Contemporary Journal of African Studies Vol. 4. No. 2 (2017) 1-35

Akan Ananse Stories, Yorùbá Ìjàpá Tales, and the Dikènga Theory: Worldview and Structure[1]

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Abstract

In this paper, we aim to use *Dikenga*, the cosmogram of the Bakôngo, as an Afrikan cosmological, philosophical, conceptual, and theoretical framework to analyze the structure of Akan *Ananse* and Yorùbá *Ìjàpá* stories. According to Fu-Kiau, "nothing exists that does not follow the steps of the cyclical Kongo cosmogram" (Fu-Kiau 1994: 26). This bold hypothesis is tested in this study by applying what we term the "*Dikènga* theory of literary analysis" to the aforementioned stories. We find that this theoretical framework can help us shift away from concepts of "storylines" and "timelines" to reveal the patterned and cyclical nature of material, spatial and temporal phenomena. Further, we find such an approach may deepen our understanding of these stories as manifestations of a shared Afrikan worldview.

Keywords: Ananse, Ìjàpá, Dikènga, worldview, structure

Résumé

Dans cet article, nous visons à utiliser Dikenga, le cosmogramme du Bakôngo, comme un cadre cosmologique, philosophique, théorique et conceptuel Afrikan pour analyser la structure des histoires d'Akan Ananse et Yorùbá Ìjàpá. Selon Fu-Kiau, "il n'existe rien qui ne suit pas les étapes du cosmogramme Kongo cyclique" (Fu-Kiau 1994: 26). Cette hypothèse audacieuse est testée dans cette étude en appliquant ce que nous appelons la «théorie Dikènga de l'analyse littéraire» aux histoires susmentionnées. Nous trouvons que ce cadre théorique peut nous aider à nous éloigner des concepts de «scénarios» et de «délais» pour révéler la nature structurale et cyclique des phénomènes matériels, spatiaux et temporels. De plus, nous trouvons une telle approche peut approfondir notre compréhension de ces histoires comme des manifestations d'une vision du monde Afrikan partagée.

Mots-clés: *Ananse*, *Ìjàpá*, *Dikènga*, cosmologie, structure

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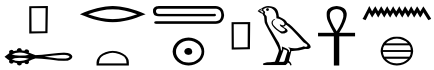
[1] This article is dedicated to the loving memory of my late Kikôngo teacher, N'kulu Kimbwandende kia Bunseki Fu-Kiâu, *mȝᶜ ḫrw* 'true of voice,' and the late Baba Henry Ervin Van Kirksey, *mȝᶜ ḫrw* 'true of voice.'

Introduction



pḫrt pw ʿnḫ 'Life is a cycle' (Faulkner 1956, p. 22)

This article will examine parallels between Akan *Ananse* 'Spider' stories and Yorùbá *Ìjàpá* 'Tortoise' tales with regard to worldview and structure. *Dikènga*, the Kôngo Cosmogram, will be advanced and tested as to whether it may be regarded as a manifestation of a shared Afrikan[2] worldview. Secondly, the structure of these stories will be analyzed using what is advanced in this article as the "*Dikènga* Theory of Oral (and Written) Literary Structure." While various applications of *Dikenga* can be found in the literature, it is undoubtedly unprecedented to use a theoretical framework from Kôngo to describe, explain, and analyze stories found in modern-day Ghana and Nigeria (Martinez-Ruiz 2007, Morgan 2011). This begs the question of why, therefore, would the *Dikènga* cosmogram be used in this structural literary analysis of these stories? The answer is simple. In Ɔsagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's speech entitled "the African Genius" inaugurating the official opening of the University of Ghana's Institute of African Studies, he asserted that:

> One essential function of this Institute must surely be to study the history, culture and institutions, languages and arts of Ghana and of Africa **in new African-centred ways** (Nkrumah 1963). (emphasis mine).

In this light, simply because such an endeavor is unprecedented, that, alone, should not dissuade one staying true to the course of studying Afrika in new Afrikan-centered ways. Rather, Afrikan scholars have the responsibility to pursue such uncharted courses as an intentional divergence from the propositions and pre-suppositions of the colonial epoch of the past or those of the neo-colonial epoch, in which we currently find ourselves (Nkrumah 1963). In this same vein, it becomes imperative to transcend Afrika's largely arbitrary Berlin-conference-inherited borders in an attempt to study things Afrikan in new Afrikan-centered ways by showing how countless Afrikans, irrespective of their location, share the core cosmological principles as manifested in the *Dikènga* cosmogram. Moreover, if we can and

[2] As I have argued elsewhere, Afrika (n.)/Afrikan (adj.) is preferred to "Africa" whenever possible as the word is consistently spelled in various Afrikan languages with a /k/.

do, indeed, often use "Western" or Eurasian[3] (most notably English, French, German, Russian, Greek, etc.) concepts and conceptual frameworks under the guise of universality to analyze Afrikan literature and other Afrikan phenomena, then we can certainly utilize concepts from Afrika for the same purpose. In other words, if those demonstrably foreign concepts and analytical tools can be said to be universal and/or applicable to the Afrikan context, then Afrikan tools can, at the very least, be applied to Afrika, the global Afrikan world, and possibly beyond.

Another reason for using *Dikènga* is that much of the study in Afrika and of Afrika – not just literary study – operates from what may be termed a "forward/backward" paradigm. This is to say, Afrikans of the continent and elsewhere in the Afrikan world tend to look "forwards" to Eurasians for theoretical frameworks and then look back towards the individual ethnic group (or village) as the object of study. Here, it is argued that it may rather be useful for us to look laterally within the rich tradition of Afrikan deep thought for theoretical frameworks and conceptual paradigms. Another way of looking at it is to say that Afrikan-centered may also entail a composite Afrikan approach, which looks at underlying commonalities in addition to the more prevalent culturally/linguistically/ethnically/nationally-specific approach which focuses primarily or solely on individual pre-colonial or neo-colonial fragments of the whole. A composite approach, on the other hand, empowers one with the ability to broaden one's world view to deal with the global Afrikan world instead of dismembered and disconnected fragments (Armah 2010).

As further justification of this approach, Ɔsagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah gave yet another ideological imperative stating unequivocally that the Institute of African Studies should necessarily:

> […] conceive its function as being to **study Africa, in the widest possible sense** – Africa in all its complexity and diversity, and **its underlying unity** […] **not limited by conventional territorial or regional boundaries. [T]hese investigations must inevitably lead outwards — to the exploration of the connections between** […] **the cultures of other African peoples and other regions of Africa**. Ghana, that is to say, can only be understood in the **total African context** (Nkrumah 1963) (emphasis mine).

Thus, Nkrumah's charge to Afrikan scholars gives us the ideological motivation and clarity of thought with regard to the task of uncovering the

[3] Note that Europe and Asia are one landmass – Eurasia. Thus, this term is preferred instead of arbitrarily choosing to label them as separate entities as is common practice in much of the English-speaking world.

connections between Afrikan people through Afrikan literature in the form of Akan *Ananse* and Yorùbá *Ìjàpá* stories.

