

## Imitations as Elements in the Shadows of Colonial Legacy: Reflections on Kobina Sekyi's *The Blinkards*

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### Abstract

This article delves into the intricate use of imitation as a device in Kobina Sekyi's satirical play, *The Blinkards*. The play's central theme is a scathing critique of the attitudes and behaviours of African elites who mimic European values and customs. The article posits that the practice of imitation is an integral element in perpetuating the shadowy remnants of colonialism in Africa. It draws on the tenets of postcolonial theory and cultural studies to argue that imitation is a tool of subjugation and control, as it reinforces the pervasive notion of the "Other" as being inferior. The article also explores how imitation intersects with other legacies of colonialism, such as the imposition of European languages and the suppression of African cultural traditions. The article emphasises the need to critically examine the enduring impact of colonialism on contemporary African societies by examining the role of imitation in this regard. It highlights the complex ways in which the practice of imitation perpetuates colonial legacies and reinforces systems of inequality and domination. The article advocates for a nuanced understanding of how imitation intersects with other aspects of colonialism, such as language and cultural erasure, to perpetuate the lingering effects of colonialism. By examining the use of imitation in *The Blinkards*, the article aims to contribute to a broader understanding of the legacies of colonialism in Africa and how they continue to shape contemporary African societies.

**Keywords:** Imitation, *The Blinkards*, "Other," Colonial Legacies

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### Introduction

Kobina Sekyi's *The Blinkards* is a satirical play that critiques the cultural and social attitudes of the Ghanaian elite during the colonial era. The play uses imitation as a literary device to expose the shadows of colonialism and the legacy it left on Ghanaian society. Imitation in the play takes different forms. For instance, the characters in the play imitate European manners and culture, often at the expense of their own African identity. They believed that the colonial authorities would accept and respect adopting European ways. However, their imitation is superficial, and they often look foolish and ridiculous. The play also features characters who imitate each other, highlighting Ghanaian society's social and cultural divisions. For example, the character of Mrs Brempong imitates the manners of the European colonists, while her husband imitates the behaviour of the African commoner. The imitation reflects the class and cultural divide during the colonial era, with the elite imitating the colonisers and distancing themselves from their culture. The use of imitation in the play exposes the damaging effects of colonialism on Ghanaian culture and identity. Adopting European manners and culture is portrayed as a betrayal of one's culture, resulting in a loss of identity and a sense of inferiority. The play also highlights the absurdity of imitating a foreign and unfamiliar culture, resulting in a superficial and meaningless imitation. The play's characters also reflect the shadows of colonialism and the legacy it left on Ghanaian society. The play portrays the Ghanaian elite as disconnected from their own culture, often at the expense of their people. They are shown to be more concerned with their interests and maintaining their social status rather than the welfare of the Ghanaian people. Kobina Sekyi's *The Blinkards* uses imitation as a literary device to expose the shadows of colonialism and the legacy it left on Ghanaian society. The play serves as a powerful critique of the damaging effects of colonialism on Ghanaian culture and identity. It highlights the need for decolonisation and restoring Ghanaian culture and identity.

A play is not a piece of literature for reading but dimensional literature that walks and talks before our eyes (Boulton, 1960, p. 3). The modern playwrights of Africa, the concert parties, and the operas have much of their origin in ritual dramas of the past. Inevitably, the facets and accidents of colonialism, colonial history and slavery have distorted and divided much of the source materials (Banham & Wake, 1976, pp. 1-2). We must remember, therefore, that African communities were and still are intriguing homogeneous beings in all their frightening moral forces related to their facets like communalism, myths, folklores and folktales, religion, proverbs, and their cultures. For instance, *The Blinkards* reflects the performative nature of plays and their cultural origins while depicting the impact of colonialism on African society. The play is a satire that critiques the African elite's adoption of European ways and their rejection of African culture and traditions. The play's performance is crucial to its impact, allowing the audience to witness the characters' behaviour and attitudes

first-hand. The play also reflects past ritual dramas' influence on African theatre. It highlights the impact of colonialism on African culture, which has distorted and divided much of the source materials. Through its themes of cultural clash and hybridity, *The Blinkards* underscores the importance of recognising and preserving the rich cultural heritage of African communities, which are characterised by communalism, myths, folklores, religion, proverbs, and other cultural facets. The play demonstrates that theatre is not just a piece of literature to be read but dimensional literature that comes to life on stage and reflects African communities' complex, cohesive nature. Overall, *The Blinkards* is a poignant commentary on the cultural and social issues of its time and a reminder of the importance of recognising and preserving the cultural heritage of Africa.

