, as the acronym goes) constitute political Ghana. 70% of assembly members are elected locally; the predominant political party in the area appoints the other 30% per cent (GIZ, 2011). These assemblies have been increasingly vested with the executive and legislative capacity to fulfill functions at the local level, but problems persist, particularly when it comes to the interaction of the assemblies with the traditional authorities in the same area. Most oftentimes, this authority manifests itself in an age-old chieftaincy, disempowered by nationalization. The emerging imbroglio has proven difficult to assuage, and it is for this reason that multiple NGOS, both foreign and domestic, have intervened in order to aid in decentralization efforts (see also GPRS II, 2005; GTZ, 2010)

In 2005, the process of decentralization in Ghana seemed to have hit a snag (APRM, 2005); traditional mechanisms of governance were coexisting alongside

established municipalities, but—for the most part—neither were collaborating with one another in a coherent and constructive manner (Kendie & Gurr, 2007). Suspicions are rampant as regards the capacity of indigenous institutions and authorities to prove valuable partners to private and public interests in development, despite various case studies that suggest otherwise (see also Willson, 2000). Remonstrating the damaging statements of detractors as to the efficacy of traditional officials, Boafo-Arthur (2003) wrote: "Many chiefs….have instituted measures to tackle developmental problems confronting their people in particular and the nation at large" (cited in Kendie & Gurr, 2007). The debacle surrounding decentralization is a fitting microcosm of a much larger conflict when it comes to sustainable development since, at a fundamental level, the commandeering question in this instance is the question of how culture can either facilitate or impinge upon environmentally sound development.

It is at this point that we may introduce in fluid contextual continuity the topic of Akan culture as it applies to a mutually beneficial—and therefore sustainable—relationship with nature. UNESCO (2010) characterizes the paragon of the indigenous person as an individual that "use[s] resources without depleting them…[and uses his or her] intimate knowledge of the plants, soils, animals, climate, and seasons, not to exploit nature, but to coexist alongside it." While in the context of the Akan the renown may not necessarily be one of herbological expertise or prescient technological innovation, the people are rendered singular by an unparalleled spiritualism that obliges only the most extensive stewardship of a land they know they must pass on. The most singular aspect of the Akan indigenous mindset —and that most conducive to conservation—is a set of inherent environmental ethics. The ethics imbibe the collective conscious of the people, directing the trajectory of their desires and curving excess in behavior. An Old Akan proverb runs as follows: "adi di daa ye kyen adi preko" (quoted in Awuah-Nyamekye, 2009*)*, liberally translated to mean "it is a poor decision to eat all you have in one day". The visceral spiritualism of the Akan endows each member of the ethnic a sense of conservative caution—since all that may be seen, heard or touched is not without its spiritual element and therefore not without reaction if acted against. Quoting Danquah (1968), Eshun (2009) inserts in his thesis a phrase key to the Akan conception of man's obligations to nature, as evinced and evidenced by its tendency towards animism: "We do not hold in trust for the present and the future generations all the natural resources on which our welfare and continuance of the community depend, but are also accountable to the ancestors ...." Such an awareness of the continuity and imperative for the longevity of natural life is that which modern anthropological and religious scholars such as Awuah-Nyamekye and Eshun hail as the basis of a religio-cultural environmental ethic that could aid modern Ghanaians—who

according to the former have forgotten that "environment is life and life is environment" (2007)—in the appraisal, adoption and execution of sustainable practices. This idea will be explored further throughout the course of this essay.

Assuming such an ethic does exist, the quandary then becomes how to educate others in the intricacies of the ethic. Under the Ghanaian EPA Act of 1994, defining statutory functions, the government undertook the responsibility, through the charter of the EPA, to disseminate information instrumental in environmental preservation (EPA 2012), but a simple content analysis of any city street is enough to recognize the gap between the formulation of educational policy and its implementation. A different approach may, in fact, be necessary. "Education in the broadest sense will by necessity play a pivotal role in bringing about the deep change required in both tangible and non-tangible ways" (UNESCO, 1997) to make certain sustainability seizes the national imaginary, and seizes in it such a way as to guarantee its duration. While there is no shortage of theorem as to how youth may be instructed in the language of sustainability (Awuah-Nyamekye, 2007; UNESCO, 2010), this essay will scrutinize deliberately the fashion in which culture is centripetal to the momentum of change—not of policy, not of politics, but of principle. Only changes in attitude will prove precedent to preservation in Ghana, but these changes need not be subject to any sort of forward-looking disparity. The people of Ghana need only to introspect—to glance backward in time to see that progress need not be prospective, but merely respective of life as once it was lived.

Structure of the Essay: This essay will consist of multiple sections, each pertaining to either culture or education. These sections include information on (in order of appearance): the ethnic and lingual composition of Ghana, elementary aspects of Akan culture, Akan religions belief systems, traditional agricultural practices, modern quandaries in organic and conventional agribusiness, the process and implications of decentralization, the impact of modernization on traditional culture, lessons on good stewardship as dictated in Akan mythology, the relationship between indigenous institutions and conservation, curricula prescribed—or lack thereof—in the name of environmental education, and the efforts of the environmental protection agency at ameliorating the environmental crisis in Ghana. The essay concludes with a case study on the Amansuri Conservation Project in the Western Region. Delineated under self-contained headings, these may be referenced individually or in the larger context of the essay.

I. An Intriguing Interethnic: The Asante, the Akan, the Ewe and the Guan

The national borders of Ghana, like those of most ex-colonies become states, were drawn arbitrarily by careless cartographers and apathetic administrators who gave little, if any, consideration to the ethnic and lingual divides, by which the peoples of the region identified themselves prior to interaction with Europeans. Through a gradual and gradational osmosis, first with neighboring ethnographies, then with Europeans, these identities became somewhat malleable, however mesial to the sociological anatomy of Ghana they remained (Valsecchi, 2001).

The official ethnographical makeup of Ghana consists, in order of population size, of the Akan, Mole-Dagbani, the Ewe and the Ga-Adangme (Nkansa-Kyeremaneng, 1999). Consigning to lingual categories as opposed to those of the ethnic, Edoh Torgah, head of the department of Ghanaian languages at the University of Cape Coast, summarizes the divisions with the following four classifications: the Ewe, the Ashanti, the Akan and the Guan. Gesturing towards a map, he designates the southern central coastal region extending east as the jurisdiction of the Akan; the central region extending North as that of the Ashanti; the Northern and Western extremes (extending into Burkina-Faso and Benin) as the land of the Ewe. The Guan, he claims, are a bit of an anomaly, scattered irregularly throughout Ghana, but relatively uniform linguistically—at least in terms of the syntactical and lexical idiosyncrasies[1] that distinguish them from the aforementioned groups. Each lingual category, he continues, is replete with a superfluity of self-determining ethnic groups. Briefly digressing into a discussion on the Nzema—an ethnic subset of the Akan in the western region—and with it, a discussion on the intangibility of post-colonial ethnic identity, he eventually advises against further inspection into the matter, as even a partial enumeration of ethnic subsets in Ghana would be too taxing to undergo casually and without a comprehensive grasp on the post-colonial manifestations of cultural heterogeneity. Valsecchi (2001) speaks exquisitely to this tune, addressing many of the issues of identity using the Nzema—interestingly enough—as his sociological paradigm. In Torgah's opinion, when examining how religious and cultural sentiments give rise to positive environmental attitudes, the most manifest example in Ghana, and that on which has been done the most viable degree of prior research, is the Akan of the Central Region. While various cultural groups will be mentioned throughout this paper for the purposes of comparison, the analytical focus will be on the culture of the Akan peoples, who incidentally comprise 52% of the total Ghanaian population (Ghana Demographics, 2011-

[1] Expounding further, he references the Gonja of northern Ghana as a subset of the Guan

2012) and constitute the bulk of the populace in the Central Region, where the majority of this research was conducted.

II. Animism, Asafo & the Ancestors: An Introduction to Akan Cultural Idiosyncracies

Odomankoma Kyerama Kwamena Pra, who is referred to amongst his compatriots simply as Kyerama, is the artistic director of Twerammpon Traditonals, a troupe specializing in the folk music of the Akan peoples of Central-Southern Ghana. Kyerama leases a windowless, poorly ventilated room in the northeastern corner of Cape Coast Castle, a room employed *autrefois* in the storage of gunpowder and other volatile articles. He has now outfitted the apartment with a wall of studio mirrors for the instruction of dance; in one specifically sequestered cell now lie his impressive array of instruments, the authentic traditionalism of the array interrupted only by the occasional electric guitar. The singularity of his troupe is accentuated by one key feature: all of his troupe members are adolescent students. Kyerama believes beyond all else in the sacrosanctity of education; the majority of profits his troupe generates is allocated to the funds necessary to ensure each of his members receives an adequate education. If, during any public performance, an adolescent expresses sincere interest in the functions of the troupe, Kyerama approaches the youth with the possibility of contracting him or her as a member. So far, the system has proved providential enough, both to Kyerama and his students, but passable sources of funding are few and far between; Kyerama worries as to the future of his program and of the students, in which he has invested so much of his passion and patience.

Not only a philanthropist, Kyerama also happens to be the resident expert on the Akan culture of the Central Coastal region (he is consulted frequently even by the curator of the castle's museum). His enthusiasm for the tradition of music, and the manner in which it so intimately coalesces with the education of any community—its old and its young—has afforded him special insight into a culture simultaneously cohesive and heterogeneous, determined to preserve those elements directly related to its identity, but not so dominated by the endogenous as to preclude the possibility of interaction with the outsider.

What is initially striking as regards the Akan peoples is the manner in which they've made so perfunctory a mélange of more ancient animistic tendencies with modern Christianity. Prone to proselytizing—according to Kyerama, at least—the Akans embraced the monotheism of the European colonizers with relative ardor, and were quick to adopt the belief "that Christ provided new direction to spiritual health in the everafter…" accepting that "only through him, the true light and way was found." While the Yahweh of Judeo-Christianity is purportedly a jealous god—and revengeful should his followers follow

false idols before him—the Akan have more than actively sought to reinstate and sustain the authority of the ancestors. The Supreme Being, in the Akan language, is *Nyame*[2]. While to the uneducated eye *Nyame* might seem a contestant to the Christian God, Kyerama contends that they are, in fact, one in the same—a duplicity of identity similar to that seen in the Holy Trinity, as it were. His opinion on this matter is somewhat unique, as a multiplicity of other scholars contend, in fact, that competition exists between the traditional religion and Christianity, particularly Christianity of the Pentacostal/Charismatic type (see again Eshun, 2009; Willson, 2000). Whatever the situation, the ancestors act as the "intermediaries between the people and *Nyame*". In times of crisis or impending catastrophe, these ancestors are consulted for guidance. How the will of the ancestors is interpreted is a matter more than meritorious of the outsider's attention, and one that will be explained forthwith after a requisite degree of contextualization.

The tribal anatomies of the Akan remain much the same today as they were prior to contact with Europeans. While official scholarly interpretations differ slightly (see Kendie & Guri, 2007; Eshun, 2009) the following is a paraphrastic breakdown of that anatomy as articulated by Kyerama: At the head of each community is instated a Chief (*odikro)*; he may take multiple wives depending on his community's allowances and holds what would be comparable in the West to "office hours", during which he makes himself available for discourse and dialogue on the affairs occurring in and around the community. Upon election by the community, the chief is vested in a stool, the most significant symbol of his dominion. He may be "de-stooled" at any time should he fail to perform satisfactorily and fulfill his obligations, but otherwise will preside in his stool till death do him undo. In service to the chieftain and the municipal unit he represents, are the *asafo.* Kyerama describes the *Asafo* as a "military group"[3], held accountable for the completion of developmental projects within the community, which may include but are not limited to the "protection of the land, sanitation, the training of community members in basic jobs and infrastructure". Traditionally exclusive to men, the asafo only allow the most physically fit

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[2] Numerous institutions and items bear the name "Gye Nyame", which translates roughly either to "By the will of God" or "God bless", depending on the context and the interpreter. Ghanaians readily use religious invocations when naming shops selling anything from merchandise to medicine (i.e. I Will Not Falter Fashion" or "Fisher of Men Pharmacy")

[3] Military only in name now, as they no longer are responsible for martial combat against competing tribes

women to join[4]. All ages are welcome, but as with allowances for women, a requisite degree of vigor must be demonstrated in order to enter and remain part of a modern *asafo* group. Apart from the *asafo,* the chiefdom's court includes most conspicuously an orator or "linguist" (*Okyeame)*, whose role pertains to diplomatic engagements and public announcements. Perhaps the linguist's most crucial role as part of the chief's court is that of vessel to the voice of the spirits; in times of crisis or impending catastrophe, seeking the deliverance of the ancestors from a curse via incantation, the chief will summon the linguist to conduct a consultative séance of sorts. After the pouring of a libation[5] onto the community shrine, the linguist is induced into a trance-like state. What he speaks during this hallucinatory phase is interpreted to be the word of the ancestors, as channeled creatively through him.

