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Structured Abstract

Purpose: This paper investigates why environmentally-sensitive companies still face criticism despite the extensive disclosures in their annual reports. This paper explores the extent of site-specific social, environmental and ethical (SEE) reporting by mining companies operating in Ghana.

Methodology/Approach: We conduct an interpretive content analysis of the annual/integrated reports of mining companies for the years 2009 to 2014 to extract site-specific SEE information relating to the companies' mining operations in Ghana. We also theorise these actions using the existentialist work of Jean-Paul Sartre, in particular his work on 'bad faith, nothingness and authenticity'.

Findings and Implications: The findings suggest that SEE information disclosure at site specific level remains problematic because of bad faith and inauthenticity by mining companies attempting to placate a range of stakeholders. Bad faith represents a form of self-deception or internal denial which manifest in corporate narratives. Inauthenticity is a self-awareness that culminates in the denunciation of corporate identity and the pursuit of external expectations. The effect is the production of inauthentic corporate accounts that is constrained by assumption made on stakeholder expectation.

Originality: We apply a Sartrean lens to explore site-specific SEE. Furthermore, we seek to expand the social accounting research domain by drawing on Sartre's work on 'bad faith' and 'nothingness'. Sartre's work to the best of our knowledge is not explored in social accounting research.

Keywords: Segmental reporting; social, site-specific environmental and ethical reporting; sustainability reporting; Sartre.

1. Introduction

Recent years have witnessed an immense international growth in social, environmental and ethical reporting by public listed companies (KPMG surveys 2011 and 2015). Over time, social, environmental and ethical (SEE) information have been incorporated into annual reports (Buhr, 1998; Deegan and Gordon, 1996; Kent and Zunker, 2013; Patten, 2002). Studies suggest that these sets of information provide illustrative accounts of corporate social performance. They provide insights relating to corporate social engagements in the environment (Cho and Patten, 2002; Deegan and Rankin, 1996). Signalling theorists have suggested that SEE information give signals to the market on corporate social performance (Clarkson et al., 2013; Plumlee et al., 2015). However, impression management theorists suggest that SEE information are part of a carefully crafted scheme to improve corporate public image (Cho et al., 2010; Neu et al., 1998; Solomon et., al 2013). As a consequence, corporate reporting of SEE has been criticised for providing stakeholders with only a partial picture of corporate reality.

Research indicates that SEE in annual reports by environmentally-sensitive companies have been implicated in these criticisms (Jenkis and Yakovleva, 2006; Patten 2005). Paradoxically, research also suggest that environmentally-sensitive companies produce extensive environmental-related disclosure (Patten 2005). This study therefore further explores why environmentally-sensitive companies still face criticism despite their presentation of extensive disclosures in their annual reports. We offer further insights by applying Jean-Paul Sartre's theoretical lens. We focus on his concept of 'bad faith' *(mauvaise foi)* and nothingness; and 'authenticity'. By bad faith, we refer to corporations engaging in self-deception through their playing of a social role. We argue that this social role limits corporate freedom to strive for authenticity (genuineness). The result is that corporate reporting of SEE takes up a false existence which mirrors acts of bad faith (deception). It is proposed that companies need to return to a state of 'nothingness' where its very existence is not defined by societal boundaries to demonstrate authenticity.

Our argument is illustrated through a study of mining companies as an example of environmentally-sensitive companies. Mining companies are increasingly incorporating SEE information into annual reports in an attempt to enhance reputation by responding to demand for stakeholder information (Atkins and Maroun, 2014; Plumlee et al., 2015; KPMG, 2011). However, there is little evidence to suggest an accompanying rise in richness of content on SEE information linked to mining sites. Mining corporations by their very nature operate on site-specific basis. These sites together materially contribute and affect the outlook of the mining operations of companies. The sites make social and investment demands on companies. Corporate profits, long term survival, and social licence are determined by site-specific operations. However, there is limited research on site-specific SEE reporting in annual/integrated reports pertaining to mining operations. This paper seeks to address this gap by examining site-specific SEE disclosures by mining companies operating in Ghana.

Our analysis of this particular set of reports enables us to establish a picture of corporate authenticity in relation to site-specific SEE reporting by mining companies operating in Ghana. In addition, we provide illustrative cases of 'bad faith' in the way mining corporations report on their operations at the site-specific level. The lens enables us to explain why mining companies are restrained in the provision of SEE information at the operational or segmental site level. The lens draws attention to the restraint towards information disclosures. It is argued that corporate attempt to impress stakeholders hampers corporate freedoms to move beyond assumed expectation in order to provide a real picture of corporate reality. The rest of the paper is divided into six sections: the literature review, research context, method, empirical findings, discussion and conclusion.

2. Sartrean lens: Bad faith and Authenticity

The concept of bad faith (mauvaise foi)

According to Sartre, *bad faith* is fostered by a form of self-deception (Sartre, 2003). Bad faith starts from telling a lie to oneself about their identity so as to please others (Wyatt, 2006). *Bad faith* is often triggered by some form of social pressures for an actor to act in ways not ideal to the actor. Human beings are convinced by and deceive themselves that their role in society is who they are. However, this conceptualisation means that human beings in defining their existence by a social role attempt to be 'what they are not' (Zheng, 2001). The concept is best illustrated by Sartre's description of a waiter who is clearly 'playing at' being a waiter (Sartre, 1943; Sartre, 2003). By trying to appear like a waiter a person is 'not being' a waiter and is constituting him/herself as something which he/she is not. Thus, a waiter being conscious of the fact that he is not a waiter but one deceiving people into believing he is a waiter. The waiter acts in bad faith because s/he exaggerates to impress his/ her subject hence not being original. As Sartre illustrates, the way in which the waiter plays his role demonstrates, "… a fundamental alienation from his true being" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, p.305) and thus puts himself in bad faith (Sartre, 2003). Thus, bad faith describes a situation where companies engage in self-deception by acting in ways that does not represent their true self. It is a denial of agency.