Ananse 'Spider' stories – in which the spider is often the central character – come from Akan-speaking areas as indicated on the map in Figure 1. The group is composed of sub-groups such as *Asante, Fante, Akuapem, Akyem, Dɛnkyira, Bɔno, etc*. *Ìjàpá* 'Tortoise' tales – which, similarly, often feature the tortoise as the central character – come from Yorùbá land comprising *Ọ̀yọ́, Èkó, Ẹ̀gbá, Èkìtì*, etc. The *Dikènga* theoretical framework used comes from the *Kôngo* kingdom composed of *Esikôngo, Bavili*, etc.

Figure 1: Diachronic Map of Pre-Colonial Afrikan Empires (Israel 2007)

With regard to scope, 65 written *Ìjàpá* tales and 90 written *Ananse* stories were studied and analyzed (Rattray 1930, Babalola 1973, 1979, Hutchison 1994). Additionally, 23 oral *Àlọ́ àpamọ̀* "riddle stories" and 4 oral *Àlọ́ àpagbè* "narrative stories," as well as 57 oral *Ananse* stories from various sources including personal recordings, were studied (Trustees 2009, Bolajiutube 2012, Masters 2012, Afolayan 2013, Hassan 2013). In short, about 239 tales were consulted in total in pursuit commonalities in terms of structure and worldview.

As mentioned above, the *Dikènga* cosmogram will be used for the structural analysis of the tales studied. As articulated by Fu-Kiau:

> According to Kongo teaching, **nothing exists that does not follow the steps of the cyclical Kongo cosmogram**. People, animals, inventions, social systems, and so on are conceived (*yakwa/yindulwa*) and live through a kind of pregnancy (Stage 1), are born (*butwa*) (Stage 2), mature (*kula*) (Stage 3), and die (*fwa*) at the collision stage **in order to undergo change** (Stage 4) (Fu-Kiau 1994: 26-7) (emphasis mine).

It is particularly important to note that Fu-Kiau does not limit the scope of that which follows the *Dikènga* cycle solely to Congolese phenomena, but rather asserts that nothing exists that does not follow the steps outlined – including the universe and creation itself. This quote is particularly important because it makes a strong prediction and presents a testable hypothesis which is essentially that if all things are said to follow the steps of the cyclical *Dikènga* Cosmogram, then indigenous stories should also be able to be evaluated within the *Dikènga* structural framework. Therefore, in this article, Akan *Ananse* stories and Yorùbá *Ìjàpá* tales will be analyzed to prove or disprove this assertion under the logical proposition that any phenomenon that is held to be true universally should also be true for any subset of the whole – especially when that subset is derived from a common foundational Afrikan worldview. Indeed, if, in theory, all things follow these steps, so too should these stories.

Worldview

Figure 2: Freytag's Pyramid (BrokenSegue 2006)

It is in this light that the *Dikènga* cosmogram can serve as a viable alternative that, in time, may come to supplant currently dominant structural frameworks used in the analysis of oral and/or written literature. Indeed, quite recently, we find literary scholars who are still using Freytag's model to say that narratives go from exposition to a rising action, climax, falling action, and then denouement (Freytag 1863, Mc Intyre 2006, Kubheka 2014). While pyramids themselves are Afrikan phenomena with the vast majority of them constructed far into the interior of Afrika in the country now known as Sudan, if we are to adopt a pyramid structure analogy in application to narrative structure, such an application should be couched in terms of the cosmological

significance of pyramids to Afrikan people. Moreover, it is argued that if, indeed, scholars can use Freytag's appropriation of the Afrikan pyramid as shown in Figure 2, then most certainly any contemporary Afrikan scholar of oral (and/or written) literature should not shy away from using other, perhaps more appropriate endogenous structural frameworks rooted in the Afrikan worldview.

To elucidate, *Dikènga*, also known as *Tendwa nza Kôngo* as shown in Figure 3, is a cosmogram of the Bâkongo 'People of the Congo' featuring four major stage markers around the perimeter of a circle.

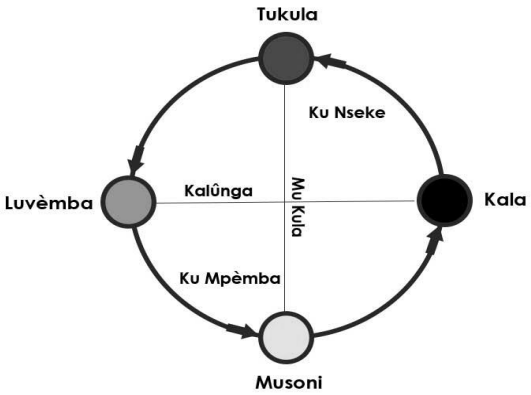


Figure 3: Dikènga Cosmogram (Kambon)

According to Fu-Kiau, the stage known as *Musoni* is the stage of the conception of ideas, human beings, and all things conceivable. *Musoni* corresponds to when the sun is at midnight and is represented by a yellow color. Although the sun has set and therefore cannot be seen directly by the observer, it is understood to still exist. Similarly, when a person dies, he/she is understood to still exist in the same fundamental way as the human being is conceived of as *ntângu a môyo* 'a living sun' (Fu-Kiau 1994: 26).[4]

By the same token, matter is not created or destroyed – it simply changes form. One of the most ancient instantiations of this concept is found in the classical Nile Valley wherein we find the concept of *ḫpr* 'exist, be, come into being, become, change (into), occur, happen, come to pass' which incorporates notions of transformation from one state/stage of being to another (Dickson 2006: 299). While this is a principle fundamental to physics, as exemplified in the law of conservation of energy and the law of conservation of mass, it is something that has been known by the Bakôngo and many other Afrikan people for millennia as the fundamental cosmological basis of countless cultural expressions including libation, sacrifice, ancestor veneration, reincarnation names, *etc*. However, the

[4] Because the same word, *ntângu* is used for both 'sun' and 'time' in Kikôngo, this could also be translated as 'vital time, time of life' as in the cited text.

difference is that when Afrikans say it, it is oftentimes termed as "pagan and heathen" but then when physicists tell us the exact same thing, it goes unquestioned. Needless to say, such a state of affairs is problematic for many reasons.

After *Musoni*, the next stage is *Kala*, illustrated in Black, which represents birth, sunrise, and, in this case, the beginning of the story. Next, *Tukula*, associated with the color red, represents the sun at noon. It corresponds to the highest point in a person's life and the highest point in the story as will be demonstrated. The next stage is *Luvèmba*, shown in a grey color. This represents sunset. This is the stage of the transformation that occurs when a person passes on. However, in the Afrikan worldview, this is not truly the end. Indeed, Fu-Kiau asserts that "Dying is not an end. Dying for the Kongo is just going on vacation" (Fu-Kiau 2001b). The underlying concept is articulated in the proverb "'*tufwanga mu soba*' — we die in order to undergo change" (Fu-Kiau 1994: 27) *Luvèmba* is where the story comes to its closing formula but continues to exist in other forms. According to Fu-Kiau, worth quoting at length:

> The Kongo cosmogram is the foundation of Kongo society. The circle made by the sun's movement is the first geometric picture given to human beings. We move the same way the sun moves: we wake up, are active, **die, then come back**. […] This cosmogram is in constant motion, as the circle is in motion (Fu-Kiau 2001b) (emphasis mine).