This sort of rite is not unique to the Akan. Ibraham Salifu of the Karimenga village near Tamale in the Northern part of Ghana beyond the Volta is the owner and operator of an eco-guesthouse, the profits generated by which are used to educate children in the community. He is well-versed in the practices of the Gruni people, itself composed of three ethnic groups: the Mumkusi, who comprise the bulk of the community, the Munchis and the Fulanis, originally of Burkina-Faso. Like the Akan, the Gruni have a similar penchant for the contacting of the ancestors in days of dire predicament. Unlike the Akan, the chief must reference the regional soothsayer *(Bakolobokra)*, who is capable of communiqué with *Winneh* (the Gruni word for *Nyame*). The veracity of the soothsayer's divination usually depends on some sort of sacrifice offered by the chief to appease the spirits. The sacrifice is usually one of guinea fowl smeared in flour converted to paste, called *Bakala Ka'Oh* or "water given to the gods".

As regards the Akan specifically, it would be unenlightened, at best, and imbecilic, at worst, to ignore the animism inherent in the system. In a fashion comparable to that of most of the ethnic peoples in Ghana and its neighbors, the Akan maintain that spirits inhabit all corners of the earth. This spirituality—dwelling in both the material and the immaterial, the organic and the inorganic, the animate and the inanimate, human or otherwise—is ubiquitous and all-encompassing. To honor the spirits of these entities is to honor equilibrium between man and nature; violation of this equilibrium is worthy of only

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[4] Traditionally, women have separate assignments than men, often acting as the company's priestess and protector in times of combat

[5] The libation is a variant of gin called *Akpeteshie* in the Akan language; it is 95% alcohol and therefore evaporates posthaste upon exposure to air

the most severe sanction on the part of the gods. Celestial clemency, in such cases, is not common; damned is the man to disrespect the spirits of the earth.

III. Bosom, Sacred Boundaries, Totem and Taboo: Akan Religious Belief Systems

Yaw Sarkodie Agyemana is the head of the Department of Religion and Human Values at the University of Cape Coast; while he teaches quite consummately a grand gamut of ethics courses, his primary academic cynosure, as it were, is environmental ethics and its enduring relationship with traditional African religions.

He prefaces his account of the Akan religio-cultural perspective as follows: “the Akan have always had a symbiotic relationship with nature; their worldview is one that holds nature to be a manifestation of the creator on earth, with its own spiritual dimensions apart from the physical”. According to Agyemana, the Akans hold steady to the conviction that, like humans, all aspects of nature are as much spiritual as they are somatic. “Mountains, rivers, forests all have their own spirits” he explains, “but these may also be inhabited by a guest, or second spirit.” This multiplicity of spirituality is an intriguing aspect of Akan cosmology and one that Agyemana elucidates as follows:

Among the various spiritual entities that dictate the elements—and therefore command the respect of the community—are what Agyemana calls deities, or *bosom.* The deity of the ocean, for example, is called *bosompo*. Fundamental to the Akan perception of natural phenomena, such as floods or drought, these deities are also employed in various ethnic delineations, patrilineal in ethnological complexion and known as *agyabosom* or *ntro*[6]. The most significant deities are those upon which a community’s lifeblood is dependent, such as *asase yaa*, the “owner (deity) of the earth”. In effect, it is common practice to allow such deities as these a day of rest and recovery; farmers, therefore, are expected to abandon the farms one day of every week. These days, traditionally, are subsequently taken as market days. A survey of five communities in the Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese district has shown this day prototypically to be Wednesday or Thursday, though this selection is subject to any variety of variance.

Elsewhere in Akan culture is the concept of “totems”. Each clan lays claim to a certain animal totem, ranging from the eagle to the Leopard. Agyemana explain his totem to be the Leopard. Akan mythology maintains that should one encounter his totem animal in nature, that animal shall not harm him—unless, that is, he is morally corrupt and unworthy of association with that animal. In the latter instance, the totem animal will maul to death

[6] One *agyabosom*, to illustrate, identifies itself with the deity of the river pra, or *bosompra*

his sinful human counterpart. In the instance of the less violent encounter, it is said that a member of the totem clan could ideally communicate with his totem animal, though Agyemana quickly interjects that he has never tried. If ever a member of totemic clan should kill his totem animal, he is expected to provide a funeral for that animal as if it were one of his human kin[7]; if he does not, he would incur the wrath of the gods on his whole community (Awuah-Nyamekye, 2009). Speaking of the totem animal as the judge, jury and executioner of the decadent, disrespectful and depraved, Agyemana continues on to describe "nature" as the "moral barometer", to which the Akan traditionally referred themselves in times of self-reflection. Whether through totems or taboos, the Akan cultural mechanism operates on the principle that "nature demonstrates to man the nature of his sins" and renders restrictions or punishments on him accordingly.

Perhaps his most poignant example, Agyemana recounts the myth of the river that "runs away". Of the many religious proscriptions, by which the behavior of Akan is bound, is one that prohibits farming, weeding or any such agricultural activity within a certain radius of the nearest riverbank. Should these riverbanks be trespassed upon, the legend goes, the river will "run away". The scientific justification of a riverbank's sanctity is self-evident, Agyemana believes: degrade the soil structure of riverbanks and erosion will follow suit; with enough erosion, the water will disperse and no longer be available as a resource. Thus, it will have effectively "run away".

The Akan have many areas as sacred as rivers—with strong, environmentally sound rationales for conservation masked by a religious fervor that many simply shelve at face value. Some of the most sacred are the "groves", as it were, of the ancestors[8]. Any location considered historically or religiously significant—such as the site of a magnificent military victory or abhorrent defeat—or inhabited by a "guest spirit" is a viable candidate for designation as "sacred". Any location considered "sacred" cannot be molested by the likes of man, and may only be disturbed if the community is in need of some medicinal herb found solely at that location. No hunter may hunt there; no farmer may plant there. "Sacred

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[7] In what proves an intriguing aside, The Ghanaian Wildlife Society (GWS) has, for the last decade, sponsored a project that promotes the protection of totemic animals across Ghana. Many of these animals are subject to overexploitation in the search, seizure and sale of bush meat (GWS, 2011). GWS has made a valiant effort to sensitize Ghanaians about the plight of totemic animals by appealing to indigenous ethno-religious sentiments. As will be discussed later, its efforts have proven fruitful in quite a few cases

[8] Consider, as a case in point, *nananom mpo*, one such sacred grove where are buried the first three chiefs of the Akan people: Obrumankoma, Odapayan, and Oson.

groves" as they are called are perhaps the most intriguing illustration of nominally assigned conservation areas, protected on pain of mutilation, death, damnation or any/all of the above. So sacred are these groves, in fact, that the taboos, which apply to each may be seen as excessive; for example, a woman in the midst of her menstrual cycle may not enter the forest, as she will be considered "unclean" and therefore would transgress against the will of the gods should she step foot on sacred land. Though Agyemana does admit that some of these taboos may be considered to take conservation of "sacred areas" to the extreme, he maintains that they do, nonetheless, serve the same fundamental function as a national park—protecting the microflora, the megafauna and everything in between. To violate these areas is to violate the regard of the deities or the memory of the ancestors that have rendered them inviolate; equally, however, it agitates an equilibrium considered requisite to the peace and prosperity of the people. The gist of the latter is not difficult to substantiate scientifically, Agyemana interposes; without the biodiversity that designed areas of conservation guarantee, man himself could not persist, even painstakingly. To this note, and in a fashion that corroborates Agyemana's portrayal of nature in Akan culture as a "moral barometer" Nkansa-Kyeramaseng (1999) writes: "Sin, in the Akan cultural context…. implies neglect of the ancestors, and whatever upsets the right balance, of duties and obligations, so as to endanger the life and well-being of the earth and its inhabitants".

"The relationship of the Akan to nature is symbiotic" Agyemana muses; the health of both is contingent on the mutual respect of the other. At the source of many of the modern environmental issues Ghana faces, Agyemana believes, is an assault on the "traditional worldview" that held the earth as sacred. With the advent of Islam and Christianity, both considered "genuine faiths" higher-ranking than the "primitive" counterparts (Eshun, 2011), the indigenous worldview so pivotal to the conservation of nature has been, disenfranchised by a regrettable majority. Without this worldview, however, few have the influence to act effectively to parry the blows that modernization has delivered so relentlessly: "The Municipal government has no moral authority; recycling facilities are absent. A week ago I was in Takoradi with a bottle of water. After one kilometer of walking, I still had not found a rubbish receptacle to dispose of it." Without the fundamentals, Agyemana argues, there can be no infrastructure. Without the infrastructure, there can be no progress. He concludes by suggesting that until the Ghanaian people again respect the moral barometer that so long guided behavior reverential of the environment and enforced the conventions that so adequately conserve it, a great deal more of suffering is almost certainty in store.

IV. The Culture in Agriculture: Traditional Farming Practices Friendly to Sustainable Agriculture in the Central Coastal Region

Dr. Kingsley J. Taah is a professor of Crop Science at the University of Cape Coast, and an aficionado when it comes to the agricultural practices of the Akan and the Ashanti prior to the green revolution of the last six decades. Queried on the topic of organic agriculture, his immediate response is "naturally, the traditional crop culture of Ghana has always been organic—no synthetic fertilizers or agro-inputs, for obvious reasons". Nowadays, however, he views the geopolitical landscape of Ghanaian agriculture as markedly more complex; "the bulk of farmers, low-income and low-resource, do not have the capacity to 'go organic' and still produce the profits" necessary to stay afloat.

Taah defines "indigenous farming" as "practices which the indigenes learnt from their predecessors which they continue to use in their farming activities"; he cites most harvesting and grain storage methodologies as paradigmatic of such practices. Though 66% of Ghana is classified as guinea savannah (Taah, 2008), the central coastal region is considered a "rainforest vegetation zone" and therefore influences significantly the traditional farming practices of the Akan peoples inhabiting the region. Classified as "rainfed agriculture", the agronomy of the central coast depends fundamentally on bi-modal rainfall, the patterns of which remain relatively stable across long periods of time. In terms of land tenure, according to Taah, there are four categories: land belonging to "stools or skins[9], clans or families, individuals or the government". According to custom, land tenure also incorporates a sizeable degree of sharecropping[10]; crops involved in these instances include "cocoa, coffee, oil palm, citrus and coconuts".

Of particular pertinence to the modern conservationist is the traditional agronomic confidence farmers vested in sustainable methods such as intercropping, mixed cropping and compound farming, the benefit of which is difficult to controvert. Other orthodox agricultural practices such as "the slash and burning" method of land clearance have invoked ambivalent responses from soil and crop scientists. On the one hand "fire sterilizes soil" and assists in the "removal of pests and disease inoculum" (Taah, 2008) from the area as well as lowers the pH of soil in a manner favorable to the fecundity of crops; on the other, the incineration of debris, and the ash left therein, allows for the rapid erosion of

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[9] Reference to traditional Akan symbols of chiefdom

[10] Share cropping could be understood as the allocation of "*abunu*" (1/2 of purchased land) or "*abusa*" (1/3 of purchased land), depending on the context and circumstances of the agreement and the crop of choice

essential micronutrients in soil and the runoff of compost that, left unhindered, would percolate and provide a steady supply of vitamins to burgeoning crops. Seeking to exemplify a case in which traditional Ghanaian farming methods (at least, methods prescribed intergenerationally prior to the agricultural revolution) actually appear more sustainable than conventional techniques, Taah cites the diverse functionalities and innovations made in the farming of maize. Employed in intercropping due to its role as a rapid growth perennial, Maize is manually cross-pollinated, reared, harvested and stored in a bamboo structure designed to inhibit pests from besieging the season's output. Elsewhere of import in the case of maize is the opinion, widely held amongst producers and consumers alike, that the naturally occurring variety is the most robust in terms of storage and the superlative in terms of palatability. Subscribing to the Mendelian principle of "like begets like", farmers of maize select seeds from stalks expressing an array of profitable qualities, including size and resilience against disease. Hybrid varieties, manufactured abroad, do not allow for the same sort of selection, says Taah, and the same holds true for a plurality of other crops, including pineapple, an examination of which will follow forthwith.