In playing 'the waiter', companies restrict their identity and associated actions to their socially defined roles. Constraining the conceptualisation of their existence to social identities denies them the freedom to pursue greater accomplishments. Bad faith is displayed in narratives that are framed in a way that denies the role the company consciously play in its development (Craib, 2000). Pre-emptive actions are downplayed to make the story appear natural. Companies in presentation of accounts attempt to play up to others rather than projecting their true self. Such acts result in corporate mask of its real identity and complex circumstances in an attempt to satisfy another party. To move away from self-deception is to acknowledge that companies and individuals are not defined by a social identity. Companies can pursue good faith by first separating their identity from their very existence and their ability to meet expectation (Rowlands, 2011). A company that for instance keeps a plant nursery for the replacement of fora destroyed during mining activities will be acting in good faith if this action is neither triggered by regulators nor stakeholder calls.

Nothingness

Sartre argues that to be genuine to oneself (authentic) (Zheng, 2001) there is a need for acceptance that humans can exist outside their social role. For individuals, the abandoning of their social identity means they have no identity (they are nothing). Outside their social role, human beings are considered to be 'nothing'. In the state of nothingness (not defined by a social role), humans become a blank canvass. They are free from affiliation, restriction and can push the boundaries in a positive direction without constraint linked to social roles and situations. Sartre argues that *nothingness* exemplifies expectation and anticipation that does not result in either the expected or anticipated, hence results in nothingness. In explaining nothingness, Sartre imagines entering a café and expecting to meet a friend. The whole café resembles the 'ground' required as a backdrop for the presence and sight of the friend: Instead, the friend is absent. He explains that,

> "…. now Pierre is not here. This does not mean that I discover his absence in some precise spot in the establishment. In fact, Pierre is absent from the *whole* café; …. I myself expected to see Pierre, and my expectation has caused the absence of Pierre to *happen* as a real event concerning the café" (Sartre, 1943, p.10).

The above quote depicts the expectation of meeting Pierre as Pierre but not the waiter Pierre. But the waiter Pierre was met hence resulting in nothingness. Within the lens of our study, this is linked to an expectation of meeting site-specific SEE reporting from annual/integrated reports on multinational mining corporations. Existentialism within a Sartrean lens view humans as beings and not identified by profession or occupation. As humans engage in a profession to earn a living and survive, a balance must be kept between them being humans and their socially ascribed roles (such as being identified as a doctor) in order to be authentic. Similarly, multinational mining companies must keep their interest in remaining profitable while looking after SEE issues stemming from their operations. The intrinsic approach to SEE issues without third party influence leaves firms in the state of nothingness.

The concept of Authenticity

Authenticity relates to an acknowledgement, approval and holding on to the fact that an individual is free and responsible for his/her choices, actions and their consequences in a comprehensive manner (D'Anjou, 2011; Zheng, 2001). Ladkin and Taylor (2010) view authenticity as being one's true self. Having attained the state of nothingness, which is the pure being of an individual's self, the individual then begins to attain *authenticity.* Authenticity deals with one staying true to his/her actual character, personality or ideals regardless of any form of external pressures. Thus, a lack of authenticity is referred to as bad faith*.* Authenticity does not exist in a vacuum by one identifying an authentic faith and staying true to that in practice. Lawler and Ashman (2012) interpret 'unauthenticity' as being in a situation where individuals refuse (or fail) to make choices/decisions and take personal responsibility for their decisions and actions (Lawler and Ashman, 2012).

In the light of Sartre's views on authenticity, for a company, i.e. its management, to follow codes of ethics, legislation or, say, GRI guidelines 'blindly' represents a case of bad faith and unauthentic behaviour. Mere compliance with legislation and guidelines without self-reflection and autonomous decision-making at the individual (personal or corporate) level would seem to represent unauthentic behaviour as it suggests no attempt to make decisions in relation to context and therefore no attempt to be accountable for decisions – simply instead passing the buck to the Code or the law. This could reflect "… the possible alienation of the individual who lives her life with too great a focus on the beliefs, norms, codes and behaviours of others, and the struggle for authenticity in that context" (Lawler and Ashman 2012, p.338). Living an authentic life reflects an adequate acknowledgment and embracement of an individual role to make free choices alongside the willingness to take responsibility of the consequences of these choices. Authenticity is not something that can be claimed as achieved but as an aspiration (D'Anjou, 2011; Lawler and Ashman, 2012). A Sartrean perspective is adopted in order to bring this richness and theoretical flavour to our interpretation of the content analysis. The analysis relies on three main Sartrean concepts: authenticity (and unauthenticity), bad faith and nothingness in discussing SEE through segmental reporting.

Segmental reporting and SEE

According to PwC (2008, p.4), "[s]egment reporting under IFRS 8 should highlight the information and measures that management believe are important and are used to make key decisions. It should also provide a better link between the financial statements and the information reported in management commentaries such as the Operating and Financial Review or Management Discussion and Analysis." Segmental reporting forms part of the annual reports. Companies provide disclosures on economic activities relating to operational segments in segmental reporting. The disclosure practice relating to operating segments follow internal management reports (see IFRS 8 and SFAS 131). Thus, the identification, measurement and reporting of material issues relating to operational segments are subject to managerial discretion. Reliance on managerial discretion in determining the basis for segmental reports has drawn criticism from academics (Crawford et al., 2012). They argue that the reports are customized for management, thereby undermining the needs of external users.

Furthermore, critics of segmental reporting have questioned the regulatory requirement to abandon the mandatory disclosure of geographical segmental information. The current requirement has been interpreted as encouraging limited geographic wide disclosures (Nichols *et al.,* 2012). However, other researchers have observed minimal change in the identification of reported segments (Milne and Gray, 2013). The debate relating to the disclosures by geographical segments highlights concerns regarding management potential to suppress material information; in particular, financial and non-financial information (e.g SEE) on geographical segments that hold economic and social implications for the wider group.

An illustrative example is the social, environmental and ethical controversies that plague segmental reporting. For instance, the BP oil spill in 2010 in North America posed a threat to corporate legitimacy and financial performance (Sabet et al., 2012). The Volkswagen (VW) scandal on carbon emission is an example of a material social and ethical issue linked to a geographical segment with wider ramifications for the entity. VW's operations are scattered around Europe. The operation within which this scandal emanated was material to how VW would have dealt with those issues. Consequently, geographical segmental information in environmentally-sensitive industries remain a concern for investors and other stakeholders. Accounting studies confirm that companies pay attention to SEE reporting at the segmental level in annual reports (Boiral, 2013; Deegan et al., 2006). However, this paper questions the authenticity of such disclosure.