Thus, *Dikènga* provides an extended analogy for understanding story structure superimposed upon the four cardinal points of the circle. *Musoni*, is the idea of the story; it is the *ngînga* 'seed'; it is conception at midnight. *Kala* is the beginning of the story like dawn or the transformation occurring from a child's transition from the ancestral realm via birth up to the naming ceremony; the formal rising of the story as a living sun. Significantly, rituals such as naming ceremonies that mark transitions from one stage of life to another are comparable to opening formulae in stories, which also mark the transition from one stage to another; from the ideational state to realization via storytelling. *Tukula* is the climax of the story which is analogous to the climax of one's life which, for Afrikan people, is also marked with ritual such as being instated, enskinned or enstooled as a ruler of one's people. Likewise, *Luvèmba* is end of the story, which is like the *ayie* 'funeral' (Akan) or *ìsìnkú* 'funeral/burial' (Yorùbá) which are, in turn, comparable to the closing formulae which mark the end of the story (Fu-Kiau 1991, 1994, 2001a).

Although *Dikènga* is used in this article due to its poignant articulation and visualization of these ideas and principles, these types of solar metaphors

and analogies are found not only among the Bakôngo people but are common throughout Afrika and can even be found in other parts of the global Afrikan world. Among the Yorùbá, for example, proverbs exist such as:

1. *Ayé l'a bá 'Fá […]* ***ọ̀sán gangan*** *nìgbàgbọ́*
   World FOC'1PL join Ifá […] noon exactly FOC-belief
   wọlé dé.
   enter-house arrive.
   'We came to meet Ifá (Yorùbá divination system) in the world […] It was not until high noon that Christianity appeared on the scene.' (Adelowo 2014: 340)

What the proverb in example (1) demonstrates is a conceptualization of the entire history of Yorùbá people since creation as a single day saying that it was not until relatively recently that Christianity came on the scene. The concept is also evinced in common Yorùbá names such as *Bántálẹ́*:

2. *Bá-n-t****álẹ́***
   join-me-up to-**night**
   'Stay with me until night' (i.e., do not die young)

In this analogy, night is not conceived of in terms of the time span of a single day, but rather as part of the entire lifespan of a human being. The name, *Bántálẹ́*, therefore means "do not die young." We can also find examples of sun-position-as-life-stage analogies within Yorùbá *Ìjàpá* stories themselves, such as in the following selections:

3. *Àwọn jàndùkú díẹ̀ t'ó yínmú sí*
   PL ruffian few REL'3SG poke out nose to
   ìkéde yìí fi ọ̀run jìfà
   announcement DEM take sky obtain-reward
   l'ọ́sǎngangan *aiyé wọn.*[5]
   at'high-noon world 3PL
   'Those few ruffians who flouted this announcement were executed before the (successful) completion of their lives' (Babalola 1979: 84)

[5] Although orthographical standards for writing Yorùbá have changed, examples here are given as they appear in the original text.

4. *Ẹni* *t'ó* *l'ọ́kọ* *á* *di*
   Someone REL'3SG have'husband HAB become
   opó ***l'ọ́sǎngangan***.
   widow at'high-noon
   'A married woman would suddenly become a widow.' (Babalola 1979: 28)

There is also a common idiom in Yorùbá that uses a solar position analogy:

5. *Àárọ̀* *ọjọ́*
   morning day
   'Childhood' (Fabunmi 1985: 11)

Similar sun-position-as-life-stage analogies exist among the Akan people. In lyrics from a song called "M'adamfo" by Bisa Kdei, he cites the following well-known Akan proverb:

6. *Adamfofa* *nso* *nti* *na* *ɔtwe*
   Friend-making also therefore FOC duiker
   nya-a *n'awia-wu*.
   obtain-COMPL 3SG.POSS'sunshine-death.
   'It is because of friendship that the small antelope/duiker died young.' (Kdei 2013)

In other words, the duiker did not get all the way to the "evening" of its life or it did not reach old age. A comparable example is found in the following libation text:

7. *Mo-m-ma* *yɛ-n-nya* *amaneɛ,*
   2PL-NEG-allow 1PL-NEG-obtain catastrophe,
   Mo-m-ma *yɛn* *ani* *m-fira,*
   2PL-NEG-allow 1PL eye NEG-wrap,
   Mo-m-ma *yɛn* *aso* *n-si,*
   2PL-NEG-allow 1PL ear NEG-clog,
   Mo-m-ma *yɛ-n-wu* *awia-wuo.*
   2PL-NEG-allow 1PL-NEG-die sunshine-death.
   'Don't allow us to encounter disaster, don't allow us to become blind, don't allow us to become deaf, don't allow us to die young' (Mensah 2010).

Dzobo cites another Akan libation text in translation keeping with this same theme:

8. Don't let me die in the day,
   Don't let me die at night,
   Don't let me die at all,
   But let me die.

In Dzobo's discussion of the text, he explains thusly:

> The point of the first is fairly obvious, but that of the second needs some explaining. In the second one, which is a prayer proverb, the individual expresses his desire to see and appreciate the beauty of life and nature (line one) and to be sexually active (line two) so as to fulfill his creative being and have many children who may perpetuate his name, beliefs and philosophy of life (line three). After he has fulfilled his destiny he would be happy to join the fathers (line 4). In this proverb we see the indigenous understanding of life and death as polar opposites, which complement each other. (Dzobo 1992: 98)

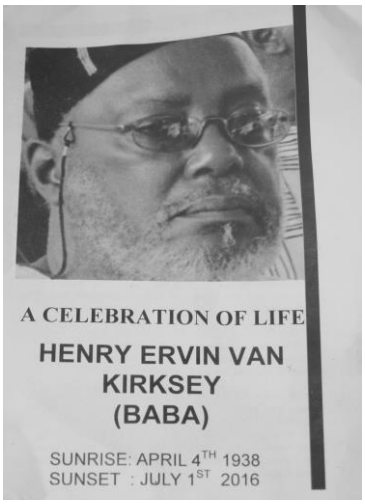


Figure 4: Birth as Sunrise; Death as Sunset on a Memorial Service Flyer (Photo Credit Kambon)

Again, the first line is about living life to its fullest and reaching eldership and uses the analogy to refer to the entire life span. The lifespan reference is layered on top of "don't let me die at night," which is but a single day's duration saying that night is the time at which procreation (and conception) occurs. We see, quite profoundly, that the libation text itself extends and layers these analogies at different levels (a lifetime/a day's duration) demonstrating an awareness of the philosophical and cosmological principles found in *Dikènga*. This idea is echoed in the Akan goldweight proverb *Abɔdeɛ ne abrabɔ mu ntaa* 'Creation and life (are) twins' (Ofori-Ansa 1997). A major point, as correctly noted by Dzobo, is the notion of complementarity. It is very important to understand that these ideas are conceptualized by Afrikan people as complementary opposites (both necessary parts of a whole) in contradistinction with more prototypically Eurasian conceptions of diametric opposites wherein what are actually two aspects of the same thing are typically seen as being against or in conflict with each other.