Teaching through case study, Dr. Taah oftentimes evokes the example of Mon Santo's MD2 variety of pineapple as a prime illustration of the reason why the adoption of western prescriptions for successful agricultural ventures is not always wise. While pineapple exports accounted for over 38% of horticultural exports in the year 2006 (GEPC, cited in Wolter 2009), the natural variety stands alongside an array of competitors. Sustained by heavy agronomic machinery, Mon Santo's MD2 pineapple created a furor upon its production in the 1980s (Chestnut Hill Farms, 2012). While a number of Ghanaian farmers were eager to adopt the crop, most quickly discovered they were unable to rear profitable fruit and suffered deplorable returns on investments. The situation was aggravated by the arrival of phitopthera, which, due to a lack of genetic diversity amongst the MD2 hybrids, decimated the crops of the few fruits farmers that had been fortunate enough to preside over some growth.

Such tragedy might have been avoided, Taah alleges, were farmers more cognizant of the *cultural* basis, upon which the solvent conception and remunerative execution of *agricultural* pursuits is contingent. Traditional taboos and indigenous wisdom regarding the capabilities and capacity of the land have long been beneficial to farmers (Eshun, 2009), as well as various other industries such as the fishing industry, but westernization and the green revolution have seen an end put to many of these values. "While many taboos and interdictions were thought to be mere artifacts of superstition, scientific findings have now confirmed that there was a perfectly legitimate justification for many practices in traditional communities". Referencing the above, Taah describes one taboo in the central

coastal region, wherein no fishing is to be carried out on Tuesday, in order to allow the deities of sea (*bosompo*, specifically) to rest. While the effect may not be immense, Taah alleges that this does allow for some varieties of fish eggs to hatch undisturbed and alleviates the marine disruption caused by the fishing that occurs all other days of the week. This sort of "allowance to the gods" as it were, carries over into practices on land, where, at least once a week, farmers quit the fields to permit the earth to rest. These days have since become the market days held weekly in the majority of communities in Ghana.

"There is a deficiency in the sensitization of farmers to harmful practices[11]" Taah claims. Impatient and susceptible to the appeal of profits, many farmers hastily adopt harmful agricultural practices without realizing the long-term implications of their actions. Ironically, those methods most propitious to environmental soundness, such as those seen in organic agriculture, are kept as trade secrets, Taah says. Most of these issues, though, he believes may be resolved if cultural considerations are taken into account and traditionalism is not marginalized as inefficaciously retrograde. Keen and capable of appealing to cultural narcissism, producers of synthetic weedicides and fertilizers have already monopolized on cultural sentiments in a much more effective manner than have conservationists. Evidence of this may be seen most easily in the names of chemicals such as the controversial "Asasi-Wura" (translated as "owner of the land") and "Oso-Deso" (translated as "so much on a single tree"). "Our predecessors were not stupid," asserts Taah, reiterating that the indigenes of Ghana were more than conscious of the value of indigenous basil varieties, which ward off a wide range of insects, neem (or azadirachta indica the crude extract of which repels fruit flies), papaya leaves, chromolamae, African marigold (lethal to nematodes) and Chilis (with a considerable capsaicin content) in the prevention of disease and as pest-repellent.

The largest issue created by the gap left in the absence of cultural contemplation is that of soil integrity. He points to the dissipation of perennial rivers, desertification and denitrification of soil as just some of the issues aggravated by hasty abortions of traditional methods in favor of the supposedly superlative western variety. Unlike others, however, who believe the revival of traditional agricultural techniques to be sufficient, Taah believes a much more extensive reformation is necessary to counter the damage that has already been done. His opinions on soil amendment are much in line with a report on soil management, published in the Journal of Soil and Water Conservation (see Lal, 2001), in

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[11] Taah advises the consideration of herbicides in the destruction of beneficial monocots, and the subsequent suppression of malevolent weeds, as a prudent example of the educational deficit amongst farmers, who avail themselves of these chemicals haphazardly

which is outlined methods on SOC sequestration in soil and the detriments of erosion due to the misuse of land demarcated for tillage and agriculture.

While Taah's opinions are not without its detractors, particularly those that see traditional farming practices as unfriendly to the "tapping" of full agribusiness potentialities (see again Wolter, 2009), they still hold some ground. "Return to the roots" Taah muses in conclusion, "there is much to be learned there. If you don't start somewhere, you won't get anywhere."

V. The Intricate Isosceles of the Citrus Trade: The Producers, the Prescription & The Processors who Package

T.T. Laryea, regional instructor of extension officers in Ghana's central Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese district, defines organic agriculture as "working in harmony with nature, rather than against it." Immediately, this translates to rigid restrictions the implementation of any sort of synthetic animal feed or insecticides/pesticides in agricultural endeavors and concentrates the efforts of environmental intervention on the integrity of the soil structure and the effective "use of water resources." Laryea's lesson focuses on enabling farmers to produce crop yields sufficient for a profit, but in a manner that is not deleterious to the environment or its inhabitants. The ministry's version of organic agriculture, at least the version Laryea advocates, is one promotive of crop rotation—particularly the sort that involves crops resistant to insects and herbicidal diseases such as rough lemon, Cleopatra, volka and mandarin—and genetic diversity in the surrounding ecosystem. In a similar vein, the ministry supports the consistent employment in agriculture of green manure and compost, such as piruria for palm plants and carpie for citrus—both of which, it should be noted, are high in nitrogen content. While Laryea himself advises the liberal application of this green manure, he equally admonishes that "using too much, or using it at the wrong time, could be as harmful as using man-made, artificial fertilizers."

The ministry is particularly adverse to—and therefore meticulous in educating on the dangers of—the biological amplification of chemicals released into the soil. Laryea notes specifically the eventually adverse effect of pesticides and other such chemicals on the health of the human animal at the top of the food chain. His precautions are pertinently reminiscent of a report from the United Nations Environment Programme (cited in UNICEF, 2006) on the "Descending Spiral of Unsustainable Development", wherein the use of materials hazardous to the environment eventually proves hazardous to the health—and the subsequent development—of the persons within it. Laryea's lesson is one abounding in anecdotes that act as harsh reminders on the continued misuse of chemicals, oftentimes

due to language barriers that inhibit the reading of instructions, and barefaced "disobedience", as Laryea phrases it. "Disobedience is killing us," he warns sternly, and "hard-eared farmers" he implies as the leading culprits in most impediments to organic agriculture. In terms of the ecological soundness of any agricultural venture, Laryea prescribes five paradigmatic practices: mulching, utilization of green manure, composting of vegetable material, composting of animal waste, and crop rotations.

Laryea's workshop on the first of June, 2012, was one oriented specifically to address the rearing and harvesting of citrus. Though never explicitly stated, the main impetus behind the workshop coincided obviously with the augmentation of the investment interests of Pinora®, an organic citrus company operating in the region, processing and exporting the Ghanaian product for consumption in France and elsewhere in the European Union. Held to vigorous standards of import, Pinora® apparently had to up the regulatory ante, as it were, on the Ghanaian farmers whose citrus it intended to export. This new regulation purportedly has established various criteria, satisfactory to the subscribed standards of health but flexible enough to permit further research in the field of organic agriculture, by which farmers should govern crop yield. These criteria have been coordinated with and defined in consideration of other precepts laid out in the Organic Inputs Evaluation Project[12], though some discrepancies do seemingly remain. What Laryea hails about the new regulations is the idea of "direct equivalency", the exact comparability of production and processing standards "allowing exporters to work with recognized national or regional inspectors [and] thus encouraging the growth of the global organic sector". This, according to Laryea, is particularly promising for Ghanaian Citrus farmers, who have long encountered issues with EU standards[13] that evolve regularly and are rarely ever considered sacrosanct for more than six months. Assessments designed to determine whether or not these changing regulations are being met will be conducted by 'accredited' officers, who may be authorized to orchestrate regular or random inspections. The frequency of these inspections will depend on how compliant a farmer is with the standards he has, in effect, pledged to uphold. Laryea is confident this will target

[12] Funded by the 'Commission of the European Communities under the work programme Quality of Life', the Project is one that seeks 'harmonised and standardized procedures for evaluation of plant protection products, fertilizers and soil conditioners for use in organic agriculture'; Source: http://www.organic-research.org/Project-Description.408.0.html

[13] Europe, according to extension officer Donatus Donely, consumes 11,000 metric tons of Ghanaian citrus each year, thus rendering it an immensely lucrative market.

"weaknesses in the supply chain" and strengthen the reputation of both the Ministry of Food & Agriculture presiding in the region as well as of the farmers themselves.

Laryea's instruction is but the first step in the modus operandi of training that will eventually see the dissemination of the above information to all Citrus farmers in the Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese district. Within the near to direct future, an Internal Control System (ICS) will assume authority as the body of certification responsible for the creation and distribution of lists that designate farmers as approved, sanctioned or suspended from international export, depending on how organic various inspections reveal their methods to be. While Laryea also provides various instructions in rather specific techniques facilitative of citrus farming—such as intercropping in combination with the cautious use of "10 kilograms of poultry manure" per tree—and hints at research currently being pursued in the crusade for an approved organic fertilizer (one that must possess calcium, sulfur, zinc and nitrogen in larger quantities, as well as borium, manganese and zinc in lesser quantities), these are beyond the scope of this essay and will not be discussed further here in the name of expedience.

To understand accurately the complications that arise when culture and commerce collide, it is necessary to diverge briefly in this example and discuss five acronyms involved in the harvesting, processing and export of Ghanaian citrus: CROCFA, the Central Region Organic Citrus Farmers' Association, MOFA, the Ministry of Food & Agriculture, accountable mostly when it comes to the dissemination of technical information to farmers, Pinora®, which processes citrus for eventual export to the European Union, GIZ (*Deutsche Gesellshaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit*), a german NGO working with the MOFA in "Market Oriented Agricultural Programs (MOAP)" and GIGMAG, the Citrus Growers and Marketers' Association of Ghana.

Perhaps the most intriguing of these is GIZ, whose mission it is, according to Baba Adam, junior advisor to the GIZ office in Cape Coast, to "strengthen the agricultural section's competiveness" by connecting farmers with producers and "promoting the value chain"[14] of crop harvesting and processing for selected variants. Oriented particularly towards capacity development and improved technologies, GIZ works to bridge the gap between all "stakeholders" involved, from those actually rearing the crops to those, such as Pinora and Frutiland, that process and export the fruits of the farmers' labor. Oriented thus, GIZ is particularly impressive in buttressing the infrastructure favorable to the full integration of any given market. Under the category of "public sector services", GIZ

[14] The value chain, as defined by MOAP, is as follows: "Input provision, primary production, transforming and processing, marketing and trade" and finally consumption

facilitates the articulation and implementation of economically catalytic agricultural policy; elsewhere, under the category of “private sector services”, the organization works to “facilitate joint marketing” as well as sponsor “market research” and temper “trade fares”. It is GIZ in the context of the Citrus trade that will be discussed here to illustrate its proposed function as an integumentary unit in an otherwise easily eviscerated body of public and private interests.