Segmental Reporting, SEE through a Sartrean Lens

The accounting literature abounds with criticism of SEE reporting and often concludes that corporate sustainability reporting efforts fall far short of 'genuine' attempts to discharge accountability to stakeholders (Cho et al., 2015; Contrafatto, 2014; Denedo et al., 2017; Gracia Osma and Guillamon-Saorin, 2011; Malsch, 2013; Michelon et al., 2015; O'Dwyer, 2005). According to Aras and Crowther (2009), corporations are in effect not addressing issues pertinent to SEE "but are merely creating an image of sustainability" (p.285). This epitomises bad faith. The SEE literature reveals evidence of a contestation of varied empirics at the level of corporate disclosure and environmental performance (Clarkson et al 2008). This has resulted in sustaining stakeholder pressure on the need for SEE accountability. As an effect of this, corporations are more involved in impression management activities (Neu et al., 1998; Markl-Davies and Niamh, 2007) and, in some cases, corporate propaganda (Collision, 2003) in satisfying stakeholders demand for SEE accountability. An inadequate reporting of these issues therefore represents bad faith on the part of the implicated corporations.

Authenticity when embraced within social issues such as integrating employee concerns within the operations of a corporation, yields positive results in terms of employee satisfaction (Mcshane and Cunninghan, 2012). "Indeed, it is noticeable that extractives industries – which by their very nature cannot be sustainable in the long term – make sustainability a very prominent issue (Aras and Crowther, 2009, p.284) which in turn hinders on issues of employees and overall the sustainability agenda of such corporations. Aras and Crowther (2009) conclude that sustainable companies are less exposed to risk than those that are not. Notwithstanding this, the very language used in reporting corrupts thoughts using instruments that promote alternative realities leading to obfuscation (Aras and Crowther, 2009). Absence of transparency in reports has reduced reporting to a marketing gimmick aimed at corporations seeking social legitimacy (Boiral, 2013). We find Sartre's concept of bad faith and his interpretation of (un)authenticity helpful in understanding more deeply why SEE disclosures and sustainability reporting are not necessarily successful in addressing stakeholder concerns and discharging an adequate level of accountability for social and environmental impacts. More so in developing economies such as Ghana.

3. Mining in Ghana

Ghana has a long history in mining, with the large-scale mining sector accounting for 97 per cent of most of the gold extracted (Akabzaa and Darimani, 2001; Aragón and Rud, 2015; Dashwood and Puplampu, 2010; Hilson, 2002). The long-standing history of mining activities has brought attendant environmental and social consequences (Basu et al., 2015; Twerefou et al., 2007; Aryee, 2001). For example, large-scale mining activities has resulted in encroachment into agricultural lands (Aragón and Rud, 2015; Lawson and Bentil, 2014), unfavourable contractual agreements between multinationals and the government of Ghana (Burgis, 2015), and poor remuneration for the indigenous workforce leading to labour unrest, strikes and low numbers of employed Ghanaians by the large-scale mining sector (Crisp, 1979; Garvin et al., 2009). With police brutalities during the protests, such incidents could be likened to the Marikana mine riots of 2012 (Solomon, 2013). This has often generated tensions between local communities and mining corporations.

To manage these tensions between communities and mining corporations, companies use philanthropy through corporate social responsibility (CSR) by providing social amenities such as schools and hospitals. Though some of these gestures by mining corporations are sometimes cherished by communities, Hilson (2006) argued that they are most often not genuine. He cites the reluctance of large-scale mining corporations to relinquish their unused lands to small-scale miners as a justification. He also bemoaned the numerous human rights abuses that characterise the forced removal of small-scale miners by large-scale mining corporations. Also, the poor compensation payment system to farmers for farm/crop destruction and community resettlements are woefully inadequate and not commensurate to the distractions caused by large-scale mining corporations (Burgis, 2015; Hilson, 2006). With a 700 per cent increase in production from 1980-2012 accounting for 42 per cent of national exports (Basu et al., 2015; Hilson, 2002), the industry stands pivotal to the social and economic benefits of Ghana. Notwithstanding this, the industry also faces the challenge of capturing both financial and social dynamics of the environment in segmental reporting.

4. Research Method

This study employs qualitative content analysis of reports by mining companies (Cho et al., 2015). Qualitative content analysis allows for a capture of corporate interpretation of site-specific SEE information on mining operations in Ghana. The analysis focuses on consolidated annual /integrated reports rather than sustainability reports. The choice of reporting outlet enables us take cognisance of the recent corporate trend of publishing an integrated report. The transition towards integrated reporting infers that companies are providing information consumed by stakeholders. In so doing, the move is expected to signal a genuine embrace of the broader notions of accountability (Solomon and Maroun, 2012). Therefore, corporate recognition of a wider stakeholders makes consolidated annual/integrated reports an attractive platform for exploring the (un)authenticity of actions as translated to reports on SEE.

The sample was selected from a comprehensive list of multinational mining operations in Ghana. One of the challenges of the research was that many companies operating in Ghana are not listed on the Ghana Stock Exchange and do not produce reports. We did attempt to obtain the state mining reports produced according to regulation from the government for companies which are not listed and which provide no public reporting. However, this proved difficult and despite one of the authors travelling to the Minerals Commission in Ghana, copies were not obtained. Thus, we have only been able to analyse the reports of seven mining companies operating in Ghana covering the period 2009-2014. This period allows for an insight into corporate discretion in the disclosures of site-specific SEE information and into how companies can choose to provide information that might be deemed in bad faith despite increased regulatory flexibility.

The site-specific SEE information derived from the sample of annual/integrated reports was analysed by a coding process. The coding process involved the grouping of the data from the reports into codes. The codes that were associated with the social dimensions include, for example, information on lost time injuries, health and safety and fatalities and communities. Anti-corruption/corruption issues and contractual breaches were placed under ethical codes. Issues related to carbon emission, spillages, reclamation, plants and animals were coded as environmental. The developed codes were divided into three main categories. The categories were derived from the research problem include the social, environmental and ethical issues. The interpretive process of analysis was reiterative in nature (see Cho et al., 2015). The interpretive process of analysis required engaging with the theoretical lens i.e Sartre's concept of bad faith and authenticity. The lens was used to make sense of the categorised codes derived from corporate disclosure on SEE information relating to mining sites in Ghana.

