

EDITORIAL

INTRODUCTION

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Guest Editor.



This special issue of *Drumspeak* brings together five papers that shed novel theoretical and interpretive insights on Amma Darko's novel *Beyond the Horizon*. Written in the fin de siècle of the long twentieth century, *Beyond the Horizon* is a sobering meditation on the migration of Africans to the West. It is an important text in the subgenre of African literature that focuses on migration, dislocation, prostitution, and the crisis of expectations that confront African migrants in the West. The novel is, therefore, central to what Iheka and Taylor (2018, p. 18) call "the migration turn in African cultural productions." Since its publication, *Beyond the Horizon* has generated a significant corpus of literature that attests to the amplitude of Darko's craft and vision.

This special issue emerged from the desire to provide students, in particular, and the scholarly community, in general, with alternative theoretical and thematic perspectives on Amma Darko's novel. Our expectation is that the papers will go a long way toward enriching the existing literature on *Beyond the Horizon*. It is significant to point out that the authors of the papers in this special issue have taught Darko's novel at the undergraduate and graduate levels for several years. Therefore, the authors are not only abreast of the existing scholarship on *Beyond the Horizon*, but they also come to this project with a deep grasp of the text. In other words, the authors are not just readers; they are also teachers of literature.

The first paper, "In Pursuit of dreams: Migration and toxic masculinity in *Beyond the Horizon*" by Theresah Patrine Ennin, explores the relationship between masculinity and migration with an emphasis on the complex process of sustaining manhood in a different

environment. Ennin argues that “the fraught nature of the migrant experience contributes to the creation of toxic masculinities and the perpetuation of gender-based exploitation of women.” Consequently, Ennin shows that the “misogynistic attitude of male characters towards the women in the novel can be understood within the context of their migratory experience” (p. 5). The paper thus offers an alternative theoretical framework, masculinity, for understanding the gender-based violence and exploitation in *Beyond the Horizon*. More importantly, the paper hints at the importance of setting for character development.

For writers like Amma Darko, literature is not only a tool for analyzing the unbearable conditions that women face; it is also a means of articulating a feminist vision based on women becoming conscious. In “Becoming conscious of the self: spatial dynamics, character pairs, and the feminist vision in Amma Darko’s *Beyond the Horizon*,” Christabel Aba Sam examines Darko’s feminist vision in *Beyond the Horizon* by focusing on the relationship between spatial dynamics and character pairs. According to Sam, setting is “the principal determining factor in Darko’s emancipatory framework” (p. 2). Aba Sam demonstrates this by identifying and analyzing four specific character pairs in particular locales in Darko’s novel:

- First Pair - Undoing patriarchal conspiciacies: Mara and her nameless mother in rural Naka.
- Second Pair - Beseeching feminine integrity: Mara and Mama Kiosk in urban Ghana.
- Third Pair - Negating the fetish of Europe through character: Mara and Gitte in urban Germany.
- Fourth Pair - Owning the body is a We-for-She affair: Mara and Kaye in the German Brothel.

By focusing on the relationship between spatial dynamics and character pairs, Sam shows that Darko foregrounds the efficacy of sisterhood, solidarity, education, financial freedom, and bodily integrity as the routes to the total emancipation of the African woman” (p. 1).

In “Reversing the imperial gaze, affirming the possibility: Conrad and Fanon in Amma Darko’s *Beyond the Horizon*,” Rogers Asempasah examines Darko’s subtle inscription of Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* and Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* in her novel *Beyond the Horizon*.

Drawing on Bakhtin's notion of the dialogism of the word, Asempasah discusses the word "horror," as used by Mara, and the novel's title as double-voiced discourses or dialogical sites of contestation and affirmation, respectively. Asempasah argues that while the Conradian subtext is framed around Darko's reversal of Marlow's imperial gaze in *Heart of Darkness*, the Fanonian subtext revolves around Darko's politics of "beyond the horizon" which is contingent on decentering Europe as the location of hope for postcolonial people. By focusing on Darko's subtle dialogue with Conrad and Fanon, Asempasah shows that Darko strategically frames Mara's encounter with Europe as a journey into the "heart of darkness" and foregrounds de-linking from the West as an emancipatory ethic for postcolonial transformation. Although the first three papers draw on different theoretical perspectives, taken together, they offer valuable insights on setting as integral to the meaning-making process in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*.

Hannah Amissah-Arthur's paper, "Clandestine, circumscribed, and coded: sexuality in Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* and Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*," looks at sexuality in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* and Nawal El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*. Drawing on Foucault's argument that the history of sexual experience involves the correlation between fields of knowledge, types of normativity, and forms of subjectivity in a particular culture, Amissah-Arthur examines the libidinous practices of characters in *Beyond the Horizon* and *Woman at Point Zero*. The crucial insight in this paper is that although the African tradition regards sexuality as a suppressed discourse, *Beyond the Horizon* and *Woman at Point Zero* present Mara and Firdaus as subjects of concupiscence, i.e., "individuals who realized themselves as subjects of sexual desire" (p. 1). According to Amissah-Arthur, "the acts of concupiscence by Mara and Firdaus defy the established, circumscribed discourse on sexuality in Africa" (p. 5).

The final paper, "'I am his pawn, his slave, and his property': A stylistic analysis of the abuse of women in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*", by Daniel Oppong-Adjei and Dora Essah-Ntiful, investigates Darko's use of parallelisms and deviations in *Beyond the Horizon*. Employing a stylistic framework of analysis, Oppong-Adjei and Essah-Ntiful show how the abuse of women by men is conveyed through patterned repetitions of words and sentences,

deviations, etc. The paper makes a significant contribution to the literature on *Beyond the Horizon* as the analysis draws attention to how parallelisms and deviations contribute to the development of the theme of gender-based violence and exploitation.

I wish to express my profound gratitude to all the reviewers, authors, and the Editorial Board of *Drumspeak* for their patience and support throughout the process. It has been a long, tedious, but rewarding journey.

References

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