### **Theatre in Ghana Before the Arrival of the Europeans**

Pre-colonial Ghana was prosperous with community-based activities and performances related to its tribal social life culturally, belief-wise, and religiously, based on actual events, while others were imaginative. These performances were already fulfilled or about to be fulfilled in the future. For instance, whenever the tribal war heroes wanted to tell their community what had already happened on the battlefield with their tribal foes, they imitated or enacted how the actual incident occurred. Before the arrival of the Europeans, the traditional theatre performed in present-day Ghana could be grouped under five major categories. These ritual dramas included the rites of passage, all forms of initiations performed by religious sects, etc. Ceremonial dramas, which featured festivals, funeral rites, hunting tales, war-like enactments, etc., narrative dramas involved folk tales (storytelling), riddles, dilemma tales, sagas, legends, myths, etc., pastimes, game dramas which were inspired by *oware*, *atsidada*, children games, etc., and incidental dramas which harboured daily life activities including traditional music and dances by groups, processions by the people et cetera. Interestingly, these performances were ubiquitous and integral to every traditional community. These performances were and are still part of people's everyday lives and have functions beyond mere entertainment with the markers of traditional theatre, which had no gate fees charged, but instead, they are participatory.

### **Theatre in Ghana after the arrival of the Europeans**

Roots in Ghana go back to colonial times when the colonial administrators employed drama as a propaganda tool. After the arrival of the Europeans, an indigenous form of itinerant theatre which dates to the early 1900s, including the traditional theatre performed in Ghanaian society, metamorphosed into three major categories: the Concert Party/Popular Theatre, Literary Drama or theatre, and the Community Theatre (the now Theatre for Development). Traditional forms of theatre continue to exist, evolve, and remain a part of Ghanaian life. They are the prerogatives of any active living soul, permeating every individual's daily life. There are movements towards a professional theatre industry, but we still have some ways to go. A more stable political and economic environment will aid this process. African theatre is entertainment, but it can also be aesthetically, politically, socially, and spiritually committed, and often it is all these things simultaneously that make the African behave the way he/she does. At its best, African theatre is a total experience of mind, body and soul which engages with and feeds off a highly responsive, involved, and vocal audience (Banham and Plastow, 1999, p. vii). Indeed, the professional theatre in Ghana now, where artists live off their art, had Governmental support and rapid growth and started at the peak of 1957s when Dr Kwame Nkrumah, the first Prime Minister and the first President of the then Gold Coast (later named Ghana) gained the power to lead the nation. Dr Kwame Nkrumah's attempts to revive the tradition catapulted the establishment of the Ghana National Theatre Movement.

### **Origin of the Imitation**

It is established that cinema had existed in Ghana since 1910 when George Geppert began projecting slides at the Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) in Accra (Aveh, 2010), and this is what Collins postulates as:

A third foreign influence on the concert party came through films that began to show from around the First World War and starred Charlie Chaplin [silent movies] and the blackface comedian Al Jolson. Fourthly, vaudeville and music hall were brought to the country by visiting artists, including African-American and Caribbean ones (Collins, 1996, p. vii).

While tracing the theatre in Ghanaian, some critics opine that African theatre or drama, exemplified by Ghana in this context, is developed due to European influence, especially after the colonial invasion. However, many others believed that the origin of Ghanaian theatre or drama is rooted in the dramatic ritual and magic practices, dances, music, songs, and drumming, of African communities, which were frequent in pre-colonial Africa, which Ghana is not exempted. David Kerr postulates that:

There has been heated debate as to whether drama did or did not exist in pre-colonial Africa and to what extent it could or should be distinguished from rituals. Much of this confusion is caused by using English words like 'drama', 'theatre' and 'ritual', which are loaded with meanings derived from European rather than African culture (David Kerr, 1995, p. 1).