Table 1 provides a list of the companies analysed. The table also provides details of the geographical sites in Ghana where operations are reported to take place, the minerals mined and the company's listing status on the Ghana Stock Exchange (GSE).

Insert Table 1: Sample of mining companies operating in Ghana and their reported sites

Interestingly, when we examined the lists of mining operations and operating sites within Ghana as reported by the Ghana Mining Commission, there was a striking difference between the data we had gleaned from the companies' reports and the Minerals Commission's lists. Some of the companies we studied were reported to be operating in up to 15 different sites within Ghana, yet we only found site-specific information relating to a maximum of four sites

(Noble Resources, one of the analysed companies) in the reports. This seems to be explained by the possibility that the company has not yet started or has already completed active operations at the unmentioned sites. Another possibility is that quantitative requirements for geographic segmental or site-specific reporting have not been met (see above). From our sample, there was only one company, AngloGold Ashanti, which chose to produce an annual report entitled 'Integrated Report'. The rest of the sample tend to demonstrate integrated reporting formats by integrated social, environmental, ethical and financial components in a single report still labelled as annual report.

Table 2 summarises the form of reporting by our sample companies for each year during the period 2009-2014.

Notably, in the instance of PMI Gold Corporation, we are aware that annual information forms are required to meet the Security and Exchanges Commission regulations in Canada. Therefore, the inability of the researchers to have full access to consolidated annual reports prompted the use of annual information forms for PMI. Our comparison of the extracts of PMI's consolidated annual reports and that of their annual information forms did not show any significant difference. PMI's annual information forms contained the information we would otherwise have obtained from its consolidated annual reports hence the use of its annual information forms, as proxies for consolidated annual reports did not have any unexpected impact on the research. We now consider the incidence of site-specific SEE reporting in the sampled reports.

Table 3 provides a summary of the number of sample companies disclosing site-specific SEE information.

Table 3: Site-specific SEE disclosure

The number of companies providing SEE information on site-specific, Ghanaian issues, remained quite static over the first three years of our sampling period but increased around 2011/2012, falling again towards the end of the sample. Perhaps this pattern arises from an initial response to the introduction of integrated reporting. Table 3 shows that site-specific SEE is patchy and haphazard. The analysis illuminates a serious failing in capturing information for operations at local level and their impact on the environment and society, given that local activities are likely to be of great consequence for employees, local communities and NGOs.

5. Empirical Findings

The empirical findings are used to provide illustrations of examples of bad faith and unauthenticity. In so doing, the analysis of the findings is used to address our research problem. The implications are discussed from a Sartrean lens as indicated earlier. The discourse focuses on bad faith and (in)authenticity.

Bad faith

Bad faith embodies self-deception by the reporting entity, in this case the mining companies. Self-deception is internalised but becomes evident through corporate narratives relating to social, environmental and ethical issues. Corporate narratives in perpetuating the notion that the discourses are free from agency, represent a form of self-denial. In reality, corporate narratives are shaped by pre-emptive reflections how SEE information impact on stakeholders. The corporate narrative below shows an attempt by Gold Field to rationalise its accounts rather than admit any form of agency.

> "This is being supported by a newly formed, world-class team of water experts at Group-level headed by a new Group Head of Water Management to ensure we address heightened levels of scrutiny from national water regulators and other stakeholders in an early and proactive way." (Gold Fields, Tarkwa, 2012, p. 91).

The narration appears intended to achieve a particular outcome through the way the story is told despite a lack of admittance by the company i.e., a denial of agency. This is read as bad faith. In addition, the excerpt keeps hidden whatever private concern on water usage or contamination that might disrupt the mining company. Instead, the disclosure on the appointment of water experts are presented as part of a normal practice. These disclosure practices reinforce the argument that there is a denial of agency.

Bad faith is further illustrated when complex social issues are portrayed in corporate narratives in simplified forms devoid of corporate internal struggle, dilemma and social experiences. This is exemplified in Gold Fields reports on the changes to the method employed in discharging water at its *Tarkwa* site. The bland statement suggesting normal routine compliances cover the existence of any difficult experiences it might have encountered in making such a dramatic shift. The masking of the truth is a form of bad faith.

> "In July 2012, Ghana's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) directed us to suspend all discharges of water from our North and South Heap Leach facilities at *Tarkwa.* The EPA further required that instead of utilising longstanding dilution methods, which had ensured that we were discharging within regulated limits, all such discharges should be treated through a water treatment plant to reduce conductivity levels (i.e. the amount of dissolved salts rather than any indication of toxicity per se). Although the EPA had permitted the dilution method for several years, we nonetheless: Suspended discharges as part of our commitment to strong environmental stewardship and compliance with the EPA directive; Commissioned the construction of two water treatment plants at the mine" (Gold Fields, 2012, p. 91).

Similar forms of bad faith are included in the discourse on rehabilitation. It is noted that 'Rehabilitation Liabilities' of AngloGold however appeared on site-specific formats in its 2014 integrated report. Again, rehabilitation is a crucial part of compliance. It deals with putting a mine site into its natural form after the end of the mining cycle of a mine life as required by environmental regulators. Further examples of denial of agency and a cover-up of corporate reality is highlighted in disclosures on environmental information presented in the form of factual information. For example, illustrations arise from analysing AngloGold Ashanti's report (2014) relating to Iduaprime and Obuasi: "Total greenhouse gas emissions were 93"…"14 reported environmental incidents"…"Developed a task team to address issues of water and land access."

Some disclosures came in a form of factual and quantified data. Site-specific information relating to energy, water and emissions was provided by AngloGold (2014) in relation to their *Iduapriem* site: …"Energy usage (million GJ): 1.01" (p.37). .."Water usage (ML): 582" (p. 37). …"GHG emissions (000tCO2e): 97" (p.37). Similarly, the company disclosed the same information for their *Obuasi* site, as follows: …"Energy usage (million GJ) : 1.74" (p.37)...."Water usage (ML) : 6,534" (p. 37)…."GHG emissions (000tCO2e) : 197" (p.37). Together, the different illustration of environmental information associated with climate change are devoid of corporate voices and experiences. They represent a form of bad faith as they play up to stakeholder interest. A similar practice is observed in the disclosure of information on exploration sites.