Organic agriculture is the trend in the Citrus trade, Adam confirms, but few farmers, despite contestation, know how to farm in such a fashion as fits organic standards. Scourges of gummosis[15] and the complete disregard of the prohibition by processors on synthetic fertilizer are evidence enough of this void in technical knowledge. “Major challenges face Ghanaian citrus farmers,” says Adam; these challenges include most conspicuously the issue of BRIX (denoting the sugar content of a given fruit) and the aesthetic quality of the citrus raised on Ghanaian soils. Less conspicuous, but more insidious, are deeper issues beneath the surface-level blemishes mentioned above. Less detectable, and much more difficult to assess and manage, these issues are cultural and ethnological issues—the most uncompromising obstacles to the progress of practices promotive of “market integration” and sustainability. “Most farmers are not business oriented” regrets Adam, “farming, traditionally, is thought of in terms of subsistence; no strategy is ever applied” when crop selection and planting is done on haphazard and whim. “A farmer sees his neighbor growing citrus and he says to himself, ‘well, I suppose I should like to grow citrus, too’. The competitive edge is absent and it is therefore grueling for farmers to maximize profit yields on otherwise impressively lucrative crops.

Also unnerving is the adoption rate of simple, but fruitful methods in the maximization of comfortably accessible agricultural resources. NPK (nitrogen-phosphorus-potassium) deficiencies, according to Adam, are rampant in Ghana and are combatted conveniently and compellingly by “green manuring”, which requires only that farmers strategically resituate the debris from clearing plots instead of burning it. Even cocoa peels, shed aplenty on most farms and suffused with an array of nutrients, are cast off without further consideration when they can be used effortlessly in the rearing of maize and citrus.

Ultimately, details and frustrating digressions aside, GIZ is endeavoring to demonstrate that sustainable agricultural practices are also cost-effective, solvent and rewarding—all accounts considered in the long term. To this note, one of MOAP’s enduring aspirations has been the creation of a “demonstration” site, upon which will be grown

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[15] Oxford American: the copious production and exudation of gum by a diseased tree, esp. as a symptom of a disease of fruit trees

crops in accordance with certified organic practices and in a fashion that does not marginalize the economic inclination so centripetal to success in the international agricultural market. "Culture changes with the right sort of pressure" Adam claims, "and change is necessary to help farmers realize that there is real money to be made in agriculture if they turn their mind to business and the GAPs ("Good Agricultural Practices") we prescribe and teach". Thus far, GIZ's agenda has not been pursued without discernable success. Working with CROCFA and various other farmers' associations, GIZ has been pivotal in group development exercises and lobbying efforts. Elsewhere, according to GIZ's informational packet, "the capacities of 1,800 pineapple, citrus, and mango farmers have been enhanced through certification to maintain access to the international and domestic markets through the production of quality produce". It is triumphs such as these that have propelled GIZ to the forefront of the organic agricultural forum. Its future is promising, though larger questions still remain as to how effective GIZ can be without deliberately tackling the aforementioned cultural impediments.

Taken cumulatively, the citrus trade as a case study implies much about the manner in which culture affects environmental impact, and in this instance, the impact made through agriculture. Naturally, even disregarding the immediate environmental concerns, an abundance of problems exist within the citrus trade: some easily resoluble if addressed and others still intractable given current deficiencies in research. According to Laryea, one of the largest of the latter is what could be called a somewhat puerile myth of immortality surrounding the performativity of Ghanaian land. "Ghanaians believe their soils will always be fertile;" regrets Laryea, "why worry when God will provide?"

VI. The Disconnect: Commercial Capital versus the Psychology of Subsistence

Gathered at a forum for stakeholders in the citrus business at the office of the Citrus Grower's Marketing Association in the town of Asebu are a group of farmers assembled to discuss the sort of standards they would like to have met in the construction of a citrus collection facility. The facility will be designed by Consulting Company *FasConsult* at a designated cite in the Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese district and sponsored by the African Development Bank alongside USAID. All but one of the fifteen farmers gathered has now chosen to adopt organic over conventional methods of farming[16]. Asked collectively as to whether they had decided to "go organic", all claimed they had done so not on the basis of

[16] The sole dissenter eventually cited labor costs as being too prohibitive to adopt organic standards, but at first was hesitant to voice his dissent

environmental concerns, but in order to tap the premium prices that make the organic market so tantalizing in the first place. The impulse behind the lobbying efforts of the farmers for the collection point was seemingly the inability of growers to render products to the buyers before either desiccation or rot had made the citrus impossible to sell. The forum bore witness to the testimonials and concerns of the assembly; most affected of the considerations raised, at least as pertained to what the newfangled facility should entail, included a place for prayer, a place for long-distance buyers and sellers to rest, and a more tangible setting for the amelioration of the relationship of farmers to commercial exporters. Only when prompted by the researchers did the farmers address the issue of ensuring the facility would be eco-friendly; while *FasConsult* did mention the possibility of solar panels for the acquisition of electricity and the potentiality of a water purification pump, its representatives admonished that these would be erected only if all other aspects of the project received a sufficient appropriation of the budget. When the inquiry was raised as to whether or not the environmental soundness of a project was ever prioritized, agricultural extension officer Donatus Donelly replied, "Financial soundness first, environmental soundness second." The response is revealing, but not unexpected, given the inferiority of citrus to other more lucrative crops such as cocoa and palm oil.

The demographics of the farmers assembled were as follows: four of fifteen had attended secondary school, all had at least one parent who was a farmer, ten of fifteen claimed to have learned about the environment during whatever period of time they had been schooled and five of fifteen claimed to have gained the majority of their knowledge regarding environmentally sound practices solely from experience. None of the farmers were members of a local *asafo* group.

VII. Exeunt the Nationalists; Enter the Locals: The Implications—Positive and Negative—of Governmental Decentralization in Ghana

GIZ (pronounced G-I-Zed), a multifaceted and versatile institution, does not operate exclusively in the realm of sustainable agriculture. James Ayarik is the Director of Human Resources at the SfDR (Support for Decentralization Research) programs branch of GIZ in Accra. The mission statement of the SfDR program reads as: "improving local service delivery through institutional strengthening and civic participation" (SfDR, 2011). Summarizing the vision of SfDR, Ayarik touches on the keyword of "capacity building", research on which SfDR conducts intimately with other governmental institutions such as the Institute for Local Government Studies (ILGS) as well as the Ministry of Chieftaincy Affairs & Culture (MOCAC). Asked about what exactly is meant by "capacity building",

Ayarik responds that "capacity building" is assistance offered by higher institutions to subsidiaries in the undertaking of new mandates, the proper appropriation of budgets and allocation of funding grants for developmental projects, and the adequate management of "personnel and powers" newly afforded to local governments with the introduction of "composite budgeting in 2012/2013" (*ibid*). Crippled by a lack of logistical expertise and paltry funding, these local governments cannot, sometimes, perform even perfunctorily, nonetheless satisfactorily. Such defects cause the most chaos in the area of service delivery. Without rudimentary structures in place, these governments simply cannot formulate policy in a manner promotive of development.

Mr. Edward Sarpong is another representative of GIZ working in the name of the SfDR. According to him, GIZ—in as much as the SfDR is concerned—is not a donor organization, but merely presides over the various studies conducted both by the ILGS vis-à-vis the Ministry of Local Government as well as over forums providing for dialogue between ILGS and the Ministry of Chieftaincy & Cultural Affairs. This latter aspect of GIZ's work is a sphere of significant interest—and an area of heated contest. Sarpong depicts vividly unfortunate quagmires of decentralization, wherein traditional authorities sell land without the knowledge of district assemblies, escalate intragovernmental tensions and undermine dialogue while unit committees, responsible for bringing community issues to the fore at the district assemblies, fail to properly assess developmental needs and fuel the malcontent of district constituents. The over-politicization of these district assemblies is yet another hotbed of decentralization's numerous grievances, but Sarpong claims that both sides of the debate lack evidence to support claims made as to whether or not the assemblies are rigged by the predominating party in parliament. Perhaps decentralization's grossest—and most perceptible—issues revolve around the fact that District Executive Officers are still appointed by the national government, as opposed to being elected within the district they come to represent. "The less conspicuous nightmare" alleges Sarpong, "but possibly the most haunting, is that of the frequent arrest, delay"—and occasionally, the complete constipation—"of fiscal transfers", just one aspect of the grander debacle surrounding underfunding (GIZ, 2011). What neither Sarpong nor Ayarik mention explicitly is the holistic and healthy role the chieftaincy might very well play in developmental projects and the decentralization process as a whole; asked directly about this topic, they defer to the Ministry of Chieftaincy & Cultural Affairs, with whom they have little interaction.

Whatever the issues, GIZ's and SfDR's exertion has not been without its accomplishments. In the case of District Finance Officer Kassimu Ashadu, GIZ aided him in "quadrupling the district income in two years" (GIZ, 2011), by instructing him and his

colleagues “in improved data systems”. Such success stories continue to fuel the research of GIZ—as well as reinforce the mandate it has received so enthusiastically from the Ghanaian government—, but do little to reorient its attention to the potential of indigenous institutions. As will be seen in the Amansuri case study below, this tunnel vision has led to the loss of an inestimable quantity of opportunities to ease both the impasses of decentralization and the enactment of environmentally sound policy.

VIII. Paradise Lost: The Subversion of Communal and Cultural Values via Modernization, Urbanization and Education too Inadequate to Address the Indelible Harm Caused by Both

In what proves to be a poignant case in point, Kyerama of Tweramponn Traditional implicates the rapid rise of urbanization and the correlative diminution of communal mores as being behind a substantial amount of the problems facing modern Ghana. Kyerama himself has been a longtime inhabitant of Cape Coast, where, according to the Ghana Country AIDS Progress Report 2010-2011, prepared by the Ghana AIDS Commission, 9.6% of residents have been diagnosed with HIV. He underscores, as a prototype of the sort of protective figures so vital to traditional communities and so tragically absent in urban centers, the “Queen Mother”, an elder woman fundamentally independent of the Chief[17] and responsible for many of the incentives that keep communities healthy, keen and content. At the time of a girl’s coming of age (i.e. her first menstrual period), the “Queen Mother” traditionally assumes liability for the education of the young woman in female hygiene and reproductive health. Kyerama believes firmly that, without the overshadowing of the Queen Mother, a privation more than manifest in most urban centers, teenage pregnancies and the proliferation of HIV amongst adolescents increase. The statistics strongly support his sentiments (see Ghana Country AIDS Progress Report 2010-2011), though it should be noted in this instance that the correlation does not—and need not— necessarily imply causation.

In a similar vein come the comments of Mustafa Issah, the director of Cultural Resources at the Ashanti Cultural Center in Kumasi. Issah affords great credence to the notion that urbanization has undone much of the cultural authenticity, upon which is contingent the perpetuation of various ethics across generations and genealogies. A resident of Kumasi, or what the Ashanti have traditionally called the “Garden City”, Issah

[17] In what is a rare example of Akan “Checks & Balances”, as it were, the Queen Mother of any given Akan community is allowed the deciding vote in the election of a Chief to the stool of power; otherwise stated, she can easily make or brake the man in charge

vituperatively condemns the type of urbanization that has seen the sex trade flourish and pollution run so rampant it is now virtually impossible to grow a garden within the city's boundaries. Issah's frustration also gives dimension to the specter of ignorance that so elegiacally accompanies the detriment of urbanization hand-in-hand. Speaking on a sidenote to the animism of the Ashanti, he remarks that many traditional communities[18], while tolerant of and even enthusiastic to adopt chemical fertilizer in the harvesting of cocoa, as it seemingly augments commercial output without any adverse byproducts, have no knowledge of the potential for pollution in the use of such fertilizers. "These communities" he claims, "are simply not aware of such processes as chemical runoff, due to problems in the infrastructure of information dissemination". Issah speculates offhandedly that were traditional communities more cognizant of such deleterious side effects as chemical runoff, they might be more hesitant to adopt chemical fertilizer, for fear of infuriating the spirits and sowing the seeds for imminent calamity.

