

Editorial

A nebula is a truly wondrous thing to behold. The name is derived from the Latin word for ‘cloud.’ Nebulae (plural) are not only massive clouds of dust, hydrogen and helium gas, and plasma; they are also called “star nurseries” of the universe because stars are often formed inside the nebula (Matt Williams, 2015). Thus, a typical nebula is a place where stars are born. But, such descriptions barely scratch the surface. In fact, nebulae have provided scholars with endless scientific discoveries.

True to its philosophical nomenclature, the journey through most of the articles in *African Nebula* has always been a voyage of academic discoveries. This present edition is no exception because, essentially, it reflects the very essence of the true nature of a nebula. It draws on and projects the scholarly production of an array of young stars from four countries. The illuminating essays examines various issues ranging from communication and advertisement strategies, gender, population and climate change, to feminism, national security, global media, etc.

Specifically, **Adeyemi Adegaju**, in the first article, examines some verbal and visual signifiers in some GSM advertisements in Nigeria. The paper applies what the author calls a connotative semiotics framework to underpin and explain the semiotic import of verbal and visual signs in GSM advertisements. The article reveals that the codification of meaning in the discourse is hinged on cultural rules and social forces in the context of the situation in which the signs in the GSM advertisements are produced and received. In the second article, **Chineze Onyejekwe considers the** linkages between population dynamics and climate change as well as the gender-differentiated impacts of this phenomenon. The paper submits that empowering poor women is essential to tackling the negative impacts of climate change.

Kehinde A. Ayoola and Folasade Hunsu, focus on Muslim women’s writing from northern Nigeria. They argue that though this writing has attracted feminist critical attention but the exploration of this tradition through a blend of feminism and critical discourse analysis has not been explored. It is from this neglected analytical lens that the duo examines Asabe Kabir Usman’s *Destinies of Life* and Saliha Abubakar Abdullahi Zaria’s *Edge of Fate* to show how these women negotiate the interstices of feminist ideology, religion, culture and Western education. The paper also discusses the binaries of Islamic religion and culture vis-à-vis the yearnings of the contemporary northern Nigerian Muslim woman to extricate herself from the patriarchal web of inequity and injustice. The analysis projects the dilemma and creative impulse of the contemporary northern Nigerian Muslim woman as she attempts to overcome the forces that inhibit her self-expression without overtly upsetting the applecart of Islamic and patriarchal ideologies.

From a historical perspective, **Walter Gam Nkwi**, examines the activities of the gendarmerie in Cameroon since the re-birth of multi-party politics in the 1990s. He opines that these activities have been sending shock waves across several parts of Cameroon and that old memories of brutality and popular reaction are being rekindled. By relying on primary sources from the Cameroon National Archives and several secondary sources, the paper contends that the Gendarmes were strongly abhorred by most West Cameroonians, because of their oppressive and suppressive activities. The paper submits that in spite of the fact that Gendarmerie corps are primarily tasked with the maintenance of law and order and the protection of the citizen, yet it has turned out to be more of an oppressive force.

Lanre Davies, in the fifth article, focuses on the political economy of the Egba nation between 1830 and 1960. He argues that the economic prosperity of Egbaland did not only result in political power for the Egba, but also acted as a pull factor for many people who later made Egbaland their abode. The author contends that the modernisation of Egbaland pre-dated colonial rule and the evolution of a federal system of government which the Egba designed in Abeokuta after 1830 was unique and the first of its kind in Nigeria. He, therefore, concludes that the Egba are pace setters not only in Nigeria but throughout the West African sub-region. .

An interesting philosophical discourse on global media and the argument about the purported end of the nation state captures the fancy of **Wincharles Coker** and **Eric Opoku Mensah** in the sixth article in this volume. The paper argues that contemplations of the phenomenon can be effectively enhanced if a middle-ground approach is adopted. The authors are of the view that such a posture requires that a critical examination of the dialectic between global media and the nation-state within the orbit of critical theories such as Marxist political economy is absolutely necessary for understanding the wider implications of discourse on global media and the end of the nation state for sub-Saharan African states.

Henry Kam Kah, in the last article, critically examines two organisations (CERAC and JACHABY) whose Chief Promoter is Chantal Biya, Cameroon's First Lady. It argues that the organisations were meant to provide compassionate aid to the deprived and needy, promote education of the woman and girl child and ameliorate poverty. He, however, laments the fact that the two organisations have become tools for the veneration and 'worship' of Chantal Biya and "femocracy" in Cameroon's democratic and multiparty experience. Through a content analysis of internet and secondary sources as well as participant observations, the study concludes that both JACHABY and CERAC have deviated for their noble mission and now serve as lobby groups for the First Lady and the President of Cameroon and that this development poses a veritable challenge to good democratic governance.

By and large, it is a widely acknowledged fact that that nearly all nebulae are associated with stars and their illumination comes from star light. Indeed, between the entire star systems that fill our galaxy and our universe, nebulous clouds and masses are sure to be found, just waiting to give birth to the next generation of stars! (Matt Williams, 2015). Thus, the galaxy of stars (contributors) that have contributed to this volume have succeeded in giving further illumination to a wide range of issues that are critical to the survival of humanity in the 21st century. There is therefore no doubt that the issues raised herein will continue to provoke robust academic debates among both the present and next generation of *African Nebula* stars. I warmly congratulate and thank all the contributors, reviewers and editors that have made this present package of African Nebula possible.

Happy reading!

Olukoya Ogen.