> "At *Obuasi,* a total of 12,169m was drilled, with 4,805m from underground exploration and 7,364m from surface exploration activities. Surface exploration focused on the Rusty Monkey target, with 16 holes completed for a total of 5,659m" (AngloGold, 2012/2013, p. 66).

> "We currently operate four open pits at *Ahafo* with reserves contained in 11 pits and an underground mine presently in development. Commercial production in the fourth pit, Amoma, began in October 2010" (Newmont, 2012, p.33).

The information produces a narrative that suggests a relegation of corporate interest by ignoring the freedom of choice to express on-going private concerns about gas emission water and energy usage.
Thus, bad faith as argued in Sartre's work comes to play here.

Authenticity
Authenticity is depicted in the forms of corporate reporting that reflect a determination to showcase the corporation's identity. The disclosure of SEE information are far from restrained by social expectations. Essentially, the corporate reflections of actual happenings are presented in an original manner and uniquely communicated in less standardised formats to stakeholders. In the same vain, inauthenticity in reporting is characterised by corporate reporting practices that are intended to reflect predetermined expectations. Predetermined expectations are manifest in discourses that reveal corporate compliance with social regulations and societal norms. Sartre suggests that the problem of inauthenticity permeates the different spheres of society. The findings reveal inauthenticity in discourses that are aimed at reminding stakeholders of regulatory compliance. These disclosures reflect superficial attempts to satisfy stakeholder expectations.

> "*Iduapriem* maintained its ISO 14001 certification" (AngloGold Ashanti, 2009, p.75).

> "Tarkwa also retained its ISO14001:2004 (Environmental Management System) certification following an external audit during the year…" (Goldfields, 2009, p.31)

> "Tarkwa also retained its ISO14001:2004 (Environmental Management System) certification following an external audit during the year. The mine also retained its full compliance to the ICMI Cyanide Code" (Goldfields, Tarkwa, 2009, p.31).

Adherence to ISO certification is common regulatory compliance practice among extractive sector companies. ISO certifications come from an international non-governmental organisation that offers external validation to a diverse range of firms. With a membership of 162 national standard bodies it is undoubtedly an influential organisation that covers a key range of issues from risk management and Business Continuity to sustainable procurement. Its operations are such that different membership categories are granted access to different levels of access and influence over the ISO system. To gain such influence (advantageous in

contracting), external validity firms clamour for its certification thereby losing their authenticity.
Discourses suggesting that the mining company meets the regulatory requirements outlined by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is another form of inauthentic behaviour. Mining corporations are granted licences to operate by adhering to the EPA's standard specifications. Reporting on EPA compliance will be akin to meeting obligations of basic mining practices other than striving to be authentic on site-specific environmental issues.

> "[the company] has engaged in an environmental reclamation bound with the EPA" (Nobel Mineral Resources, 2011, p.81, in relation to the *Bibian* site)

> "Completed environmental and social impact assessment" (Azumah, 2011, p.17, in relation to the *Wa* site).

> In addition, the United States Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") is currently seeking to regulate as hazardous waste under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act ("RCRA") process solution streams derived from core beneficiation operations, such as our roasting operations, in Nevada. Historically, such streams have been considered exempt from RCRA and have been regulated by the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection. The regulation of these streams as hazardous waste under RCRA could subject us to civil and criminal penalties for past practices (Newmont, 2014, Generic, p. 13).

We interpret this type of reporting as being motivated by regulatory compliance rather than arising from any independent corporate-driven motivation, an act of inauthenticity. A further example of environmental disclosure clearly motivated by regulatory compliance with US rules (the company's country of origin) is found in Newmont's report, as follows:

> "Our mining and exploration activities are subject to various federal and state laws and regulations governing the protection of the environment. We have made, and expect to make in the future, expenditures to comply with such laws and regulations, but cannot predict the full amount of such future expenditures…" (2011, p. 84).

Unauthentic conduct is traceable to social interaction between external regulatory bodies and the mining corporations. Mining companies in protecting their operations play the role of a 'good citizen' by catering to the needs of the regulatory bodies. However, this strive to achieve certain standards makes it difficult for corporations to truly express their true self in reporting on actual practice. A consequence is that corporate statements overtly focusing on regulatory compliance is that it privileges information that might hold relevance to a particular stakeholder group over another. In addition, it discourages sincerity while playing to ego of corporations seeking to boast their image by touting certifications. It dampens a genuine drive by corporations to invest as well as publish information that reflects simple but sincere efforts made at protecting environment.

Unauthenticity is exemplified in cases where corporations become vulnerable to social laws in sharing responsibilities. The mining companies exploit rules in setting boundaries that are intended to restrict stakeholder expectations. The boundaries rely on legal rules to highlight the existences of a restraint that makes it impossible for a corporation to fulfil stakeholder expectations. The boundary setting is illustrated in the following written statement published in the annual report. PMI Gold Corporation report stated that,

> "At the *Kubi* project, under the terms of the previous mining license, reclamation of the site is the responsibility of the former operator" (2011, p.19).

> "Environmental liabilities from previous mining operations at the *Obotan* project were grandfathered to the government of Ghana when the new mineral titles were issued" (2011, p.18)

Rather than discharging accountability for environmental stewardship, this site-specific disclosure appears to be more about laying the responsibility for reclamation elsewhere, i.e. 'passing the buck'. Unauthenticity lies in corporate attempts to use the discourse to build a case that allows it avoid responsibility linked to perceived or potential pressure from stakeholders. It is also observed in the construction of corporate statements in a manner that is intended to reduce the negative repercussion that might arise from stakeholder backlash unmet social expectations. This part of SEE would likely leave stakeholders unsatisfied with the attitude of mining companies.