James Ayarik, mentioned above in the context of the SFDR program, speaks to a correlative, but slightly different tune as regards the devaluation of a cultural footing obscured and rendered increasingly beyond reach in the rush of modernization. Elsewhere an author of a thesis on the influence of the West on African politics, it is Ayarik's staunch opinion that Ghanaian post-colonial democracy "started on the wrong foot"—quickly seeking to institute the republican principles of its previous colonizers without adapting that republicanism to African communal values. His conversations on the matter are reminiscent of the work of many scholars writing in the same issue area. Over a decade ago, an article submitted by two such scholars posited: "Africa is essentially a communal society and it is this communalism, which defines people's perceptions of their rights, their freedoms and their responsibilities. In this respect, liberal democracy offers a form of political participation, which is markedly different from an African concept of participation, which is firmly linked to communalism" (Oakley and Clegg, 1999).

Within the political pandemonium generated by the cultural disconnect, many a positive indigenous attribute of politics is lost, Ayarik believes. The queen mother, for example, long an incredibly influential woman in the political limelight, and one more-often-than-not with the final say in the stooling of a chief, was perhaps pre-modern Ghana's greatest example of a woman in power. "No woman nowadays, parliamentary member or otherwise, occupies as powerful a political niche as did the queen mother." Citing the history of Ghana's political modernization, Ayarik implicates the first president, Kwame

[18] In this case, he was speaking of the Asante, of which the Akan is reputed to be the most significant splinter constituent (see Valsecchi, 2001)

Nkrumah, as having scrapped much of the traditional authority to which the chieftaincies were still privy even under colonial rule. Having involved themselves too treacherously with colonial powers, in a manner that facilitated slavery at worst and perpetuated European domination at best (Abayie, 1997), it was the opinion of nationalists that these powers could no longer remain. While the curving of traditional authority did alleviate much of the ethnic tensions that survived colonialism, the radical altercation with and alteration of communalistic competences ensured, according to Ayarik, that recuperative development in modern Ghana would be painstakingly slow.

Peter Brown is the Deputy Director of Center for the Continuing Education at the University of Cape Coast. His educational background is defined by impressive tenures in African Studies. Ethnologically speaking, he identifies himself as an Akan and is equally an expert in the culture. Beyond all else, Brown laments the swift and steady disappearance of traditional African culture, the merits of which he enumerates eagerly to all that ask. "The African is a man stuck in suspension," he states firmly, "he has forgotten his own culture and does not understand the one brought to him by the European." It is for this reason, more than any other, that Brown believes development has been so depressingly downtempo in Africa. "If we don't understand what was brought to us, but we cannot remember what we had before, what do have now?" The question, he quickly adds, is not rhetorical: "It seems to me that we have absolutely nothing." In culture, in religion, in lifestyle, it is Brown's staunch opinion that Africans have gone awry, since they have not taken the time to learn from where they came. Much of the issue and injury lies in the realm of language. "I do a little exercise before class" he muses, "I ask my students—undergraduate, graduate, postgraduate—to write the English alphabet, which of course they do in fifteen seconds. Then I ask them to write the alphabet of their mother tongue…" He pauses for effect. "Usually only two or three in a class of one hundred can respond accurately." Here Brown draws wide his rhetorical underscore. As a student and professor of African studies, he has come to believe there is an esoteric mysticism in Akan spirituality[19] lost on many modern members of the Akan ethnic exactly for the reason that

[19] Much of this mysticism pertains to the spiritual composition of man—his "dance body", his "vital body", his "desire body" and his "mind". Man, according to Akan mysticism, is a lost being, which has entered, exited and reentered the world since the dawn of existence. The world in which he lives is not his own, and is therefore not his to do with however he pleases. Accordingly, the way one lives on earth speaks about one's character. In what might be comparable to the final judgment, three days after his corporeal death, the Akan man undergoes an inspection of this character.

they do no understand the intricacies of their own language. It is this mysticism, according to Brown, which holds within it the true "kernel" of environmental conservation.

Brown is equally confident that such a mysticism is inherent in Christianity, but its meaning has lost too significant an amount of shade and substance for it to be any longer intelligible to the average believer. All this he considers the result of all that is lost in translation. He employs quite the apropos analogy to illustrate his claims: "Tell a student to do complex arithmetic in a language he has only recently learned." Perhaps he might be able—at best—to count, but he certainly cannot compute the most complex of algorithms. Brown likens this inability to the Ghanaian adoption of Christianity. "We adopted Christianity but we do not read between the lines to find the hidden meanings. We memorize the bible, but do not learn it." Without an understanding of the spiritualism in either his inherited culture or the culture he has embraced, the average Ghanaian, grieves Brown, is deprived of the impetus for environmental preservation. Brown offers yet another example, this one infinitely more involved than his last.

Nyamesem[20], in the Akan language, translates roughly to God's word. This is the name the Akan give to the stories they tell; "story to the Akan is equivalent to scripture," Brown claims. "Without his language, the man of the Akan cannot access his own scripture." Though he advises in advance that no foreigner can ever capture the full sum and substance of an Akan story translated into the vernacular, he extends one story as a friendly gesture and as evidence of the inextricable relationship between Akan mythology and an environmentally conscious mindset. The following section contains a summary of that story—paraphrased and abridged, of course, but as realistically recounted as practicality and interpretation permit.

IX. Anansesem & Asase Yaa: Lessons from Mother Earth in Akan Mythology

"In the upbringing of an Akan child", begins UCC Professor Peter Brown, "stories are the basis of morals". Morals prescribed include, for example, the obligation to always aid one's neighbors as well as the necessity of preserving one's "sacral essence" (e.g. the imperative to renounce masturbation, condoms and casual sex). Some of the most gripping—and

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[20] It should be noted that there are numerous manifestations of *Nyame*—the supreme being, the most common of which is *Nyame* of the sky. The most powerful is that of *onyamekompon Kwame*, a name that is normally not spoken aloud. This manifestation of *Nyame* inhabits a man's sacral essence (i.e. his sperm). Orgasm/ejaculation, therefore, as in many Western cultures, is both an apotheosis of man's material and spiritual essence.

morally engaging—stories revolve around a character named *Asanse. Asanse* in the Akan language is a word of multiple meanings. To the *Abruni* (or white people), Brown claims, *Asanse* means "spider", yet given the arcane quality of every word in Akan, this, of course is not the sole meaning. Oftentimes the ethnological milieu of an *asanse* tale ultimately determines its meaning. Without further adieu, here is one such story:

"What I'm about to tell you is not true, but do not take it as such. Instead, take a little something from it. Kweku Asanse's village was once in a crisis of famine. Kweku Asanse had a son named Asansesem, only a small boy at the time of his coming adventure. Asansesem was troubled by the famine and so decided posthaste to travel far away and find a solution. Making headway into his journey, Asansesem eventually stumbled upon a palm tree, underneath which lay three nuts. Asansesem was very hungry and decided to indulge himself. Upon cracking open the first nut, the contents swiftly jumped out and into a nearby hole in the ground. The second and third followed the form of the first. Asansesem was quite puzzled and made up his mind to investigate.

"Upon entering the hole in the ground, he found a vast land of inestimable wonder. Exploring and exploring, he eventually heard the voice of an Old Woman, saying 'No one comes here. Why are you here?' Before he could answer, the Old Woman suddenly materialized before him. She had a very large nose—a GIGANTIC nose. 'Please, madam, I have come to find help for my village as it is hurting tenderly from famine.' The Old Woman examined him and said, pointing, 'There is a field of yams. Only dig at the trees that say, "Don't dig me! Don't dig me"; do not dig at the trees that say "Dig me! Dig me!"' Asansesem obeyed. Upon digging at the first tree, he found a huge yam. He was jubilant and rushed to the Old Woman. 'Old Woman,' he said, 'I would like to make fufu! How should I do it?' The Old Woman instructed him to peel the yams and boil only the peels and to cast away the white matter inside. Asansesem obeyed. Then, since there was no mortar in sight, the Old Woman instructed Asansesem to pound the boiled peels in her nostrils to render the fufu. Asansesem obeyed. Asansesem and the Old Woman soon feasted on fufu. This carried on for many days and Asansesem grew pleasantly plump and full of vitality. However, he began to worry for his village, so he asked the Old Woman, 'Please, madam, I would like to help my village. How should I do it?' The Old Woman directed him to a room full of drums—some minute, some medium-sized some enormous—and instructed him to pick one. Asansesem picked the smallest drum, which could easily fit in the bottom of his pocket. 'Now,' said the Old Woman, 'whenever you are in want, simply bang the drum and say, "If you don't know how to do it, do it! If you do know how to do it, don't!"' Asansesem acknowledged the Old Woman's instructions and left the marvelous land.

During his return journey, Asansesem became hungry. He slowly played the drum he had picked and repeated the words he was instructed to repeat. Soon, as if a cornucopia, all the food Asansesem could ever desire filled the drum. He rushed to show his village and all were amazed at his findings and rejoiced in the plentitude his discovery soon provided for all. Asansesem was hailed as a hero.

Kweku Asanse, of course, was jealous of his son's findings. 'How could so small a boy accomplish a feat so great?' he asked himself. He desired greatly to find this marvelous land his son had visited and so set off. When he came to the tree, underneath which lay the same three nuts, he rushed to crack each open and did not even wait to crack the third before he entered the hole. Running through the marvelous land, Kweku Asanse came upon the Old Woman. 'Old Woman,' he demanded, "where is the field of yams?" She pointed and gave Kweku Asanse the same instructions she had given to Asansesem. Kweku Asanse disobeyed and dug only under the trees saying, 'Dig me! Dig me!' Only after he had dug under hundreds of trees and was faint with exhaustion did he heed the words of the Old Woman. Upon finding the first humungous yam, Kweku Asanse became obsessed with avarice. He decided to find the most humungous yam by digging under every tree in the field, and so he did. When he was satisfied, he brought his yam to the Old Woman, who told him to boil only the peels of the yam. 'That is stupid,' said Kweku Asanse, 'I will do it my way.' And so he did, boiling only the white matter and defecating on the peels whenever he saw fit. After days and days, the white matter would not boil and finally Kweku Asanse conceded. He whipped the fecal matter from the peels and boiled them as the Old Woman had instructed. With the finished product, he came back to the Old Woman and said, 'Where is the mortar so that I might pound these peels into fufu?'. The Old Woman responded that there was no mortar and that Kweku Asanse must pound the fufu in her nostrils. 'That is stupid,' repeated Kweku Asanse, 'I will go look for a mortar.' And so he did. Upon finding nothing, he conceded again, but rushed about his pounding in such a way that he broke the nose of the Old Woman and the blood ran into his fufu. Upon eating what he had made, Kweku Asanse immediately demanded that he be shown the room with the drums. The Old Woman acquiesced and Kweku Asanse quickly grabbed the largest drum.

Without thanking the Old Woman, he left the marvelous and set about on the return journey. When soon he hungered, he stopped and played the drum, not knowing the words he had to speak. Instead of food, a thousand whips materialized in mid-air and began to beat him. Seeing this spectacle, a bird flying by took pity on Kweku Asanse and said, 'Let it be finished.' And it was finished. Kweku Asanse was angry and did not thank the bird. He decided to vent his frustrations on his village. When he returned, he gathered all the community into one compound and with them gathered inside, he played the drum and ran

out. As in the instance before, a thousand whips materialized in mid-air and began to beat the villagers, who screamed in agony and could not escape. Kweku Asanse laughed at them from outside the compound. Seeing this spectacle, the same bird flying by took pity on the villagers and said, 'Let it be finished!' And it was finished. The whips gone, the villagers became incensed and chased Kweku Asanse all about the land, until finally the only place he could escape the hatred of their blows was the ceiling. And there he stayed for all his days. That is the end of the story."

The obvious interpretation, of course, is the same we might give to the tale of Echo and Narcissus. Caves reverberate all sound exactly for the reason that Echo the nymph banished herself there, condemned eternally to repeat all that she hears. The narcissus flower droops despondently over running rivers, as that is where the gods transformed Narcissus, infatuated with his reflection in the water. The spider, *asanse*, clings to the ceiling as that is oftentimes the only place the community cannot catch him, and is therefore the only place he is safe. This explanation is incomplete, at best, and wholly superficial. In the same way as all mythology, the metaphysical and the moral—obscure as they may be—encapsulate themselves within the obvious. Echo teaches us that we cannot simply mimic others should ever we aspire to have meaningful interpersonal relations, while Narcissus personifies—however anthropomorphically—the psychological paralysis of conceit and self-absorption. Such elements as these are the very patchwork of Akan mythology. Let's vivisect all the above.

