

# Is the Ghanaian creative spirit and creative writing on the decline now?

BY MICHAEL AKENOO

It appears there had been a continual decline in creative or imagination writing by Ghanaians in the Ghanaian situation since the 1960s up to date. This sordid and unpleasant situation gives much concern to many intellectuals and well educated Ghanaians in all walks of life today.

In retrospect and in the context of this apparent declining of creative/writing by Ghanaians today, there must be reasons behind this unpleasant phenomena which must be identified and put right before it gets out of hand to the detriment of the country. In-dismay and anguish, one could vividly recall the intensive and vibrant creative writing scene which characterised the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s in Ghana, when there was proliferation of creative writing by Ghanaians in the country.

Indisputably and clearly, there are two main reasons that have contributed negatively and seriously to this unpleasant creative writing situation in the country. The first major reason is the perennial low level reading culture in the Ghanaian society and the other is the problem or difficulty of publication of creative or imaginative writings in the country.

It is a fact that the perennial problems militating against the development of African literature are that of audience awareness and publication. Although these two problems are not peculiar in the context of African's attitude toward literary works, they are however pronounced or accentuated in the Ghanaian situation; and this greatly hampers the creative spirit among gifted and talented Ghanaians in the arena of creative writing.

I believe and have optimism that the problem of audience awareness in the Ghanaian situation can be tackled and solved considerably and minimised if not eliminated completely. In the solution of this problem, I suggest that there should be a strong collaboration in efforts by the government and benevolent and charitable wealthy Ghanaians business men and women, well-educated concerned Ghanaians, and also international organisations such as UNESCO, Fred Adenaur, Ford Foundation etc in terms of finance to initiate and organise activities and programmes that are intended to raise the reading culture among

Ghanaians.

Definitely, a higher reading culture among Ghanaians will tremendously help to accelerate the economic growth and development of Ghana's growth because Sir Francis Bacon, the renowned English lawyer once stated that, "Reading maketh a man" and to me, in the context of this statement and expansion in the Ghanaian situation, I will say that a higher reading culture among Ghanaians will definitely empower Ghanaians with knowledge and enlightenment; and this in turn will make Gha-

tion has also established a literary magazine for the youth known as GAW SOP Filla. The magazine features literary writings and articles from second cycle institutions as well members of the Association.

The Ghana Association Of Writers hope that these literacy programmes and activities will yield much dividends to help students greatly to improve and raise high the reading and writing cultures in the youth in Ghanaian schools. It is very necessary that the government of Ghana must give its full support in terms of

Ghanaians in various walks of life, such as fishermen, market women and traders. And this will raise the reading culture in the Ghanaian society significantly.

To this end, I suggest that the Ghana Association of Writers should embark on expansion of their activities and programmes to embrace every Ghanaian in order to meet its mission and vision to empower Ghanaians with reading and writing cultures. The Association should now solicit the assistance of the government and other stakeholders as mentioned in this presentation.

The activities and programmes intended for the raising high of the cultures of reading and writing in the Ghanaian society today should be on a massive scale country-wide similar to that of the mass literacy campaign of the 1960s organised by Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah and his CPP government.

In the case of the gloomy atmosphere of the publication situation in the country now, especially in the area of creative and imaginative writings by Ghanaians, I suggest that the government of Ghana should try and give some financial assistance to all gifted and highly talented Ghanaian creative artists such as authors, play wrights, poets etc to enable them to get their works published. Furthermore, I suggest that individual Ghanaian creative artists should co-operate and team up to establish publishing houses for

the publication of their works. In this way, they must try to imitate their Nigerian counterparts, who I think to the best of my knowledge are better in this respect than their Ghanaian counterparts.

In conclusion, I am convinced beyond any reasonable doubt that if the government of Ghana will readily lend its full support in terms of money and logistics to formidable organisations like the Ghana Association of Writers, the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service as well as individually highly gifted and talented Ghanaian creative artists, the crusade and efforts to raise high the reading and writing cultures among Ghanaians in the country today will definitely be put on a higher scale for Ghana to witness a vibrant and intensive reading and writing scene; which in turn will also help the country to move very fast to achieve great economic growth and development within the shortest possible time from now. For a higher reading, the culture that exists in a nation is a guarantee to her all round success in economic growth and development.

Ghana at all costs should become a great reading and writing nation in the 21st century, so that she can realise her lofty dreams and aspiration to achieve great development and prosperity.

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naians capable of solving their economic and developmental problems with ease.

It is significant to note that the high reading culture among Euro-Americans is one of the main factors that account for their high levels of economic prosperity advancement and development. A higher reading conscious culture of a nation is prerequisite to her high economic growth and development! And this a fact which cannot be disputed in any way!

The Ghana Writers Association (GWA) must be commended for taking some initiatives and plans to improve and raise high the reading culture among Ghanaians. For instance, the Association is at present collaborating with the Ghana Education Service to encourage reading and writing in Ghana. This organisation has initiated and organised some activities and programmes such as GAW SOP, which is an outreach schools programme involving senior high schools in all the regions of Ghana.

The Association has also established literacy clubs in senior high schools in the country, which are run by the students with the assistance of their teachers. There is also another programme of the Association dubbed GAW Sunday which comes on the first Sunday of every month. This programme features poetry recitals, storytelling, book readings, and spoken word performances. The Associa-

finance and logistics to the Ghana Association of Writers to carry out all its planned activities intended to raise high the culture of reading among Ghanaian youth in schools.

I am of the opinion that if the government of Ghana will give its maximum support to the Ghana Association of Writers as I had mentioned in the foregoing, the Association will be in a position to extend its activities and programmes to embrace all adult



• An empty writers desk

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