By then, the question one must ask is, 'What is drama or theatre after all?' or 'What constitutes drama or theatre

after all?' Theatre can be defined as an activity in which an actor takes a [another character's] role other than him or herself and communicates with the audience in the forms of drama, dance, music, mime, and masquerade and to send a message to such audience (Biko, 1978).

### **The Concept of the Play**

A blinkard is someone who has evil eyes, a dim-witted or a stupid person or an idiot. Imitation means following as a model, making a copy, counterpart or semblance of something or someone. Therefore, *The Blinkards* is a satirical comedy piece (play) which ridicules or exposes its subject as an intended means of provoking change, where humour, irony and exaggeration are often used to aid this. The negative attitudes of the society towards her own socio-cultural and even political values, and instead seeing the values of the 'colonial master' as superior and preferable, are the central themes the piece tries to address (Owusu & Asante, 2009, p. 1). Based on these explanations, we could term *The Blinkards* as a blind imitation story which revolves around Mrs Borofosem, a semi-educated woman who recently returned from England to indoctrinate her husband, the members of the Cosmopolitan Club and the whole society. The members see everything Ghanaian as bad and so must be avoided. In contrast, everything European is good and must be imitated without recourse to questioning the implication of their behaviour.

However, Mr Onyimdze, a young barrister, thinks that Ghanaians can learn something from Europeans but must remember their culture. This confuses Mr Okadu, who marries Miss Tsiba, the daughter of Mr Tsiba and Na Sompaa, who does not follow the Fante culture and tradition. Eventually, Mr Onyimdze rescues Miss Tsiba from Mr Okadu upon winning a bigamy case involving Mr Okadu and Miss. Tsiba. This victory leads to a turning point in the life of blind imitators, namely Mrs Borofosem, Mr Borofosem and Mr Tsiba, who embrace the Ghanaian culture. It is of these views that this essay attempts to demonstrate and establish the significant cases of what blind imitations are in *The Blinkards* concerning the anglicisation of lifestyles, which include but are not limited to marriage, food and drink, clothing, language, and religion.

### **Anglicisation of Marriage**

Marriage in *The Blinkards* is also the anglicisation type. The progenitor of this concept is Mrs Borofosem, who compels her husband to call her "duckie", and I will call you darling' (p. 11), while Mr Onyimdze does not see any reason in marrying a white girl. Mr Onyimdze admits, 'If I wanted to marry, I should marry her. I do not see sense in bringing out a white girl when one can marry here' (p. 33). Contrary to Mr Onyimdze's view, Mr Okadu admits, 'I wish I'd go to England.... there ...I shall try to marry a real English wife' (p. 45). We also see Mr Okadu, who reads a book about marriage and implements it. Mr Okadu sees himself engaged to Miss Tsiba and maintains, 'But we are engaged in English fashion' (p. 69). He refuses to heed Mr Onyimdze's advice and marries Miss Tsiba.

Moreover, Mrs Borofosem fuels this by persuading Mr Tsiba to accept the engagement because 'they have engaged in English fashion' (p. 73). She adds that 'You see, we want to be English. Mr Okadu is almost a white man' (p. 75). At the Cosmopolitan Club meeting, Mr Okadu reiterates his views on the anglicisation of marriage by saying, 'Without the Europeans, there would be no churches and without churches, we could not be married: there would be no weddings...without Europeans, there will be no lorries, and only lorry-weddings are grand' (p. 107 and 109). He ends his speech with a remark on anglicised marriage at his wedding reception, saying, 'our matrimonial and connubial amiability assuring our nuptial knot is inextricably woven with the minister of God Almighty (p. 117).