Kweku Asanse epitomizes the cunning in all of us and is invoked whenever one man deceives another; Asansesem epitomizes the righteousness. The Old Woman is nothing less than *Asase Yaa*, or mother earth, as it were. While Asansesem obeys even the most perplexing ordinances of mother earth without protest—and secures himself prosperity in the process, Kweku Asanse proves himself too vindictive and lustful to merit all the benefits the earth has to give and can have no closure from the torment he brings upon himself. Asansesem takes only what he needs: one yam at a time and the smallest drum necessary to impress the spirit powers. Kweku Asanse, on the other hand, rushes to gluttony to the detriment of his health. He defecates on the peel of the yam, which happens to be the most nutritious fragment of all, and while pounding his fufu, is overtaken by enthusiasm and subsequently pollutes his food with the blood of mother earth, violating in simultaneity a variety of taboos[21]. Scornful and rancorous, Kweku Asanse earns well the thousand whips that beat him, but rather than repenting, he looks only to revenge. The

[21] For comparable interdictions on the mixing of aliments, one need only look to Leviticius

overarching ethic of the myth is that, in times of desperate want, mother earth will always provide if only we listen and learn from her.

Akan mythology is rife with such stories, "but," admonishes Professor Brown, "just as the meaning was not clear to you until I explained it, so the meaning would be unclear to any who didn't take the time to learn the Akan language—regardless of whether or not it was his mother tongue." Brown expresses himself disquiet as to the future of myths such as these—myths whose meaning will be lost unless the few who embrace their native culture become the many. "We won't be the ones to suffer when the meaning of these is lost"—consigned to memory irretrievable—"it will be our children who will bear the brunt and bruises of all our sins."

X. The Convalescence of Culture & Conservation: The Challenges, Triumphs and Ramifications of Gearing Indigenous Institutions and Beliefs towards Sustainability

One is naturally suspicious as to the prevalence of many traditional Akan religio-cultural artifacts, as they are—for the most part—indicative of what many 20th century scholars jettisoned as old wives' tales and some sort of primordial paganism, defined by "fetishes" (Eshun, 2009). In as much as contemporary religion is concerned, it would be easy to marginalize Akan religious sentiment—particularly in the parallax of modern Islam and Christianity, which dominate the region—as mere superstition: heathen, superannuated and bound for extinction. Indeed, this was the fashion, as mentioned before, that many traditional African religions were abused scholastically until the advent of more enlightened perspectives on the terms "primitive" and "traditional" (*ibid)*.

Unfortunately, adherents to the traditional religion are not without issues and have sometimes encountered troubles if too stubbornly they have held to unspoken custom. An anecdote offered by MOFA regional instructor T.T. Laryea paints a somewhat saddening picture of the ideological consequence animism still possesses amongst the Akan, when left unchecked by education. A few years after he had assumed his position, Laryea was informed of a guinea worm epidemic in a village in the Northeastern corner of the Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese district. The grotesquely swollen limbs and chronic fatigue caused by the worm had debilitated much of the community, and made the realization of even the most elementary chores impossible. Alarmed as to the implications, and aware that the most probable source incriminated in the spread of the worm was the local water source, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture intervened, constructing a clean water well for the community. Laryea returned for the purposes of quality control a few months later only to find that, astoundingly enough, no one had yet opted to take advantage of the new well.

"This is the river our fathers and grandfathers used to fill buckets all their lives," the community allegedly offered as an excuse. After more probing, Laryea found even that various members of the community believed the guinea worm to be a curse, brought on by poor comportment and irreverence for the ancestors. It was the augmentation of moral standards that would end the epidemic, not the adaptation to a new water source. Laryea shakes his head as he concludes, "It took them two years, and significant convincing on our part, to finally impel them to switch."

Elsewhere is the issue of the compatibility of traditionalism with its contemporary competitors. Sackey (1998) cites a case in Abrakrampa, wherein Christian groups resisted the cultural compellence to participate in a community project sponsored and facilitated by the local *asafo* group. The Christian groups had refused cooperation on the grounds that they could not morally condone the activities of a group consistently implicated in so-called "idol worship" and animism. While the embroiling conflict was eventually quelled, such occurrences are commonplace enough to merit discretion in future cases.

These sort of confrontations aside, a profusion of case studies have been published providing ample precedent in the area of indigenous inroads to sustainable development. Three shall be recounted forthwith in chronological order of publication date: that of Jacques Willson (2000) from the University of Ghana, Legon, who studied the potency of the Dwamba, Dago and Otuam *asafo* companies in a plurality of developmental projects; that of Stephen Kendri & Bernard Guri (2007)[22], who compared and contrasted the synergy—or lack thereof—between two district governments and the constituent community's *asafo* companies; and finally that of Edwin Eshun (2009) at Queen's University of Canada, who analyzed the conservation efforts of the Okyehene Environment Foundation in the Akyem-Abuakwa traditional area from the religio-cultural perspective of the chieftaincy there (a chieftaincy responsible for the inauguration of the project and the enforcement of the taboos surrounding the delegated area of conservation). Each contains within its contents a valuable lesson as regards the syncopation of sustainable development with indigenous sensitivities and social structures.

Likening the *asafo* company to something of a "populist organization", Willson extols the virtue of the indigenous outfit in breaching the divide between government and popular interests left in the absence of a dexterous—or even reasonably responsive—framework of civil society in Ghana. "The [asafo] give the masses, especially woman,

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[22] Belonging, respectively, to the University of Cape Coast's Center for Development Studies and Accra's Center for Indigenous Knowledge and Organizational Development; many of the theoretical aspects were based on their findings and conjecture

mouthpieces" to voice their concerns, Willson writes; "they are the dominant organization attracting the commitment of the fisher folk…[and] they are the dominant force in Fante communities". Effective both as representatives and relevant actors, the asafo are the third most powerful element in the Akan hierarchy, after the *ahenfo* (the divisional chiefs) and the *mpanyinfo* (the elders). While all community members become *asafo* at the age of eighteen, initiation is required if one wishes to prove himself worthy of merit or title within the ranks of the company. In what he saw as a robust mélange of "traditionalism and modernism", Willson observed as the *asafo* companies he studied aided in "keeping the neighborhood clean by clearing roads and sweeping the towns" and found in most instances that the conduct of affairs by the *asafo* "create[d] a congenial atmosphere for the participation of all citizens in local government administration under… decentralization". It is this last note that should be underscored: with the march of decentralization proving more and more inert, the *asafo* companies embody one of the most promising opportunities for the fruitful transference of administrative faculty to local and indigenous organizations. At the time of his thesis' publication, Willson's shared the sentiment with some that the *asafo* should contest local elections if not adequately represented as stakeholders in the MMDAs, though this conviction is by no means common amongst the indigenous populous.

Kendri & Guri (2007) expanded on the estimation of the *asafo* as a civil society organization, facilitating the achievement of sustainable goals and amplifying the struggle against rural poverty. They accentuated the continued cruciality of the *asafo* in the resolution of crises within the community—ranging from natural disaster (i.e. inundation by rain, or intense drought) to the disappearance of a community member in the forest (at which point the company is responsible for the formation of a search party). To Kendri & Guri, seven particular aspects of the organizational makeup of rural communities contribute to the resiliency and resolution of the *asafo* institution as a whole, elevating them to a position of advantage in the process of decentralization. These include:

- "a system for local governance based on well-established leadership and consultative structures (chiefs, queen mothers, elders, opinion leaders)
- "a system for an annual assessment of the needs of the community, planning self-initiatives, mobilizing (in general), [as well as a]….
- "a system for mobilizing the youth and community at large to check abuses of power by the chief and elders as well as mobilizing resources for development…"

Assuming as precedent a case study in Northern Ghana conducted by Kendri & Abana in 2001, in which it was determined that a majority of externally established "water user committees" were operating ineffectively and could not meet the demands of the

community they served, they analyzed the actions of two *asafo* companies: that of Mankessim Nkanta and that of Akutuase. Fixating deliberately on the duality of government at the local level, both in its positive and negative manifestations, the researchers found that while the former collaborated productively with local governmental institutions in the "building of public schools, clinics, clearing the village of weeds, keeping a clean environment and dredging the water ponds", the latter—based near a highly forested area plagued by illegal logging—came into conflict and contention with the Forestry Commission, operating outside the knowledge of the *asafo* and colluding little with the traditional authorities in the area. While the developmental projects of the *asafo* in the Mankessim Nkanta traditional area flourished, progress proved painful in the battle against the degradation of the forests at Akutuase. Kendie & Guri intimated astutely that policymakers in the field of decentralization should take heed of such instances, both the beneficial and the undesirable.

Edwin Eshun assumes a slightly different approach in his investigation of the common ground between conservation and the environmental ethic of the indigenous Akan. Dissecting the idiosyncracies of the Okyeman Environment Foundation. The Foundation was established in 2001 by Okyehene Ammoatia Ofori Panin and was designed, first and foremost, to "promote, cultivate, sponsor, develop, aid and advance the public interest in and appreciation of environmental and natural preservation and protection" (quoted in Eshun, 2009)". However, as a "representative of the ancestors…mandated to protect the environment through the performance of traditional rituals associated with the environment" Okyehene could not help but defer to the authoritative spirit powers in the dedication of his foundation, declaring: "this is necessarily and rightfully because of our great appellation Kwaebibrem- the Dark Forest. This historical appellation is fast eroding inherit due to the depletion of our forest resources. Our rivers and water bodies are drying up or being polluted. Chain saw operators and even legal logging activities are becoming a problem...It is our intention to stop or minimize these problems". Apart from the *asafo*, it is perhaps the chieftaincy that has proven the most influential indigenous institution in environmental safeguarding across Ghana. Pledging oaths to protect and preserve all traditional taboos, totems and sacred groves over which he presides (*ibid)*, a chief simultaneously pledges to protect and preserve all soil structure, water bodies, biodiversity and woodland units within his jurisdiction. Little academic thought apart from the few aforementioned treatises have afforded credence to this notion; the pledge taken for the chieftaincy is a pledge taken by no agricultural extension officer, no agent of the Environmental Protection Agency, no representative in the MMDA. While disputes and disagreements might accompany the imposition of environmentally conservative taboos on

any individual or collective[23], the pledge of the chief levies perhaps the most robust constraint on environmentally detrimental excess in modern Ghana.

XI. Big Brother's Hesitancy to Launch: The Environmental Protection Agency in the Midst of Decentralization, Effective or Not?

"The EPA does not have all the answers," says William K. Hayfron-Acquah the Principal Program Officer at the office of the Environmental Protection Agency after a brief bout of introductions, "And I don't believe that anyone does". Under 1999's Act 462, the niche the EPA occupies is one primarily geared towards 'developing technical guidelines for relevant institutions' Hayfron-Acquah claims. As he describes it, the EPA is not diametrically involved in environmental protection at the local level, but instead adopts the "networking approach" to the management of environmental affairs, working with and training the 170 MMDAs across the nation, in order that each may appreciate and personalize responses to environmental preservation's numerous predicaments. Preparing terms of reference, as well as workshops for sensitization and the augmentation of general awareness, the EPA assists MMDAs in reconciling their roles as both "players and referees" in the campaign for conservation. While EPA officials do reside on Development Planning Committees at each of the District Assemblies (EPA 2012), "environmental issues are relatively new in Ghana" and a considerable level of expertise is required to address each case individually and effectively, especially since every solution must be as unique as the conundrum it is designed to solve. With so dynamic an array of issues, the EPA occupies itself for the most part with the formulation and dissemination of information on "adaptational and mitigating measures" (*ibid*).