Unauthenticity is illustrated in social information relating to safety was produced by mining companies. There is less of a sense of the type of injuries that common occur across individual companies. Instead, mining companies were observed to produce standardised statements regurgitating the totalised data on workforce injury. The analysis indicates that mining companies were engages in mere adherence to industry guidelines or norms in the release of standardised and quantitative information on workforce injury. Most social disclosures related to the number of employees and all injury frequency rate (AIFR). The AIFR disclosure covered the loss incurred by the company due to injury. AngloGold reported the following information for its *Iduapriem* site,

> "AIFR (per million hours worked): 1" (AngloGold, 2012, p.34).
> "Attributable gold production (000oz): 180" (AngloGold, 2012, p.34).
> "Community investment ($000): 465" (AngloGold, 2012, p. 36).
> "Average number of employees (full time employees and contractors) : 1,549" (AngloGold, 2012, p.36).

Another illustration of pursuit of industry norms is the reporting on the financial implication of workforce injuries. AngloGold reported the following information on its *Obuasi* site:

> "AIFR (per million hours worked): 2" (AngloGold, 2012, p.34)
> "Community investment ($000): 2,007" (AngloGold, 2012, p. 36)

> "There was one fatality during the year (2008:2) caused by an accident involving machinery" (2009, p.76) (this relates to the *Obuasi* site)"

> Fatality free year …The lost day injury frequency rate was unchanged at 0.26 (Goldfields, Tarkwa, 2009, p.31).

Financial data was employed in explaining the effect of the recorded injuries on the company's operations and profits. A case could be made that the estimation of the financial impact of employee injuries suggested an aspiration to provide information driven by the business circumstances. In order words, the financial dimension of the AIFR data allowed access into the private world of the company. However, when mining companies consistently mimic each other's approach to reporting such as the standardised production of financial data on injuries, there is less opportunity to gain insight into the actual financial numbers that matter to individual companies.

From a Sartrean perspective, unauthenticity is intertwined with bad faith. Unauthenticity in the reporting of information targeting specific stakeholders group is not sincere in itself. It could be described as game playing the system. Stakeholders have pre-set notion of the form of social information that suggests proper accountability. One of such type of social information is disclosures on corporate relations with the community. Corporations attempt to demonstrate socially responsible character through reporting on their 'good deeds' to the community. However, through a Sartrean lens, the corporations taking on a social character that is determined by another party is deemed bad faith. This is because the fundamental rationale for mining corporations playing a social responsible role is to play to an audience rather than show its true self i.e real attitude towards community endeavours. Essentially, the mining companies are acting and reporting out of concern for stakeholder response rather than because of the independent corporate motive. Illustrations include for example the following from AngloGold Ashanti.

> "*Iduapriem's* alternative community livelihood programme has been commended by local authorities" (2009, p.75).
>
> "Community and environmental concerns remain priorities at *Iduapriem,* especially regarding the relocation of villages and People" (2009, p.75).

In the second excerpt, there is the temptation to impugn that issues of settlement relocation have the tendency of affecting operation hence would be in a corporation's interest to meet those needs. However, some of the social disclosures on site-specific basis appeared to have offered some form of genuine attempt to account to stakeholders. There were for instance some indications from the social site-specific information disclosed by our sampled companies that they held the concerns of the local communities and employees at heart. This in our view might exemplify a case of authenticity in line with social disclosures on a site-specific basis, though not seemly a genuine effort in corporate social responsibility practice,

> The mine successfully completed a socio-economic study of the Obuasi mining community with the assistance of a consortium of consultants. The aim of the study was to determine past and future impacts on the community in order to improve the management of these impacts and to develop better community engagement strategies (AngloGold, 2009, p.77).
>
> A large majority of workers are sourced from the adjacent villages on CTP Concession and this form an integral part of the Company policy in supporting the related communities directly involved with our activities (Noble, Mineral Resources, 2009, p.3)

Similarly, Noble Mineral Resources commented that at their *Bibiani* site they, "… embarked on a mosquito reduction exercise" (2011, p.5). This 'exercise' is characterise by the absence of detail, to be more suggestive of a business case motive, linked to reducing illness within the workforce, than an initiative founded in altruism and social responsibility. However, perhaps this is not the case. The problem in that the lack of detail leaves us unsure as to the genuine motivation for such disclosure. It raises the question of who or what annual/integrated reports are meant for? More importantly, the strive for authenticity requires abandoning social norms that constrain mining corporations to dubious forms of reporting that are aimed at tick boxing. Further examples are shown below,

> "The company's highly acclaimed malaria control programme, which has led to a 74% reduction in the incidence of malaria within the environs of *Obuasi*, received another major boost with the signing, in December, of an agreement to provide funding of up to $130m ….." (AngloGold Ashanti, 2009, p.77)

> "The site's livelihood program continued with strong support from community members and local authority. The program includes crop, fish, pal, farming and processes and mushroom farming. Women economic empowerment will be fostered through the operations of stand-alone business from the farm produce" (2010, p.86).

In the last extract, the social information allowed stakeholders an insight into corporate relations with the host community. However, it also suggests that the social information was produced to fulfil a predetermined expectation. In particular, the reporting of the responsibility of mining corporations to their communities. Thus, the demonstration of authenticity would require more than corporations just opening up to stakeholders about segmental information. Corporations would seek to provide SEE information of what management deemed a true reflection of happenings at segmental level. The composition of such information is driven by a free of choice of the mining corporations to express their true self.

Following Sartre's theoretical argument, authenticity for organisations lie in the move away for disclosure practices that mirror a self-awareness of the environment and its attendant consequence. The consciousness that stakeholders might judge mining companies harshly in retributions for offensive actions needs to be abandoned. In its place, the management of mining companies are expected to be true to themselves. They should be determined to demonstrate their freedom to decide the sort of SEE information that reflects the corporate conduct for the period. Drilling down to the analysis, the disclosures relating to social and ethical dimension provided an opportunity to observed unauthentic behaviour. The cautious approach by mining companies to the disclosure of information relating to the host community is illustrated in the following extracts that reveal the use of standardised repetitive text that reflect a lack of self-determination to provide detailed information.

> "The company dedicates considerable efforts towards community relations, providing information, labour opportunities and open forum discussion" (2011, p. 22)

> "The company dedicates considerable efforts towards community relations, providing information, labour opportunities and open forum discussion" (2011, p.22).

The above extract is an example of a case of boilerplates for specific sites by PMI Gold Corporation for their *Obotan* site and *Kubi* site respectively. As noted earlier, this lack of authenticity in disclosure practices also extended to ethical disclosures. Corporate experience with ethical issues in through the lens of management was missing from most report. In a rare case, Noble Mineral Resources, minimal information was provided. See below.