While this sun-position-as-life-stage analogy is common to the Bakôngo, Yorùbá, and Akan, it is also interesting to note that this analogy has persisted among Afrikans from elsewhere in the global Afrikan world as well as seen in Figure 4. By way of another example, in the song "Nightshift," the Commodores – not known by any stretch of the imagination for their particularly "Afrikan-centered consciousness" – nonetheless sang a tribute to R&B singers Marvin Gaye and Jackie Wilson – both deceased at the time of the recording. In the lyrics of the song, they sing that although the two luminaries of their genre have passed away, they know that both of them continue to sing "on the nightshift."

9. Marvin […] Say you will sing your songs
Forevermore (evermore)
Gonna be some sweet sounds
Coming down on the **nightshift**
I bet you're singing proud
Oh, I bet you'll pull a crowd
Gonna be a **long night**
It's gonna be all right
On the **nightshift**
Oh you found another home
I know you're not alone
On the **nightshift**
[…]
Jackie […] Gonna miss your sweet voice
That soulful voice
On the **nightshift**
We all remember you
Ooh, the songs are coming through
At the **end of a long day**
It's gonna be okay
On the **nightshift**
You found another home
I know you're not alone
On the **nightshift** (Commodores 1985)

This concept can also be heard in Talib Kweli's chorus to the song "Good Mourning" (a pun on the homophonous morning) in which he sings:

10. **Good mourning, good afternoon, good night**
What have you done with **your life**?
Everybody time comes to be embraced by the light
You only scared to **die** when you ain't livin' right, man
I'm puttin' up a hellafied fight
("**Stay awake** to the ways of the world") (Kweli 2000)

Again, we find that the duration of one's life is analogous to the course of the day from morning to night. A similar concept can be found in the song "A Day in the Life of Benjamin André" in which André Benjamin's lyrics touch on various relationships he has had throughout his life but, as expressed in the title, these interactions are equated to activities of a single day (Benjamin 2003). This is particularly significant in that the duration of

the day as an analogy for the course of life and the duration of night as an analogy for the course of death (merely a continuation of the life process in a transformed state) is part of a shared worldview of Afrikan people both on the continent and elsewhere in the global Afrikan world as seen in these and various other idioms, proverbs, songs, stories, *etc.* (Martinez-Ruiz 2007, Powell 2010).

In the Bakôngo articulation of this shared Afrikan worldview, the sun's position is also indicative of the literal time of day. In Figure 5, the principal hours are labeled with Roman numerals (I-IV) and identified as *Lo biangudi* 'principal hours.' Interspersed between these are the in-between hours labeled (1-4) and identified as *Lo biandwèlo* 'small hours.' Again, this is an articulation of the analogy of the sun's position from the perspective of the viewer standing at the *didi dia ngolo zanzîngila* 'axis/center of vitality' at the intersection of the perpendicular *Kalûnga* (horizontal) and *Mu Kula* (vertical) lines (Fu-Kiau 1994: 29).

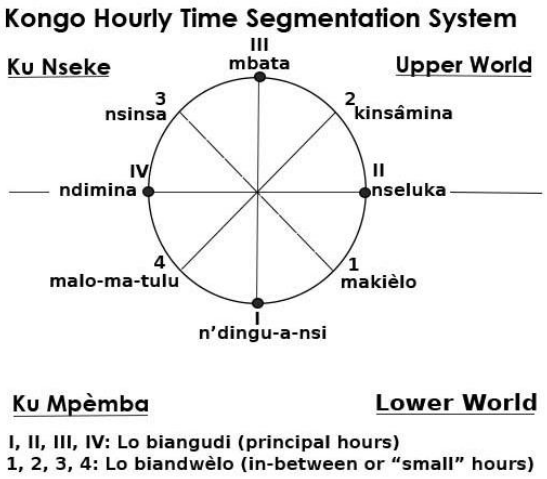


Figure 5: Kongo Hourly Time Segmentation System based upon (Fu-Kiau 1994: 29)

In Figure 6, we can see the similarity between the *Kalûnga* line and the horizon in that both serve as dividing lines at which the upper world, *ku nseke*, and the lower world, *ku mpèmba*, meet.

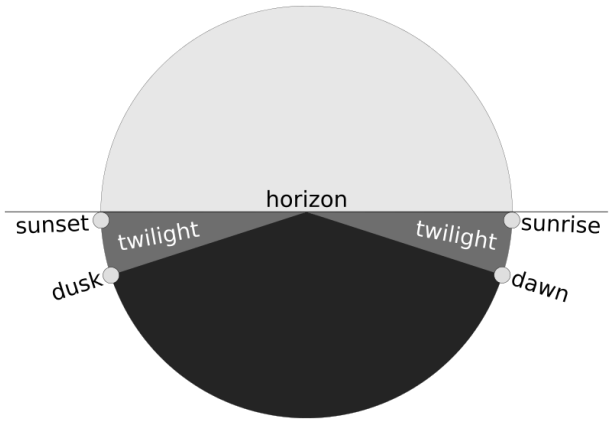


Figure 6: Twilight Description (Full Day) (Carlson 2013)

Structure

Using this anthropocentric viewer's-eye perspective in which the observer's point of view is implicitly advanced as a valid relative and relational reference point, we see that midnight corresponds to the conception of a human being and it is also like the conception of an idea

as illustrated in Table 1. We see twilight as analogous to pregnancy or formulation of a new story based on existing structures. Dawn is similar to birth or a naming ceremony – the ritual through which an Afrikan comes into the world – which is like the inception of a story. Morning follows the dawn in a natural progression and is very much like one's youth or the "exposition" stage of a story. Then comes late morning, which is comparable to adolescence or the "complication" stage of the story.

	SOLAR POSITION (DIKÈNGA)	**HUMAN LIFE**	**STORY STRUCTURE**
I	MIDNIGHT	CONCEPTION	IDEA/CONCEPTION
1	TWILIGHT	PREGNANCY	FORMULATION (BASED ON EXISTING STRUCTURES)
II	DAWN	BIRTH (NAMING CEREMONY)	OPENING FORMULA
2	MORNING	YOUTH	EXPOSITION COMPLICATION
III	NOON	ADULTHOOD	CLIMAX
3	AFTERNOON	ELDERSHIP	DENOUEMENT RESOLUTION
IV	SUNSET	DEATH (FUNERAL)	CONCLUSION (CLOSING FORMULA)
4	EVENING/NIGHT	JUDGMENT/ ANCESTRAL REALM	REFLECTION/ INTERNALIZATION
I	MIDNIGHT	CONCEPTION	IDEA/CONCEPTION

Table 1: Analogous Structures: Sun-Human-Story

In Table 1 we see that noon is analogous to adulthood or the "climax" of the story. Afternoon is analogous to eldership or the "denouement" stage. Sunset is akin to death or the "conclusion;" the closing formula of the *Ananseɛm* 'Ananse (Spider) story' or *Àlọ́ Ìjàpá* 'Ìjàpá (Tortoise) tale.' This stage, how-ever, is where the *Dikènga* theory as