Eventually, Mr Tsiba tells Mr Okadu, 'But you must order things from England. If you make them here, the wedding will not be grand. Order things from England, Also, have lorry-wedding' (p. 77). This situation angers Na Sompaa, and she protests vehemently that 'Nobody has asked my daughter in marriage: Nobody has come to pay the earnest money for engagements' (p. 76 and 78). This shows that Mr Borofosem and Mr Okadu's attempt to anglicise marriage is seriously resisted. Na Sompaa makes a valid point 'Do those who are taken to Churches go before the earnest money for their engagement is paid?' (p. 78). This proposition is in line with what Mr Onyimdze tells Mr Okadu 'If you do not pay the damages required by native custom, and afterwards make as much amends as possible, in such a case, by getting properly engaged to her, consider yourself dismissed from my office' (p. 81 and 83). We again see Nana Katawerwa, the mother of Na Sompaa and grandmother to Miss Tsiba, who holds a different opinion on the anglicisation of marriage. Nana sees "wedding should be celebrated in the night" (p. 122 and 124) in which Mr Tsiba attempts to correct her that they "did it in the English manner" (p. 124). Nana's response to this is "If this is English, then the English are barbarians" (p.124) after which she takes Miss Tsiba away. This led to a lawsuit against Miss Tsiba for bigamy. Mr Onyimdze rescues Miss Tsiba by winning the case and tells us that "I am glad I won that case. It will knock a good deal of nonsense out of our young men and young women who ...despise the native form of marriage" (p. 149). Mrs Borofosem concludes the discussion on the anglicisation of marriage's saying, "If only we were national, we should be more rational and infinitely more respectable" (p. 173) because "we of the so-called enlightened days to know little or nothing

of these grand old customs" (Awiagah, 2009, p. 138).

### **Anglicisation of Food and Drinking**

Another central point that Kobina Sekyi presents is the anglicisation of food and drinks. From the play text, and even in our society now, some Ghanaians or Africans deliberately want to change everything from African or Ghanaian to European. They want to Europeanise themselves through food and drinks. Mrs Borofosem starts this by telling Nyamekye to tell the cook, "...if he does not serve up European sweets with any dinner he prepares. I shall dismiss him" (p. 12). Similarly, she remarks, "Formerly, if I had neither friend nor roasted plantain after meals, I felt as if I had eaten nothing" (p. 12).

This establishes how Mrs Borofosem wants to anglicise herself. She feels furious when her husband eats native food. She puts it that "You have eaten native chop all the time I am away. Scandalous! Shocking!" (p. 17). She also teaches Miss Tsiba to "take chocolate. I recommend creamy ones. All young ladies in English chop creamy chocolates" (p. 37). Contrary, Mr Onyimdze eats native food and recommends it to Miss Tsiba "Do take some boredze, if you prefer that, I always have a plate instead of afternoon tea" (p. 39). Mr Tsiba, who upholds the ideas of European food, sends his daughter, Miss Tsiba, to Mrs Borofosem said "I want you to make her English ... then she will eat nice European things" (p. 21). In addition, Mr Tsiba instructs his wife to prepare fruit for him, and Na Sompah comes to tell him, "Ever since I was born, I have never seen bananas sliced and fried" (p. 68).

Again Mr Tsiba does not enjoy eating with cutlery but tries to do so as he puts it, "What else can we do? I suppose we must use them" (p. 68). A knock at the door, Mr Tsiba tells Kofi to see who it is and tells his wife, Na Sompah, to "hide the food in the cupboard" (p. 70). Mr Tsiba jumps up excitedly and exits. He comes later "in European clothes (pyjamas)" (p.71). At the wedding reception, the first member of the Cosmopolitan Club cannot hold himself but to say, "Ah! Cake is nice: all due to white man" (p. 113) and the second member agrees by saying, "Ha! Ha! Let us be glad we are modern born" (p.113). With the drink issues, when Mr Onyimdze wants to serve Mrs Borofosem and Miss Tsiba wine, the latter replies that "If it is port, I do not like it. It smells like Elixir" (p. 37). This shows that Miss Tsiba does not like European drinks.

Contrary to this, Mr Oehumuwa admits, "Without Europeans, we have only palm wine to drink, which only bushmen drink. No scholar who wants to be a gentleman must drink palm wine" (p. 105). He re-echoes this by saying, "And on Sundays before going to chapel or church. It is good to take a little gin and bitters as an appetiser to relish the sermon" (p. 107). Mr Oehumuwa's attachment to European drinks as compared to the native drink as repulsive is manifested here.