With these measures in place, then and only then do they enjoin local governance the technical specificities fine-tuned to face the situation at hand. While to many local governments, "waste management is not a policymaking priority" some district assemblies have charged the figurative chimera at the gates. Adjeu-Kotuku near Nsawam in the Eastern Region is one such local government. Currently undertaking an impressive operation, the local government has designed and is in the process of contracting and constructing one of Ghana's first recycling facilities, modeled after similar establishments

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[23] See again Eshun (2009) for a more comprehensive commentary on the conflict between rights of religious expression and the right of the chieftaincies to enforce traditional laws as guaranteed by the 1992 Ghanaian constitution

operated by private waste management experts ZoomLion LTD[24]. The plans contain numerous safeguards in the name of sustainability, including a landfill with clay at its base to prevent the dissolution of chemicals into surrounding soil. The undertaking was inspired, in part, by EPA guidelines on the proper execution of the environmental assessment process (EAP), though most of the credit remains with the local government.

In Metropolitan areas, the EPA has advised different precautions in environmental engineering and the progress of decentralization. The most pressing challenge faced by Metropolitan assemblies is that of waste management zoning, wherein different zones are allocated to various public and private waste management institutions. ZoomLion constitutes just one of the latter, though undoubtedly one of the most conspicuous. “More than anywhere else, environmental consciousness and protection is a shared responsibilities in our cities,” contends Hayfron-Acquah. “The average urban Ghanaian generates .054 kilograms of waste per day”. With so much of an influence on the accumulation of waste, every Ghanaian must consider himself accountable in its disposal. “Those who wake up not knowing where they will sleep”, however, “will not always care where they dispose of their trash” regrets the Program Officer.

Hayfron-Acquah seems particularly resigned as he discusses the issue. His reaction is not irrational. The sad, but certainly not senseless fact is that poverty represents perhaps the most insurmountable obstacle to waste management in modern Ghana. Nowhere else is this more discernible than in “Sodom & Gomorrah”, a squatter camp of sixty-thousand plus inhabitants situated directly atop the old site of the Kaele Lagoon just outside of downtown Accra. While the EPA has consistently lobbied for the removal of these squatters, they represent an impressive quantity of electors and are, therefore, left relatively undisturbed. The presence of the squatters, living in absolute destitution without the least hint of sanitary facilities, has rendered utterly infeasible the restoration of what was once a vital freshwater body and shown the weakness inherent in the quota of Ghanaian bureaucracy laboring in the domain of conservation. Handcuffed, handicapped and frustrated, the EPA has too little a proportion of political clout to pursue its agendas. As with many of those interviewed throughout the course of this research, Hayfron-Acquah agrees with the belief that only reinvestment in value systems with inherent environmental ethics will bring about change on a scale significant enough to deter the damages that ignorance has made so consistent an occurrence.

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[24] The mission statement of Zoomlion is exceptionally compelling and deserves well the further attention of the reader: http://www.zoomlionghana.com/

XII. Natural Infusions: Sustainable Development vis-à-vis Social Studies/Storytelling and the Lack of a Designated Curriculum for Environmental Education

"Environmental degradation, air and water pollution, soil structure—we do teach it all;" claim Lawrencia Andoa and Richard Bosu, educators in the social studies department at the Abusec Senior Secondary School in Abura-Dunkwa, "but we have to blend our normal curriculum with environmental studies because there is no specific allocation of time for it." Both express a sincere desire to educate their students in good stewardship. "The infrastructure of conservation is absent, but the incentive *is* there." They consider themselves accountable as teachers to kindle that sentiment however possible, if ever it arises and endures.

Issac Wirdu is a counselor at the same senior secondary school; he coordinates the HIV/AIDs educational program there and also facilitates the STARS (Students Taking Action Reaching for Success) club. No nurse or health class supplements the material he is obliged to cover as counselor, coordinator and facilitator. Speaking in reference to environmental degradation, Wirdu first mentions the dysmorphia of cultural heritage as a significant factor in the environmental threats that loom over Ghana. Such crises are exacerbated, moreover, by deficiencies in the funding and policymaking necessary to enable neighborhood cleanup and the proper disposal of rubbish. Few, he claims, are the institutions like ZoomLion, the private enterprise that pioneered waste management in Ghana. Asked what sort of cultural mechanism could be revived in correlation with environmental protectionism, Wirdu responds quite similarly to Kyerama of Tweramponn Traditionals: "Music is the universal means of communication; teach our children lessons about the environment through music and you'll have a much greater degree of impact." His comments are particularly interesting given the most popular function of most modern *asafo* companies as the musicians who perform at community festivals and parades.

Isaac Beecham teaches 6th years at Abrakampa Methodist Primary School. Passionate about environmental health, he wonders often what he can do, in his limited capacity, to ameliorate the status quo. "We are all caretakers of the environment," he believes, "but we have grown negligent of our duty to take care of the earth." It is a belief he does his best to transmit to his students. Debilitated by the lack of a structured curriculum, he finds it difficult to balance subject matters in such a way as to acclimate children to the principle of preservation. Occasionally, he operates a local radio station, and with some degree of funding, he aspires someday to use his position to circulate information on proper waste management practices and the indispensability of caution in the agro-

industry. It is a dream he sees himself as far from realizing, but "nevertheless," he claims, "I will not stop trying for the sake of my students and my children."

Before he rose to the position of Deputy Director at the Center for Continuing Education, Peter Brown (whose conversations on the deterioration of Akan culture and the alarming lack of familiarity of the average Akan with his or her own mythology may be referenced above) he taught for many years in the Department of Primary Education, itself associated with the well renowned Center for Improving the Quality of Primary Education in Ghana (CIQPREG). Dispelling all illusions to the contrary, Brown is quick to claim: "there is absolutely no curriculum for environmental education here in Ghana." If ever it is actually taught, it is apparently taught at the discretion of the teachers. The lack of educational infrastructure unavoidably warrants the almost total neglect of the topic; Ghana's educators, it seems, are completely disabled when it comes to educating children about the environment. According to Brown, however, this is not the crux of the administrative calamity. "The cultural apparatus of the African man ensures sustainability in his interactions in nature, but the African man is not educated in his own culture and therefore does not hold the same reverence for his land that his ancestors once did." In other words, continues Brown, the area of greatest concern is not environmental education, but is instead the gap left in a child's intellectual development by the failure of the government to include cultural education as part of the mandatory core curriculum. "Within the culture is our own salvation; all we need do is educate ourselves and our children." Quantitative analyses into the matter would be appropriate.

XIV. Amansuri Rising: A Case Study of the Cooperative Between the Ghana Wildlife Society and the Nzema People of Nzulezu in Western Region

The Amansuri Wetlands are "a complex of peat, swamp and mangrove forests, flood plains, and sandy shores with streams, rivers, fresh water lakes, lagoons and the sea" as defining environmental features (Ghana WestCoast: Amansuri, 2009). Home to a myriad of flora and fauna, the Wetlands have now been designated as a reserve, signaling a marvelous victory for the myriad of lobbyists that lobbied for its protection and preservation (GWS, 2011). Home equally to the Nzema[25], its native inhabitants—and an ethnic subset of the Akan, as mentioned before—the site represents somewhat of an apotheosis in the relationship between indigenous institutions and environmental protectionist cooperatives.

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[25] For a more profound and revelatory delineation of Nzema genealogy and culture, see Valsecchi, 2001

Investigations into the biodiversity of Amansuri began as early as 1981. More than a decade and a half later, the Ghana Wildlife Society began to consider the area for an intervention in the name of community development through entrepreneurial ecotourism and environmental sustainability. According to Daniel Awuha, director of the Visitor Centre and leading executive in the GWS, a great deal of sensitization was necessary to convince the residents of Nzulezo, a stilt-village built entirely on the freshwater Amansuri lagoon, to adopt the measures thought by the GWS to be the most conducive to conservation. The project began officially in 2000, much due to the impressive influence and enthusiasm of the region's paramount chief, Awualey Ano Adyee III. Most fascinating about the Amansuri Conservation Project is the instrumentality of the indigenous authorities in enforcing the standards of preservation—standards enforced mostly by the mechanism of traditional taboos and adherence to the "animism"—to which the traditionally religious subscribed and continue to subscribe. Through the engineering of numerous microcredit schemas, advised by Microsfere, a French NGO operating in the area of microfinance, and the facilitation of the chieftaincy, GWS was impressively effective in creating a system, whereby all profits generated through tourism to the area were delivered directly to the community itself—all in a fashion kind to the environment and entirely sustainable.

A private organization, the Ghana Wildlife Society did not receive even a miniscule amount of government funding. "All conservation efforts"—including the establishment of a direct waterway between Nzulezo and Beyin to maximize, in a sustainable way, the circulation of tourists to and from the sites of interest—"have been paid for by the contributions of foreign donors" Awuha affirms. Most of these donors have come in the form of governments within the European Commission, namely longtime donor the Netherlands as well as France and Italy. Other donors of interest include the Cooperation for the Development of Emerging Countries (COPSE) and the Italian Ethnological Mission in Ghana (IEMG). Despite its manifest success, the Project has still not been allotted any sort of government grant—a fact that augurs poorly in Ghana's professed struggle to decentralize and empower those at the local and municipal level.

Of paramount significance in the prosperity of the program has been the activity of the traditional authorities, particularly that of the paramount chief himself. Adyee III has consistently been the driving force behind the project, interpreting his mandate as Chief to include sustaining the ecological integrity of his people's homeland. Examples of his interdictions in the maintenance of that mandate include that on the use of lead on fishing nets (which effects the alkalinity of the water body in which it's used), overexploitation of

local raffia palm and all fishing activities on Thursday[26], considered to be the day given to the local deity, *Amanzule*[27]. Paramount Chief Adyee's subordinates have been equally, if not exceedingly, influential in the enactment of numerous sustainable policies and exactment of fines should regulations be violated. Punishment may sometimes be so severe as to include bans on fishing, the predominant occupation in Nzulezo and its surrounding areas.

As regards the leadership of Nzulezo itself, around which most of the tourism revolves, Chief (*Belegbunli*) Kabena Takilika VIII and his father before him, Emenlemah VII, have both proven themselves paragons in the pursuance of sustainability and community development vis-à-vis traditional-indigenous mechanisms of policymaking, formulation and implementation. According to the headmaster of Nzulezo's small, community-funded primary school, Edward Kweha, Chief Takilika in particular has brought about the sort of change one might consider "inspirational". Since his enstoolment, Takilika has collaborated with Zoomlion in the buttressing of the community's waste management infrastructure, AIESEC Legon in the building of a school, one Slovenian NGO (whose name escaped the headmaster) in the addition of Nzulezo to the most proximal electrical gridwork[28], and innumerable other donor organizations in the sensitization of Nzulezo's inhabitants to the challenges that still face the particularities of the Amansuri Project in their area.

As with those challenges, the more-than-promising quotient of the Project in its entirety is not without its remainders. At its height, recalls the Director of the Visitor Centre, the Project used to encompass a "Marine Turtle Task Force", which, due to lack of sufficient funding and the enthusiasm of a few of the seaside communities, has fallen into shambles. Chronic underfunding is not new to projects of the Ghanaian Wildlife Society (GWS, 2011) and budgeting has always caused tensions.

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[26] Of equal ethnological and historical significance on Thursday is the commemoration of a historic victory, wherein many of Nzulezo's enemies drowned in the lagoon (Ghana WestCoast, 2011)

[27] Local mythology holds that this deity, the deity of the water bodies that surround Nzulezo, became involved in an altercation with the deity of another water body nearby. The spat, as it were, turned the water black. Indeed, most of the water in and around the mangrove swamps of Amansuri is darkly opaque, though contemporary science has rationalized this on the basis of the high proportion of humic acid in the water.

[28] Asked as to why the chief would consider electricity necessary in so traditional a community, the headmaster remarked that children had been learning in dimly-lit conditions, which was not at all healthy for their eyesight

Whatever the impediments and complications, the Amansuri Project, taken cumulatively, is nothing less than admirable, particularly in its incorporation of the traditional authorities, which to the Nzema have always been elements of permanence. Nowhere is the cohesion of the project so visible as in its exhibition at the Fort Appollonia Museum, the restoration of which was completed, for the most part, with the assistance of the aforementioned Italian Ethnological Mission in Ghana. In the dedication of the museum, the society writes that they hope the museum to be, beyond all else, "a real point of encounter, a dialogue between the local self-representation and the ethnographic perspective". Steven Ayema-Aka, assistant curator of the museum, is in complete accord. "The mechanism for any conservation is culture," Ayema-Aka states proudly, "to keep what was and keep it sacred—that is the nature of all culture" and, as he implies it, the nature of all conservation as well. The Fort at Appollonia has indeed shown itself to be a point of encounter—of all stakeholders involved in the Amansuri Project: the people of Nzulezo, the district assembly, the Ghanaian Wildlife Society, the academics. It is tantalizing to consider that was once so exclusively a symbol of European elitism has now become the gathering point of so conscientious a collective of individuals with diversity of interests, but solidarity in the intention to preserve a gift they hope to see passed on as long as time allows.