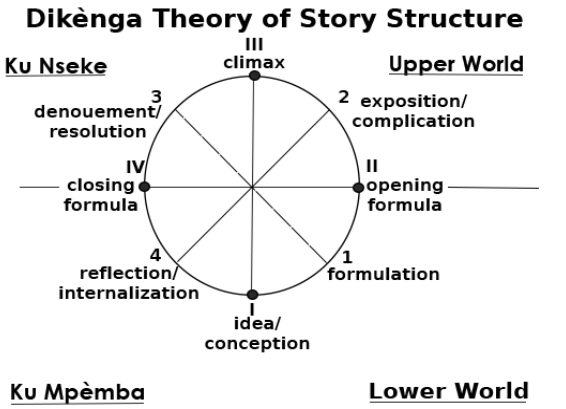


Figure 7: Dikenga Theory of Story Structure

depicted in Figure 7 departs significantly from existing models of oral narrative structure. We find that even though the sun has set, it continues to exist in a form not readily visible to the observer. Similarly, for Afrikan people, when a person dies he/she takes on a form not readily visible to the average observer but, which is still understood as existing in another state. This concept is expressed succinctly in the Akan maxim *Onipa wu a, na ɔnwui* 'When a man dies he is not (really) dead' (Gyekye 1987: 100). It is also expressed in Birago Diop's (1951) poem, *Souffles* 'Breaths' provided in translation from the original French below:

Listen more often to things rather than beings.
Hear the fire's voice,
Hear the voice of water.
In the wind hear the sobbing of the trees,
It is our ancestors breathing.

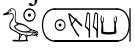
The dead are not gone forever.
They are in the paling shadows,
And in the darkening shadows.
The dead are not beneath the ground,
They are in the rustling tree,
In the murmuring wood,
In the flowing water,
In the still water,
In the lonely place, in the crowd:
The dead are not dead.

[…]
It is the breathing of our ancestors,
Who are not gone, not beneath the ground,
Not dead.

The dead are not gone forever.
They are in a woman's breast,
A child's crying, a glowing ember.
The dead are not beneath the earth,
They are in the flickering fire,
In the weeping plant, the groaning rock,
The wooded place, the home.
The dead are not dead.

Listen more often to things rather than beings.
Hear the fire's voice,
Hear the voice of water.
In the wind hear the sobbing of the trees.
It is the breathing of our ancestors. (Diop 1951: 187-189, Hughes 1960: 182-183)

The core idea expressed in the above poem is that energy and matter – of which our ancestors are composed – are not created or destroyed but are rather merely transformed into the various forms that surround us as poignantly articulated in the poem. Indeed, if water, for example, comprises approximately 60% of the human body, that water does not disappear upon a person dying but is rather recycled back into the larger system as the water in rain, lakes, clouds, and rivers. Similarly, upon death, the other tangible and intangible elements that make up the human being are gradually released back into the environment where they take on other forms and appearances.

In this article, the day-as-life-night-as-death analogy is extended to cover stories as well, wherein, even though a story has "ended" it continues to exist. This existence is simply in a different form in the consciousness of the individual and in the fabric of the society, among many others. For Afrikan people, upon death, a human being is called to account for his or her deeds and whether or not he or she has fulfilled his or her destiny and, then, ultimately he/she undergoes judgment (Kamalu 1998, Ephirim-Donkor 1997). One of the earliest attestations of this endogenous Afrikan concept of adjudication of the human in the afterlife is found in the Instructions of  *Mry kȝ rˁ* 'Merikare' (ca. 2100 BCE) wherein the text states:

> 11. The **Court that judges** the wretch,
> You know they are not lenient,
> **On the day of judging** the miserable,
> […]
> When a man remains over **after death**,
> His deeds are set beside him as treasure,
> […]
> He who reaches them without having done wrong
> Will exist there like a god,
> Free-striding like the lords forever! (Lichtheim 1973: 101) (emphasis mine)

The period after one's life in the upper world has ended corresponds to the period after the story has "ended" and, similarly, is a time of reflection and adjudication with regard to the value of the story and values contained therein; *i.e.*, whether or not it fulfilled its overt and/or underlying goals or its metaphorical "destiny." Subsequently, night is akin to the ancestral realm and it is also like the period in which the story's aesthetics, structures and concepts are internalized. Upon traversing this cycle, the story moves back to the position of midnight, coming back to the conception of the idea of a story which, again, is like the conception of a human being. The following YouTube videos are illustrative of what is meant in this Extended Analogy Layering (EAL), by juxtaposing images of analogous phenomena at similar stages of development. Due to space constraints, we will focus on the *Lo biangudi* 'principal hours' of the *Dikènga* hourly time segmentation cycle.

12. Dawn: http://youtu.be/xDIzeTpEVV4 (Kambon 2014d, Masters 2012)

The dawn video shows dawn in various forms: dawn of the day, dawn of a human being, and also dawn of a story. This is the *owia apueeɛ* 'sunrise'

(Akan), *ìlà oòrùn* ‘sunrise’ (Yorùbá), *nseluka* ‘sunrise’ (Kikôngo). Dawn is comparable to birth and the first ritual of one’s existence thereafter, which marks the transition from one state to another in what is known as the *ìsọmọlórúkọ* ‘naming ceremony’ by the Yorùbá. The video also shows the Akan *abadintoɔ* ‘naming ceremony’ with the requisite tasting of water and drink. This opening ritual of a human’s transition from the ancestral realm to the physical world is analogous to the transition of the story from the ideational stage to its realization through the process of the storytelling performance. The Yorùbá *Àlọ́ Ìjàpá* and the Akan *Anansesɛm* also have parallel set formulae for the opening of a story such as the following:

13. a. *Yɛnse* *sɛ* *nse* *sɛ* *o!*
3PL-NEG-say COMP NEG-say COMP EMPH
‘we don’t say, ‘don’t say’’ (i.e. it is make-believe so virtually anything goes)

b. *Yɛsesa* *soa* *wo* *ara!*
3PL-gather place-on-head 2SG emph
‘we put the responsibility on you’ (i.e. it’s your turn to tell the story)

14. a. *Anansesɛm* *yɛ* *asisie* *o!*
Ananse-story be cheating EMPH
‘Ananse stories are (only) make-believe’

b. *To* *no* *yie!*
throw 3SG well
‘tell it well’

15. a. *Abra,* *abra* *o!*
Falsehood, falsehood EMPH
‘make-believe, make-believe’

b. *Yoo!*
okay
‘okay’

In examples (13a-15a), the initial line is the call of the storyteller while the second line (13b-15b) in each instance is the response of the collective audience: veritable “story-helpers” who are active participants in its telling via their exhortations, songs, and extemporaneous critical feedback. We find a similar phenomenon in the case of Yorùbá *Àlọ́ Ìjàpá* – the opening formula, which is exemplified below – where the second line in bold is the standard audience response while the initial line and the rest of the formula is spoken by the storyteller.