Furthermore, we see the myopic manner of the Cosmopolitan Club members when they praise him, saying, "You ought to be a lawyer. Or an auctioneer. Or a minister of the gospel" (p. 107). They feel elated with drinks during the wedding ceremony by saying, "Chin Chin! Ho! Ho! Ho!" (p. 113) after the <sup>third</sup> member says, "Whisky is good: it warms you inside. He! He!" (p. 113). The effects of drunkenness are felt primarily in Nyamekye's attitude after he gets drunk and his unsuccessful attempt to rape Mrs Borofosem. He apologises, "I remember that I went to visit my brother, the clerk and that he gave me something to drink" (p. 152). Mrs Borofosem states, "Our ways and our things suit our climate. For one thing; our drinks have not the same effect on our people as European drinks have" (p. 173). We learn the most pretty things by enjoying our drinks and avoiding trouble and embarrassment (Awiagah, 2009, p. 140).

### **Anglicisation of Clothing and Dressing**

More so, Kobina Sekyi presents the idea of anglicised clothing. Everything that Kobina Sekyi wants to discuss centres around Mrs Borofosem. She is the leader of fashion in the play. Her name (Borofosem) suggests a European thing. She sets the tone by appearing "in a loose European undress gown lorgnette on the nose" (p. 5) and compels her husband to "wear pyjamas in the house" (p. 9). Mr Borofosem is unable to wear the native dress appropriately, and he voices that "I feel hampered when I put on the native dress because I do not know how to wear it properly: it is always slipping from my shoulder" (p. 9). In effect, Mr Borofosem shows disdain for people in a native dress when she says, "I do not want any people in native dress to come messing up my carpets with their dirty feet" (p. 16). Mrs Borofosem is a blind imitator of fashion because she "Picks up lorgnette, places on her nose and poses before glass" (p. 19), and she says 'That is how Mrs Gush has done it' (p. 19). Mr Tsiba, also guilty of the anglicisation of clothing, sends his daughter to Mrs Borofosem asking her to "teach her (Miss Tsiba) all the things you have learned at London "because" she does not like boots, she wants to go out in native dress" (p. 21). Mr Tsiba tells Mrs Borofosem that 'Lawyer Onyimdze, the one who wears European clothes for court and office and wear a native dress when at home? I do not like him' (p. 75). This assertion shows that Mr Onyimdze is a hybrid person. Mr Onyimdze grunts, 'I have taken off the European sacks and the Inns-of-court gown, which are my working clothes. I have put on the native garb, withdrawn my feet from boots, and put on sandals' (p. 24). This statement shows his hybrid nature. He uses both the native and the European things altogether. The members of the Cosmopolitan Club hold to the notion that 'No member must greet people

in a native dress' (p. 109). Again, Mr Oehumuwa says, "Without these people, we will walk barefoot; we will wear a native dress. Our feet and arms would be naked and indecent" (p. 105). This indicates their disregard for native dress or Ghanaian clothing. Before the play ends, we hear Mr Borofosem says, "I am learning to wear the native dress. The wearing of European clothes makes one too uncomfortable" (p. 154) as the wife also says, "Why, I have forgotten that I wear a native dress. It suits me, isn't it?" (p. 157). This indicates Mr Onyimdze, as Mrs Borofosem puts it, "Really, Mr Onyimdze was right all along the line" (p. 173).

Similarly, religion is presented as an anglicised type in Kobina Sekyi's work. Some characters despise the native religion, while others hold on to it. The first person brought to this view is Mr Okadu, who says, "I am learning to be British and treat with due contempt...the worship of the fetish, from which I am exempt" (p. 45). He again says, "I was baptised an infant-a Christian hedged around, with a prayer from the moment my being was unbound" (p. 45). We also hear him swiping at African Traditional religion by saying, "Without

There would be no churches, and without churches, we could not be married" (p. 107). However, Mr Oehumuwa, the Reader of the treatise at the Cosmopolitan Club meeting, says, "Going to chapel or church is more fashionable" (p. 107). Moreover, we see the Parson to be the representative of Anglicised religion. He stands entirely and directly opposite to the views and lifestyles of Dr Onwiewie and Mr Onyimdze and sees them as "heathens'" (p. 144). He says, "Every Christian should detest heathens. Heathens are the enemies of God" (p. 144). The Parson's follies come to light when he calls Mr. Onyimdze, a child of Satan, also tells the Parson, "If you will rant, rant from your pulpit to the fools who come to hear parsons like you... Go away!" (p. 145). The Parson's overzealous half-educated missionary work makes Nana Katawerwa question his credibility by asking, "Does your religion teach you to hate your neighbour's child?" (p. 144). In addition to the Parson's behaviour towards the older woman, Nana admits: On the contrary, the heathen is the child of God. Those who are satisfied with their customs, they are who are pleasing in the eyes of God. It was not from Europe that we learned to know the nature of God. We worshipped God before white men came here (Sekyi, 1915 [1974], p. 144).