> "A delay in the commencement of production resulted in a breach of a loan agreement" (p.39, Noble, 2011).

However, ethics through the prism of Sartre's existentialism deals with acknowledgement and subjectivity. Thus, an individual's freedom of choices and responsibility for those choices when made. Noble Mineral Resources disclosed site-specific information which constitutes ethical reporting for its *Bibiani* site. However, the practical implication of the pursuit of this line of corporate expression is that stakeholders can be confronted with a material gap in the disclosed information. Further investigations suggested that the company's operation in Ghana was shut down in 2012, on financial grounds. At the time of writing, checks by the researchers revealed a skeletal staff on site.

Group Level SEE Reporting

Although site-specific SEE disclosures are the focus of this study, we felt it useful to our analysis to draw a comparison between the limited site-specific SEE reporting and the SEE reporting by our sample companies at group level. It is well beyond the scope of this paper to summarise all of the group level SEE disclosures for our sample companies and this is not the focus of our study. Instead we provide a flavour for some of the reporting in relation to the groups' motivations for SEE disclosures. Drawing from the analysis, it is noted that companies through the construction of narratives related to SEE suggest that reports are produced bad faith. A reflection of a response to placate stakeholders by not being in the state of nothingness. A denial to oneself that something is happening or in this case, that the company is part of the development of the narrative. The mining company pre-empts the way in which the information is framed to achieve a specific purpose. Pre-emptive action could involve consciously downplaying the complexities of the issues.

> Responsibility: ongoing investment in the maintenance of responsible operational standards – and the avoidance and mitigation of the Company's negative social and environmental impacts. This includes ongoing investment in effective water management – something that is an increasingly material issue for most mining companies and can, if poorly managed, have a serious impact on local communities (Goldfields, 2014, p73 – 76)

> We conduct our operations so as to protect the health and safety ("H&S") of our employees and contractors and believe our operations are in compliance with applicable laws and regulations in all material respects. In addition to this, the Company has established Health & Safety Management and Technical Standards that in most cases well exceed the regulatory requirements in the jurisdictions in which we operate. The quality of our Health & Safety Management System is audited on an annual basis against the OHSAS 18001 protocol and our own internal standards. All of Newmont's operating sites maintained their OHSAS 18001 certification during 2013 (Newmont, 2013, p. 8).

The frame of these corporate statements on the maintenance of standard and health and safety hide potential corporate concern of challenges experiences during the period of operation.

Furthermore, it denies any form of agency. Another form of pre-emptive act that suggest bad faith is creative narratives that play up to specific audience.

> "The Company is aware that its future is dependent on its ability to add community value by sustainably developing, operating and closing operations to the satisfaction of all stakeholders. The Company is committed to fostering enduring relationships and partnerships and improving the lives of the communities directly affected by its development and mining activities, through supporting community development, capacity building and social infrastructure improvement" (PMI Gold, 2013, p. 14).

> "The Group is subject to significant environmental regulation in respect to its exploration activities. The Group aims to ensure the appropriate standard of environmental care is achieved, and in doing so, that it is aware of and is in compliance with all environmental legislation. The directors of the Group are not aware of any breach of environmental legislation for the year under review" (Azumah Mineral Resources, 2012, p. 7).

In the statements above, the company makes presumption on stakeholder expectation while minimise corporate expectation on this issue. Working within such constraint, reflects a self-denial that the company can make a choice to produce the information different or in a much richer manner. This showcases that even at the group level bad faith is this played out via corporate reports.

5. Discussion

The paper presents arguments through a Sartrean lens on how the current corporate approach to segmental reporting can encourage limited disclosures. The current approach to segmental reporting on SEE information indicates that mining companies adhere to an assumption of stakeholder expectation. These practices could be explained by theorisations associated with stakeholder accountability (Archel et al., 2011; Barone et al., 2013; Unerman and Chapman, 2014). Expectancy is the challenge of meeting predetermined demand. Also, there is a risk of repercussion for failure to meet stakeholder expectation. Mining companies in a bid to avoid negative repercussions succumb to stakeholder pressure in ways that superficially indicate a form of social conformance. For example, the reliance on a semblance of narratives, factual and quantitative data that infer a form of tick boxing. This form of disclosure of SEE information suggest an unwillingness of mining companies to bear full responsibility for potential shortfall in stakeholder expectation. However, the bland tick boxing approach appears to run the risk of leaving stakeholders unsatisfied with the minimalist and cautious approach to reporting on SEE at site specific level.

The adoption of the Sartrean notion on authenticity encourages mining companies to produce SEE information without succumbing to the constraints of regulation and societal expectations.

That means that mining companies assume no prior expectation in determining the contents of segmental reports. The companies decide the form of report that best reflects the social issues that are faced at the segmental level. For example, the information reflects the corporate experience of managing workforce safety. This allows companies to provide as much and as little information as they would prefer on sites. At the same time, the company is willing to bear the responsibility for gaps arising from stakeholder demand. Also, stakeholders should be willing to bear the risk of too much or too little information. However, the fundamental strength of this ideology of authenticity is that it gives a true picture of the company. Also, companies are acting in good faith. This good faith also captures differences between companies in terms of moral, ethical and social values and actions. It respects the individuality of each company and their diversity in stakeholder groups, offering and context.

It is acknowledged that while Sartre's lens offers an ideal situation that might at times appear unrealistic, it, however, encourages researchers to think about the consequence of putting companies under so much regulatory restraint. The present-day practice is to show an affinity from a theoretical lens that support calls for a standardised approach to the delivery of SEE information. In attempting to improve practices across a large number of industries, the challenge is that uniqueness of individual companies is lost in compliance and mimicking practices. Originality in discourses that could be fruitful to stakeholders are buried in synchronised approaches developed for communicating with stakeholders. Stakeholders are burdened with irrelevant and vague SEE related disclosures that oversimplify corporate situation. Sartre's lens is meant to make us think about how companies could engage in disclosures that are done in good faith. In the process, stakeholders hopefully, will benefit from original and sincere accounts of the complex situations that organisations grapple with at site levels. This process will allow companies to explain more clearly the difficulties of operating in a geographical segment or managing financial dealings that have ethical implications.