16. *Àlọ́ o!*
story EMPH
'story'
Àlọ̀!
Story
'story'
Àlọ́ mi dá gbàá
story 1SG.POSS strike IDEO
'my story strikes like this'
Àlọ́ mi dá gbòó
story 1SG.POSS strike IDEO
'my story strikes like that'
Àlọ́ mi dá fiìrìgbágbòó
story 1SG.POSS strike IDEO
'my story strikes falling and bouncing like so'
Ó dálérí Ìjàpá,
3SG.SUBJ strike-lay-head tortoise,
'it strikes the head of the tortoise,'
Tìrókò, ọkọ Yánníbo
of-*bombax ceiba* husband Y.
'of the silk cotton tree, the husband of Yánníbo'
Ẹsẹ̀ danindanin bi àran ọ̀pẹ.
leg(s) tight like fruit palm-tree
'with legs tight like the fruit of the palm-tree'
T'ó ḳọ́lé, ḳọ́lé
REL'3SG.SUBJ build-house build-house
'Who builds houses'
t'ó fi ìrán bà á jẹ́
REL'3SG.SUBJ take seat make-contact 3SG.OBJ destroy
'Who destroys them with the seat of his shell'
Ti ń lọ l'áàrin ẹ̀pà
REL'3SG PROG go at'middle groundnuts
'who goes among groundnuts'
Tí ìpàkọ́ rẹ̀ ń hàn fírífírí
REL occiput 3SG.POSS PROG show indistinctly
'for whom the back of his head shows indistinctly'
Ó ní ọpẹ́lọpẹ́ pé òun ga
3SG say thanks to that 3SG.REPORT tall
'who says it is thanks to the fact that he is tall" (Babalola 1973: 1)

This formula may be followed up with additional subsequent calls and responses to begin the story such as:

17. a. *Ní* *ìgbà* *kan*
At time one
'Once upon a time'
b. ***Kan,*** ***kan***
One, **one**
'Once, once'

a. *Ọba* *kan* *wà*
King one exist
'There was a king'
b. ***Ó*** ***wà*** ***bíi*** ***ẹwà***
3SG **exist** **like** **beauty**
'He was there like beauty.'

These subsequent formulae make use of puns, wordplay, alliteration and other oratory devices as they further draw the audience into the story by encouraging participation. Therefore, as demonstrated above, we see clearly that both Akan and Yorùbá stories have opening formulae which mark the metaphorical "sunrise/birth" of the story maintaining the analogy between the relative solar position, the human being's life and the progression of the story.

The Extended Analogy Layering (EAL) continues through to the climax of the story, the climax of a person's life, and also the climax of the sun. This is known as *owigyinaeɛ* "noon" (Akan), *ọ̀sán gangan* "noon" (Yorùbá), *mbata* "noon" (Kikôngo).

18. Noon: http://youtu.be/DcxBdL-QYVg (Kambon 2014c, Masters 2012)

Examples in the noon video show the high point in the story, which corresponds to reaching the highest point in one's career in academia such as giving one's inaugural lecture. It is similar to being made the ruler of one's people or country. This is the high point of one's life. It is like when the sun reaches its highest point in the sky from the perspective of the observer. In the background of the video, Mr. Zablong Z. Abdallah sings Dagbamba praise poetry in the Dagbanli language saying that we come to this world with music and dance and we will leave the world with music and dance

(Kambon 2014a). The song was selected due to its relevance in showing how we have formulae to mark the transition from one stage/state to another, as is also the case for the story.

19. Sunset: http://youtu.be/DKCOp2xfnss (Kambon 2014e, Masters 2012)

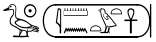
The video in example (19) shows *Luvèmba* in its various forms and manifestations. In terms of time of day, this is the *owia atɔeɛ* "sunset" (Akan), *ìwọ̀ oòrùn* "sunset" (Yorùbá), *ndimina* "sunset" (Kikôngo). This is like the closing formulae of the Yorùbá *Ìjàpá* tale and Akan *Ananse* stories as shown in the video. Another example of a closing formula for the Yorùbá is as follows:

20. *Ìdí* *àlọ́* *mi* *rě* *gbáńgbáláká*
reason story 1SG.POSS this IDEO
'this is the reason for my story'
Ìdí *àlọ́* *mi* *rě* *gbàǹgbàlàkà*
reason story 1SG.POSS this IDEO
'this is the reason for my story'
Bí *ng* *bá* *purọ́,* *kí* *agogo* *ẹnu* *mi*
COND 1SG CONT lie, should bell mouth 1SG.POSS
má *rŏ;*
NEG ring;
'if I am lying, may the bell of my mouth not ring'
Bí *ng* *ò* *bá* *purọ́,* *k'agogo* *ẹnu*
COND 1SG NEG CONT lie, should'bell mouth
mi *ró* *l'ẹ̀mẹ́ta*
1SG.POSS ring in'thrice
'if I am not lying, may it ring three times'
Ó *di* *pó……pó……pó!*
3SG become IDEO IDEO IDEO!
'it rings, rings, rings'
(Babalola 1973: 19)

Each of these closing formulae is an expression of *Luvèmba* in the *Dikènga* cosmogram.

21. Midnight: http://youtu.be/QIiCZnaBCwI (Kambon 2014b, Masters 2012)

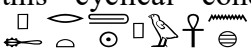
The final major marker of transition is, at the same time, the first marker. This idea of the last being the first as well can also be seen in the traditional Akan week (and month) with *Kwasiada* 'Sunday' being the inclusive beginning day of the week and the final day of the week at the same time. This concept is found in other parts of Afrika represented as a serpent with its own tail in its mouth, most notably in Benin's *Da Ayido-Hwedo* 'Divine Rainbow Serpent' and in Ancient *Kmt*[6] 'Land of the Black People' as shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8:  *Twt-ʿnḫ-ỉmn 'Tutankh-amun's' Golden Relief with Tail-Swallowing Serpents encircling both head and feet* (Photo Credit Kambon)

This *Musoni* stage is *ɔdasuom* "midnight" (Akan), *ọ̀ganjọ́ òru* "midnight" (Yorùbá), *n'dingu-a-nsi* "midnight" (Kikôngo). In the video, there is a lunar eclipse with the moon's position in relation to the sun allowing the observer to see the exact point of midnight in relation to him/her. This is yet another example of the sun's position, similar to the human's position, which is yet and still analogous to the story's position. The sun's movement in the lower world is much like the phase after the story is told, in which it still exists having gone through a transition from one stage to another. In the African context, this is like how the human being is recognized as existing after death – merely in another state. Many Afrikans exhibit an understanding of the continued existence of ancestors through masquerades, music, sculptures, possession, libation, and **through their words**, which continue to live after them as long as their words continue to be spoken. As an Akan proverb

[6] Indigenous name of the land – literally translating to 'Land of Black People' – later referred to by the Greeks as Αἴγυπτος (Aígyptos) 'Egypt' (from *ḥwt kȝ ptḥ* 'Temple/enclosure of the soul of Ptah') as an example of synecdoche or *pars pro toto*. Notably, while (white) Eurasian scholars attempt to say *Kmt* only refers to the Blackness of the soil and not the Black people, they fail to account for the fact that the *Kmtyw* 'Black People', in their own mythology said that they were made from that same Black soil of the Nile on the potter's wheel of the divinity *ḫnmw* 'Khnum'!