Awuah-Nyamekye (2007) writes: "In the view of traditional Ghanaian people, sustainable development is any human activity that: a) aims at affirming life in a holistic way, b) enables every generation to ensure its survival; and c) enables generations to hand over the survival potential to the future generation as directed by religion." The Amansuri Conservation Project demonstrates cogently the manner in which this mindset transcribes fluently to environmental protectionism. While the religious aspect is not forced upon non-adherent residents[29], they are obliged nonetheless to respect the spiritual proclivities of their neighbors and are therefore prohibited from violating the taboos those same neighbors believe violating would bring strife upon the community at large. However stringent, the provisos have proven innocuous enough so as to leave the non-traditionalists unperturbed and even, in fact, supportive of the measures taken by the chief under his mandate. In what is a promising and propitious trend—at least as described by assistant curator Steven Ayema-Aka—the more political and popular momentum the project generates, the greater the quantity and quality of resources to which it gains access. These resources come mostly at the good graces of foreign investors, taking interest in the sustainability and structural soundness of the project.

[29] Edward Kweha notes that traditionalists, in fact, are not even in the majority in Nzulezo; the predominant denomination is in fact Methodist Christianity

The governmental mechanism of environmental protection in Ghana is drastically mismanaged and devoid of adequate budgeting. Indeed, one of the most pressing issues in the process of decentralization is that of under-resourcing. As Amanor and Brown (2003) describe it, "within the district assemblies the main environmental body is the District Environmental Management Sub-Committee (DEMC). To date, the performance of the District Assemblies on the environmental front has been weak. "This is partly a reflection of the chronic under-resourcing of the whole system, and its resulting incapacity" (quoted in Awuah-Nyamekye, 2007). Administrators might well ruminate on the favorable outcomes of the Amansuri Conservation Project in effectively furthering decentralization—and furthering in such a fashion as is true to its purpose: empowering the people and rendering service to communities disenchanted with the sluggishness of national programs.

To put this case study in perspective, one should remember that the culture of the Nzema people is nothing less than intimately comparable to that of the Akan, to whom they are related ethnographically—in all aspects, really, except that of language (in which instance they are mutually unintelligible, strangely enough). With comparable hierarchies of sociological leadership, identical indigenous institutions and an inherent cultural appreciation for the environment, the Akan of the Central Region (and with the diaspora of its members across Ghana, the Akan of Ghana at large), might well learn from the laudable example of Amansuri. Any such intimation, however, requires a profundity of research this text lacks. The idea alone is tempting nevertheless.

XV. Conclusion: Speculations and Expiations, Recommendations and Regrets

If there is any hope of positive development in Ghana, such hope will only be kindled through the revitalization and reanimation of the now stagnant educational system. Let's take a look at one such resuscitation elsewhere on the continent. South Africa has in place what is called a "National Curriculum Statement", which fundamentally is an "outcomes-based curriculum, allowing for "contextualized learning" in "principles of environmental sustainability, human rights, social justice and inclusivity…. The curriculum framework creates a platform for schools to engage with environmental and other sustainability issues at local [levels]" (Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2004). Needless to say, while it would benefit to no end from the implementation of such a curriculum, education of this type is severely lacking in Ghana. The detriment caused by this deficiency could quickly amount to catastrophe if left unchecked. But what are the specificities? And what are the snags?

Let's consider first the issue of agriculture and agroindustry. Awuah-Nyamekye (2007) cites an alarming fact: "the original forest cover [of Ghana] used to be about 36% of

the country's land mass. It was reduced to 23% by 1972, to 13.3% in 1990, and to in 10.2% in 2000." Most of this loss Awuah-Nyamekye blames on the expansion of the "timber industry" and the reinvention of traditional "subsistence" as commercial ventures. This transformation in the socioeconomic and cultural imaginary has completely undermined the regulation of forestry in a country whose forests are pivotal to the health of both its environment and its employment[30]. As early as 1993, Dixon et al. cited "the potential of forest and agroforest management practices" in the "conservation and sequestration of carbon", the most infamous of greenhouse gases. To this note, Dixon et al. speculate "on preliminary estimates [that] the application of forest management and agroforestry practices to stimulate biomass productivity on a global scale could potentially sequester or conserve several Petagrams of carbon annually." Furthermore, they write, "practices such as reduced tillage, crop residue incorporation, field application of manure and sludge, and rotations using cover crops or leguminous crops store more carbon than conventional technology." Intriguingly enough, most, if not all of these, were practices subscribed by Dr. Kingsley J. Taah in the above interview on traditional agriculture.

While some posit that the tenants of the first Green Revolution failed to take actual and ideological root in Africa to the immense misfortune of many Africans, others suggest the heavy reliance of many first green revolution crop varieties on environmentally antagonistic inputs and the imprudent application of fertilizers would in fact render a retrospective approach to development in Africa more harmful than helpful (Eckardt et al.,

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[30] *The Prayer of The Tree* is a poem written by Ghanaian poet Samuel Alodina. It captures well the sentiment of conservation within cultural dialogues:

> On cold nights I am the heat of your hearth.
> I screen you from the sun with friendly shade.
> I give people fruits and flowers.
> As you thirst, my fruits refresh you.
> I am the beam that holds your house,
> The board of your table, the bed that you lie on
> The timber that builds your boat
> And from which you get furniture.
> I am the hands of your hoe,
> And the door of your homestead.
> The wood of your cradle and the shell of your coffin.

2009). It is here that monumental cultural sensitivities have been almost categorically marginalized, and curiously so. Some studies have indeed touched on the empowerment of those upon whom sustainability is contingent, namely the developers of society themselves. Ahenken & Boon (2010) investigate pertinently the manner in which women, who they cite as compromising 70% of the world's poverty-stricken population, may be instrumental in the discharge of sustainable development. Though still disenfranchised by the menacing mechanisms of gender discrimination, women in much of Ghanaian society are the veritable gears maintaining the fluency of quotidian activities. Ibraham Salifu, mentioned above in the context of the Karimenga Ecovillage, affirms that while men are still considered the directors of village affairs, it is the women that keep the villages functioning: "From dawn to dusk, it is the women who work and upkeep the family." One of Mr. Salifu's numerous and most impressive projects, for which he has received the attention and support of the U.N. World Food Project, involves the construction of a dam for the purposes of enhancing the local water supply. For three hours of work on the dam, workers are provided with a ration of food for the day. Most of the workers involved in the project are women, who invest their labor despite whatever duties, with which they may be charged in the remainder of the day. Ahenken & Boon's (2010) analysis is of the financial empowerment of women involved in the harvesting of non-timber forest products (NTFPs), the majority of which are sustainable and abundant. Such is the stuff of dreams in the world of environmentally safe development—and promising material for investment by individuals in a microfinance project, for example. More specifically, Ahenken & Boon's analysis "explores the contribution of NTFPs farming to the total annual income, acquisition of assets, health, and food security of women through participatory research methods…" finding "that a significant association exists between total annual income of women, acquisition of assets, health, food security, and the income earned from NTFP" (Ahenken & Boon, 2010).

Elsewhere, in what might be an evincing aside in the study of decentralization, Goldstein & Udry (2005) "show that farmers who lack local political power are not confident of maintaining their land rights over a long fallow. As a consequence, they fallow their land for much shorter durations than would be technically optimal, at the cost of a large proportion of their potential farm output." Goldstein & Udry's findings further advance arguments in favor of grassroots empowerment, of bolstering the power base of those whose output factors most in the welfare of the community at large. The trend thus far in Ghanaian decentralization has betrayed a distressing gap in the redistribution of municipal executive license and incentives of private interest, an error that NGOs such as GIZ, through initiatives such as SfDR, have sought to taper (GIZ, 2011). Other issues in this

area, namely the financial one, have inspired researchers such as Heerink (2004) to analyze the impacts, both negative and positive, that economic policy reform in Sub-Saharan Africa, including policies such as the "bias towards agriculture" and "structural adjustment programmes" have had on soil fertility, and subsequently, on agricultural output and sustainability. Most of these reforms, while promising at the outset, prove "disappointing" when analyzed in the long-term (*ibid)*, thus maintaining the need for a refashioning of financial policies geared to the amelioration of agriculture.

This refashioning very well may come in the form of locally-based stratagems, invigorated by the dynamic and direct influence of locals themselves. Yaalon (2000) rightly cites the importance of including "locally trained soil and extension specialists living in the region" in the "transform[ing of] the economy" in "market food production" and in what Heerink (2004) cites as "Integrated Soil Fertility Management (ISFM)". Indeed, some of the most helpful individuals who assisted in this study were agricultural extension officers such as Donatus Donely with the Ministy of Food & Agriculture in the Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese district. It is not entirely far-fetched to recommend that while occidental egos may be injured in the process, the interests of Sub-Saharan Africa are best served by Sub-Saharan Africans themselves, equipped, of course, with a sufficient education and most importantly, an education sensitive to Sub-Saharan African culture.

"Seeds are a gift of nature, of past generations and diverse cultures," the Manifesto on the Future of Seeds reads[31]. "As such it is our inherent duty and responsibility to protect them and to pass them on to future generations. Seeds are the first link in the food chain, and the embodiment of biological and cultural diversity, and the repository of life's future evolution." The paradigm of seed preservation is too tempting to resist as a parable for the power of culture in countering many of the problems faced today by developed, developing and underdeveloped countries alike. In the interests of a conclusion, I will end here in returning to an aspect of culture explored earlier in this text, specifically the significance of storytelling in the transmission of culture and with that culture, any inherent elements of sustainability. UNESCO's series on Teaching & Learning for a Sustainable Future includes one issue dedicated specifically to storytelling. "Being able to tell a story," the report instructs, "is an interesting and compelling way [to teach] an important skill" (2010). The report continues on to cite one author in particular, a certain Alida Gersie, who writes "the current concern about environmental issues is connected with this revival (that of folktales), since folktales about the relationship between the Earth and its human inhabitants have been at the heart of storytelling since earliest times."

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[31] Published by the International Commission on the Future of Food & Agriculture

In educating our children about how they might best interact with the world around them, we may take as nothing less than an imperative the preservation of the stories such as the one told earlier by Professor Brown at the University of Cape Coast. Within those stories are encapsulated our culture, and if those stories are lost, so too shall our culture be. It is equally imperative that our cultures have roots that extend far deeper than the world of our parents, our grandparents and of countless parents that preceded them. Though it is oftentimes retrograde to revere the retrospective, the world of the past was one that obliged our ancestors to hold the earth as sacred in a way that the contemporary exaltation—not unbecoming, but somewhat too sudden—of human advancement has very abrasively replaced. We need not consider that advancement undesirable, but we also need not totally shelve the principles of the past in our progress. This is the essence of sustainability—in storytelling and in development simultaneously.

"To lament is to be disappointed at the premature departure of something—or someone—for whom we have great expectations" says Oscar the Tour Guide at Cape Coast's whitewashed and wave-whipped castle. Let us not come to lament the loss of our culture. Let us live sustainability, not vicariously, but immediately in passing stories of preservation and consciousness to our children. In reality, we need never again lament, if only we take the time to keep what now is ours and hold it as consecrated as long as is allowed by time and the traveling of the earth around the sun.

Limitations: The largest limitation inherent in a study of this scope was, of course, time. While the subject matter itself proved immense, the allotment of time devoted to the study of the subject matter was somewhat undesirable. Furthermore, while data was collected in the name of a correlative statistical analysis, the accuracy of much of that data, particularly that collected from younger students, is difficult to assess given that it was collected in translation from English to Fanti and back again. It is the researcher's intention that this analysis be completed in due course.

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