Lastly, Sartre's notion of bad faith is quite important to research as it offers a first step to negotiating the discourse on how to get mining companies to divulge a true picture of their world particularly at the site-specific level. It recognises that there is still much work to do in getting companies to minimise their tampering with corporate real picture in disclosures of SEE information. Bad faith in corporate narratives on SEE is illustrated when mining companies in reporting make complex situations appear normal. In the recount of SEE events, corporate statements are presented in a manner that avoids an acknowledgement of the guilt or any form of divisive emotion. Bad faith as a form of self-deception denies the role the company consciously plays in developing the narrative. Companies in disclosures of SEE information fail to openly admit that they are playing up to external bodies such as regulators, non-governmental bodies and even the academic community. This is a denial of agency. The implication of self-denial is that it limits the richness of SEE information that could be made available to stakeholders by being more transparent.

6. Conclusion

Companies have been implicated in criticisms relating to disclosure practices. Specifically, companies have been criticised for providing a partial picture of corporate reality.

This study explores why environmentally-sensitive companies face similar criticism despite the extensive disclosures in the annual reports. The paper seeks to address this research problem by examining the case of mining companies operating in Ghana. The study focuses on segmental reporting of social, environmental and ethical information in the consolidated annual/integrated report of seven companies running segmental operations in Ghana. In addition, the research paper draws insight from Jean-Paul Sartre's theoretical lens of 'bad faith' (mauvaise foi) and nothingness; and 'authenticity'. Bad faith can be described as an internal denial or self-deception that results in corporate denial of reality. Inauthenticity is a self-awareness that culminates in the denunciation of corporate identity (true self) in order to meet external expectations.

The paper uncovers the following findings. Firstly, it shows that SEE disclosures of information remains problematic because of acts of bad faith and unauthenticity. The findings suggest that mining companies engage in bad faith. Bad faith represents a form of self-deception or internal denial which is manifested in corporate narratives on SEE information. SEE information are characterised by the masking of corporate reality and denial of agency as mining companies seek to placate stakeholders. The reporting approach denies reality in failing to capture the real corporate concern, struggles, dilemma in the simplification of complex issues. The site-specific disclosure of SEE indicates that mining companies produce unauthentic accounts. Inauthentic accounts can be described as unoriginal, bland, factual accounts that appear superficial. This is because site-specific disclosure of SEE information becomes constrained by assumptions of stakeholder expectation.

This study makes the following contributions. Firstly, it shows how mining companies through disclosures of SEE information at the site-specific level engage in bad faith by attempting to placate a range of stakeholders. The effect is the production of unauthentic corporate accounts that hold limited information value. Secondly it shows how little attention has been given by literature to the study of bad faith and authenticity in corporate disclosures. We provide an empirical illustration in addressing this research gap. The paper demonstrates that bad faith and authenticity are distinct constructs that should not be taken for granted in academic discourse addressing corporate disclosures practices. Thirdly, we demonstrate that more pressure from stakeholders might potentially enrich the quality of disclosures. We argue that there are instances where stakeholder pressure can be unintendedly harmful.

A practical contribution is that the study exposes the problems with companies entrapped in acts of bad faith as evidenced in disclosure practices. The paper recognises that the theory has limitations. The Sartrean lens could be considered as one-sided and idealist. However, it makes researchers consider the need to encourage corporate self-expression. It is argued that theory is a valuable lens that enables researchers to partially explain why corporate disclosures practices remain problematic. In summary, it extends our understanding of how companies through narratives deny their reality in providing accounts of site-specific information on SEE issues. It is revealed that corporate narratives are framed to embrace the reality of different stakeholders by lying about corporate reality. Therefore, corporate pursuit of authenticity in the provision of site-specific disclosure of SEE information has become constrained by assumptions of stakeholder expectation.

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Table 2
Types of annual reports produced by the sample companies

Company	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
AngloGold Ashanti	Annual financial statement	Annual financial statement	Annual integrated report	Integrated Annual Report	Annual Integrated Report	Integrated Report
Newmont	Annual report	Annual report	Annual report	Annual Report	Annual Report and Form 10-K	Annual Report and Form 10-K
Ashanti Goldfields	Annual financial report	Annual report	Annual financial report	Integrated Annual Review	Integrated Annual Review	Integrated Annual Report
Noble Mineral Resources	Annual report	Annual report	Annual report	-	-	-
Golden Star Resources	Annual report	Annual report	Annual report	Form 10-K	Annual Report	Annual Report
Azumah Mining Resource	Annual report	Annual report	Annual report	Annual Report	Annual Report	Annual Report
PMI Gold Corporation	Annual information form	Annual information form	Annual information form	Annual Report	Annual Information Form	-

Table 1
Sample of mining companies operating in Ghana and their reported sites

Company (annual/integrated reports for 2009, 2010 and 2011)	Geographical sites in Ghana (disclosed)	Mineral mined	Listing status on the Ghana Stock Exchange (GSE)
AngloGold Ashanti	Iduaprime	Gold	Listed
	Obuasi		
Newmont	Ahafo	Gold	Not listed
	Akyem		
Ashanti Goldfields	Tarkaw	Gold	Not listed
	Damang		
Noble Mineral Resources	Bibiani	Gold	Not listed
	Cape Three Points		
	Brotet		
	Tumentu		
Golden Star Resources	Bogoso/Prestea	Gold	Listed
	Wassa		
Azumah Mining Resource	WA	Gold	Not listed
PMI Gold Corporation	Obotan	Gold	Not listed
	Kubi		

Table 3
Site-specific SEE disclosures

Number of companies	Site specific social information	Site specific environmental information	Site specific ethical information
2009	5 (AGA, AG, NMR, A, (GSR)	2 (AGA, AG)	0
2010	3 (AGA, NMR, GSR)	2 (AGA, PMI)	0
2011	5 (AGA, N, NMR, Az, PMI)	4 (AGA, NMR, Az, PMI)	1(NMR)
2012	6 (AGA, N, AG, GSR, Az, PMI)	4 (AGA, N, AG, GSM)	0
2013	5 (AGA, N, AG, GSM, PMI)	5 (AGA, N, AG, GSM, PMI)	0
2014	4 (AGA, N, AG, GSM)	2 (AGA, AG)	0