affirms *Onipa wu a ne tɛkrɛma ɛmporɔ no, na ɛfiri teasefoɔ* 'When a person dies and his/her tongue does not rot, it is because of a living person' (Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 203). In the video in example (21), Ɔsɛe Kwaku mentions that he was originally told the story that he re-told back in 1955 or 1956 and he still remembers it to this date. Implicitly, this lets us know that one of the underlying functions of storytelling is to engender remembrance of the story itself (through repetition, colorful language, *etc*.). Lawrence Kwaku Boaten, in his interview in the video, says that his motivation for telling his story is simply just to remember his grandmother who has passed away (Kambon 2014b, Masters 2012). These interviews provide a window to the idea that different storytellers may have different goals and that these goals may even change based upon context. In other words, while there may be overt reasons for telling a story – *i.e.*, "I want/need to teach you these specific lessons" – there may also be underlying reasons – *i.e.*, "I want/need you to remember; I want/need to live on through my words." Above and beyond the storyteller's reasons, from the perspective of the "story-helper/listener," different individuals may perceive different lessons from listening to the same story as the story may even take on different meanings for the same individual across space and time.

In this section, we have discussed the structure of *Àlọ́ Ìjàpá* and *Ananseɛsɛm* using *Dikènga* as a framework for analysis and understanding. It is important to note, however, that this conception of reality is not something that the people of Kôngo came up with in a vacuum, but rather is a manifestation of the maintenance of a shared cosmology dating back to Afrikan antiquity. Archaeological research shows that the earliest fossils of modern humans (*homo sapiens*) originate in the area of the source of the Nile and other adjacent river valleys, with the oldest of these fossils having been found at Kibish in the Omo River Valley, Ethiopia (McDougall, Brown, and Fleagle 2005). Therefore, it comes as no surprise that Afrikans, having traveled down the Nile Valley towards the north, would have worked out such intricate philosophical expressions with regard to solar position analogies prior to migrating to various other places of the continent. Indeed, this cyclical concept is expressed most clearly in the aphorism  *pḫrt pw ʿnḫ* 'Life is a cycle' from the "Conversation Between a Despairing man and His Ba (Soul)" composed during the second golden age (ca. 2052 BCE-1778 BCE) (Faulkner 1956: 22, lines 20-21, Obenga 2004: 617). Indeed, in *Kmt*, Afrikans there had the same idea of four major

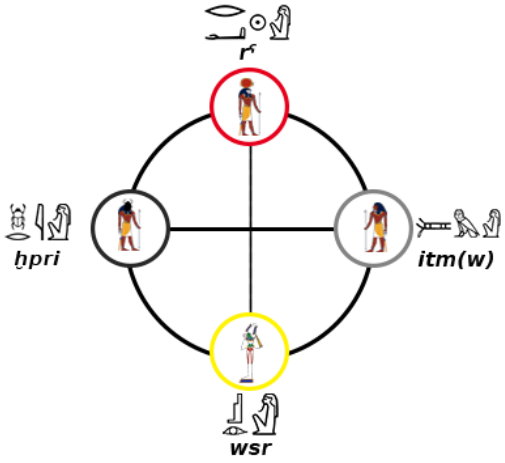


Figure 9: Ancient Afrikan Cosmological Structure (Kambon adapted from Moore 2011)

phases of the sun. According to Budge (2013) in the Legend of *Rʿ* 'Ra' and *ɜst* 'Isis', *Rʿ* 'Ra' says "I am Khepera in the morning, Ra at noon, and Temu [Atum] at evening" (Budge 2013: 76). As such, at sunrise we find *Ḫprỉ* 'Khepri' which is symbolized by a scarab beetle as shown in Figure 9. *Ḫprỉ* 'Khepri' is followed by the sun at its highest point, *Rʿ* 'Ra' and then we have *Ỉtm(w)* 'Atum', which is representative of sunset. After sunset, the sun becomes *Wsỉr* 'Osiris,' The Lord of the Underworld, as the sun at midnight (Moore 2011, Wilkinson 2003: 206). These concepts can be seen clearly in the Pyramid Texts (ca. 2780-2260 BCE), the oldest sacred texts in the world (Obenga 2004: 163). In this same vein, according to Allen (2005: 11),

> The Pyramid Texts are largely concerned with the deceased's relationship to two gods, Osiris and the Sun [*Rʿ* 'Ra']. Egyptologists once considered these two themes as independent views of the afterlife that had become fused in the Pyramid Texts, but more recent research has shown that both belong to a single concept of the deceased's eternal existence after death—a view of the afterlife that remained remarkably consistent throughout ancient Egyptian history.

Further, Allen (2005: 438) describes *Wsỉr* 'Osiris' thusly:

> Slain by his brother Seth, **Osiris rests as a mummy in the middle of the Duat, where the sun unites with him at night** to receive the power to come to life again at dawn. (emphasis mine) (Allen 2005: 438)

The conceptualization of the four major phases of the sun's movement shows a shared worldview of Afrikan people from antiquity all the way to the present, as demonstrated throughout space and time in Afrika and elsewhere in the global Afrikan world. This calls for continued research into migration patterns of Afrikans from the Nile Valley to current places and spaces of habitation after having been largely driven out by successive waves

of foreign invaders who now occupy and dominate the lower (northern) Nile Valley today.

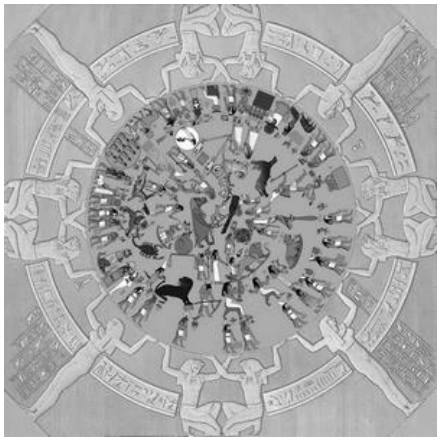
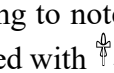
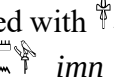
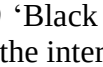
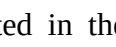
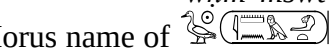
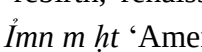


Figure 10: Dendera zodiac (Isis 2013)

This begs the separate but related question of why in the Kôngo, the *dikènga* cycle is depicted as moving in a "counter-clockwise" fashion while in *Kmt*, the cycle moves in a "clockwise" fashion. One possibility is that, from the northern hemisphere–where our Afrikan/Black ancestors were located prior to migration away from the lower Nile Valley – if one observes the movement of the stars, such as that depicted at the temple of Dendera in ancient *Kmt* one sees that the movement of all constellations is in a counter-clockwise fashion as shown in Figure 10. In contemporary Akan culture, the shaking of hands, likewise, occurs in a counter-clockwise manner as does dancing at traditional spiritual ceremonies known as *akɔm.* In another Afrikan combat art called Capoeira (originally *Kipura*), in the *volta-ao-mundo*, cyclical movements are also done in a counter-clockwise manner (Talmon-Chvaicer 2008: 29-30). The similarity that may be intuited from these similarities across space and time is that each of these counter-clockwise movements may have something to do with being in alignment with the cosmos on a very deep level. An ancient teaching of the Nile Valley says "as above, so below" (Chandler 2000: 18, Martin 2008: 957). Thus, it seems that the movements of celestial phenomena can serve as an apt metaphor and ideal model for the movements of terrestrial phenomena. It is interesting to note, however, that in ancient *Kmt*, east  *iȝbt* 'east' was associated with  *iȝby* 'left-hand' while *imnt* 'west' was associated with  *imn* 'right (-hand), right(-side), the 'West'. Thus, the  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black people' were always facing their source and their land of origin – the interior of Afrika – and the equator where the sun's intense rays manifested in their richly melanated Blackness. This recognition of the causative link between the sun and their Blackness – which formed the very core of their identity – to no small degree influenced their heliocentric worldview in which the sun was central in all aspects of life and the afterlife. Because the east was seen as left, Figure 9 reflects this orientation and perspective with relation to the four major phases of the sun.