### Anglicisation of Language

In the spheres of language, many indications could show how society despises using local languages in schools and homes. In educational setups, the children are punished severely for speaking the vernacular language. They are, again, made to write in their books, 'I will never speak the vernacular language again' over a hundred times. Alternatively, you would be a fellow pupil or student instructing the fellow to speak a foreign language. Some parents who are not literate try as much as possible to speak a foreign language to their children, and anyone whose child or children cannot speak the foreign language, such children are considered low average learners. This ideology is exemplified in the play as some characters attempt to stop using the local language (Fanti). They instead wish to speak only the English language.

In her attempt, Mrs Borofosem, the leading crusader for the anti-Fanti language, shows how much she understands the English language by making a mockery of herself. This is seen in her conversation with Mr Tsiba, who said, 'Your daughter cannot be able to blush.' Grammatically, the statement must be corrected since 'can' and 'able' mean the same. Another instance is when Mr Borofosem sings in Fanti; Mrs Borofosem becomes furious and tells him, 'It is only bushmen and fishermen and stupids and rascals who sing that song. She is also full of praise for Accra girls because 'Accra girls are better. They speak English like English ladies. In the process, she forces Nyamekye always to say, '... Lunch is on the table, madam.' in which the latter succeeds in saying, 'Dunts on the table, Malam. Therefore, rendering the whole exercise is ridiculous as Miss Tsiba retorts that '... If you do not let me speak Fanti, I shall run away.

Just as Mrs Borofosem makes a mockery of herself, Mr Tsiba, too, does the same by trying to speak English. He calls the dictionary 'dickhendry' though he attended school up to 'standard seven'; he makes the funniest statements. He also says:

Mrs Borofosem, some books I have read say, 'All modest young ladies blush at certain times. I know in dickhendry, and I see 'blush' means 'to redden in the face'; also, I look 'modest', and I see 'chest'. However, 'blush' is some English powder for the face. I have never seen it here. Order some for my daughter. I have much cocoa (Sekyi, 1915 [1974], Act. 1, Sc.1, p.5; Owusu & Asante, 2009, p. 63).

The worst offenders in the wrong grammar usage are the Cosmopolitan Club members. Mr Kyerewfo's speech only raises rhetorical questions as he says: 'The manifestations of incredible merrimetations have been displayed in this capacious hall due to wedding matrimonial jollification'. Here, the speaker only wants to use 'big words' that convey no message or meaning to his listeners. He then asks a neighbour undoubtedly, 'Did I speak well'. In this practice, they set a rule that 'no member [of the group] must talk in the native language in the day-time', and in addition to the set-out rule, there is the need for translation if they can always say. However, when Akodee's turn comes for him to make his speech, the members of the Cosmopolitan Club demand that 'no Fanti please, this is European Affair', and they must leave because Akodee continues to speak Fanti. Although Mr Onyimdze went to England, he is the only one who speaks Fanti. This surprises Mrs Borofosem as she

remarks that 'How can you remember?... Most young men cannot understand vernacular when they return from England.'

### Anglicisation of Religion

Thematically, religion is also one of the major concerns in the play. During this, most of the schools utterly despise the native religion. In inference from Mr Okadu's utterances, he notices that 'I am learning to be British and treat with due contempt the worship of the fetish' (p.6). He continues to say, 'I was baptised as an infant-a Christian hedged around with prayer from the moment my being was unborn. By taking a swipe at the African tradition and religion, Okadu puts it that 'without Europeans, there would be no churches, and without churches, we could not be married'. This, too, makes Mr Oehumuwa, the Reader of the treatise at the Cosmopolitan Club meeting, say, 'Going to chapel or church is more fashionable' (p. 107).

However, the Parson is seen as the representation of anglicised religion, and he opposes the traditional religion. He remarks that '... Every Christian should detest heathens. Heathens are the enemies of God. In the office of Mr Onyimdze, the Parson succeeds in misquoting the bible to support his position on the alleged marriage between Miss Tsiba and Mr Okadu. He appears to be an overzealous half-educated missionary. By questioning the Parson's credibility due to the misbehaviour, he put before Nana Katawerwa; the latter asks, 'Does your religion teach you to hate your neighbour's child?' (p.9 ). Nana Katawerwa corrects the Parson that:

It is the heathen who is the child of God. Those who are satisfied with their custom, they are who are pleasing in the eyes of God. It was not from Europe that we learnt to know the nature of God. We worshipped God before white men came here.

These and many more make some writers, poets, playwrights, and novelists fix these idioms of blind imitating European attitudes, ideologies, politics, religions, education, food and drinks, mode of dressing etc., into their work. No wonder then that Kofi Awoonor, in his poem '*We have found a New Land*', fixes the fundamental problems of the Africans. The poem reads:

The intelligent professionals in three pieces  
Sweating away their humanity in driblets  
And wiping the blood from their brow  
We have found a new land  
This side of eternity  
Where our blackness does not matter  
And our songs are dying on our lips  
Standing at hell-gate, you watch those who seek admission  
Still, the familiar that watched and gave you up as the one who had let the side down  
'Come on, old boy; you cannot dress like that, And tears well in my eyes for them  
Those who want to be seen in the best company  
Have adjourned the magic of being themselves  
And in the new land, we have found  
The water is drying from the towel  
Our songs are dead, and we sell them dead to the other side  
Reaching for the Stars, we stop at the house of Moon  
And pause to relearn the wisdom of our fathers (Duerden & Pieterse, 1972, p. 29)

From this piece, Awoonor tries to tell us the problem of 'adjustment for the new African who is caught up in the world of Europe, in the world of the white men, with new outfits, clothes, food, religion, parliament, with the national anthem and a song, what is he going to do about the wisdom of his father?' (Duerden & Pieterse, 1972, p. 29). Awoonor points out, 'What are we going to do with some of the basic traditions of African life, African communal life, the general spirit that did motivate African societies long before the white man came?' (Duerden & Pieterse, 1972, p. 30).

To Awoonor, 'We have not had our education properly in terms of what we are trying to do; we become black Europeans, either Frenchmen as you see in most of the French-speaking African countries, or black Englishmen as you see in most of the English-speaking African countries' (Duerden & Pieterse, 1972, p. 30). We should not argue about the primary differences between the European way of life and the African concept of living. Those who see the other views of African life suggest that African norms, customs and traditions are more affluent for learning. This attests to the fact that Mrs Borofosem contradicts herself in the initial stage by saying: What I cannot understand is that, despite all which makes our lives so enjoyable, our ancestors, whose lives seem so hard to us, lived longer and were happier than we can live or be (Sekyi, 1915 [1974], p. 6). It can thus be said that:

If only we were national, we should be more rational and infinitely more respectable.  
Our ways and our things suit our climate. For one thing, our drinks do not have the same maddening effect on our people as European drinks have. The people of the

old days were wise indeed: if only we followed the customs, they would leave us more and adopt the ways of other races less. We should be at least as healthy as they were (Sekyi, 1915[1974], p. 173). so that we cannot be all that 'born into the world of imitators, worse luck.... and blind imitators, at that' (Sekyi, 1915 [1974] p. 7).

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the article has demonstrated the intricate use of imitation as a device in Kobina Sekyi's satirical play, *The Blinkards*, and its central theme of critiquing the attitudes and behaviours of African elites who mimic European values and customs. The article has posited that imitation is an integral element in perpetuating the shadowy remnants of colonialism in Africa and serves as a tool of subjugation and control. Through exploring the intersection of imitation with other legacies of colonialism, such as the imposition of European languages and the suppression of African cultural traditions, the article highlights how imitation reinforces systems of inequality and domination. The article advocates for a nuanced understanding of the enduring impact of colonialism on contemporary African societies. It emphasises the need to critically examine the role of imitation in perpetuating colonial legacies. By analysing the use of imitation in *The Blinkards*, the article contributes to a broader understanding of the legacies of colonialism in Africa and how they continue to shape contemporary African societies.

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