In an alternative explanation to the celestial one offered above, the differences in terms of clockwise (Northern Hemisphere Nile Valley) and counter-clockwise (Southern Hemisphere Congo River Basin) variants may be wholly solar. In other words, the variants may be based on the ecliptic due to the fact that, from the perspective of a person in the northern hemisphere facing the equator, the sun would appear to rise on the left and set on the right. From the position of a person in the southern hemisphere, however, the sun would appear to rise on the right and set on the left.

In conclusion, with regard to structure, the *Dikènga* theory of structural analysis is one manifestation of a shared Afrikan worldview. *Dikènga* can be understood in the context of the sun's movement, the human life cycle, and also in the development of the story. This extended analogy layering (EAL) shows how *Anansesɛm* or *Àlọ́ Ìjàpá*, in and of themselves, can be viewed as living suns. Transformation is key in understanding structure and transition from one stage to another as marked in the story, as marked in the human being's life, and as marked in the sun's movement along with many other phenomena that could be analyzed using the EAL method.

It is also clear that stories are not fixed artifacts. As "living suns," they come to life in performance. When they are not performed, they are not alive but are, rather, functionally dead – not in the modern European sense of death, but in the prototypically Afrikan sense wherein death is conceptualized as a continued/continual/continuous transition from one stage to another stage. This notion can easily be reconciled with the law of conservation of energy in physics which states that the total energy of an isolated system cannot change. In other words, it is conserved over time. In other words, energy cannot be created or destroyed, but rather simply changes form (Planck 1927). This is not unlike the concept of reincarnation and repetition in a changed form. It should be noted that one of the first attestations of the idea of rebirth can be found in the Nile Valley concept of *wḥm mswt* 'rebirth, renaissance' famously attested in the Horus name of  *Ỉmn m ḥt* 'Amenemhat' as  *Wḥm-mswt* 'The one who repeated births' (Lundström 2016a, Dickson 2006: 57). The term was also applied to the later Ramesside period known by the same name and thought to have begun in the 19th reignal year of *R⸢msi-sw Ḫq-(M)-Wȝst Mrr-Ỉmn Nṯr-Ḥḳȝ-Ỉwnw* 'Ramesses XI' (Lundström 2016b).

Another major aspect of *Dikènga* is that the upper world (*Ku nseke*) is mirrored by the lower world (*Ku mpèmba*) and vice versa. Thus, there are complementary movements in the visible upper world that are paralleled in the invisible lower world. The aforementioned parallel movements wherein

one is traversing the upper world while another is traversing the lower world may be termed the principle of "Complementary Inversion" (CI). On another level, this CI may explain why, in various Afrikan societies including that of the Akan and Yorùbá, it is the elder who does the naming of newborns at naming ceremonies because the elder is the one who is best positioned to recognize his or her own grandparents upon their reincarnation. The undergirding concept here is that as a person moves through the world and life from birth to death, at the same time, one's grandparent is moving through the underworld in a similar fashion only to "die" there and be reborn back here into what, from the perspective of the living, is the upper portion (Ephirim-Donkor 1997). This understanding is why countless Afrikan people throughout the global Afrikan world demonstrate an understanding of rebirth and reincarnation. This philosophical thought is enshrined in Yorùbá names such as *Babátúndé* 'father again arrives' and *Yéjídé* 'mother wakes (and) arrives.' We find a similar phenomenon in Akan, wherein *Nana* translates to both grandparent AND grandchild at the same time. As such, babies are reincarnated with their previously held titles intact and, therefore, we find names such as *Nana Yaw* 'elder/grandparent Yaw' even applied to children as well as other names such as *Ababio* 'has come again.' We see related phenomena in instances of various survival names such as *Sumina* 'rubbish heap' and *Yɛmpɛw(o)* 'we do not want you' given to trick the newborn's playmates in the ancestral realm into leaving the child alone so that he/she may survive in the realm of the living (Obeng 2001: 98, 101). We see that this CI is something that is marked in names due to its significance with regard to an understanding of the cosmos as manifested in the *Dikènga* cosmogram. When *Dikènga* is taken out of the human context and applied to stories and storytelling, we can see stories in a similar fashion as occurring either in the upper world or the lower world.

While the argument could be made for the telling of stories corresponding to passing through *Ku mpèmba* – the lower world and realm of the immaterial – for the most part we view the lower world as where stories, once told, transform into the stuff from which remembrance, reflection, internalization, personalization, and reformulation are made. Thus, if the *Ku mpèmba* portion is missing or incomplete, it means that the story was not told well enough to engender remembrance, reflection, and other underlying functions for which the story is told. Again, this is parallel to how human life is conceived as cyclical in that one's life in *Ku nseke* foreshadows how one's continuation of life in *Ku mpèmba* will be. According to Fu-Kiau:

> Time, for the Kongo, is a cyclical "thing." It has no beginning and no end. Thanks to *dunga* (events), the concept of time is understood and can be understandable. These *dunga*, be they natural or artificial, biological or ideological, material or immaterial, constitute what is known as *n'kama mia ntangu* in Kikongo, that is, the "dams of time." (Fu-Kiau 1994: 20) (emphasis in original)

In this analogy, time is conceptualized as flowing like a river, but there are intervening dams or cataracts that mark different points along its course. In this section, we have primarily addressed the main markers along the course: Conception, Birth, Maturity and Death. However, within these, there are smaller repetitions (*Fulu kiandwèlo*), which also serve to mark time. Such phenomena may include points of significant transition or the repetition of episodes. These smaller markers also serve a functional role to structure the tales. As such, they are functional for the oratory/literary artist and the audience. For the oral (and/or written) literary artist, these smaller *n'kama mia ntangu* are functional because they help him/her hang on to and repeat key phrases that may have been made up extemporaneously in front of a live audience full of potentially critical participants. Repetition ensures that there will be no need to make up new phrases on the spot in the context of the pressure cooker that is live performance. Repetition is also used aesthetically for imbuing an artistic quality to the story while simultaneously serving to aid remembrance for both the storyteller and for the listener alike. Repetition can also provide order, structure and familiarity in the context of an otherwise chaotic landscape wherein anything can happen. Additionally, episodic repetition (via *Fulu kiangudi/Fulu kiandwèlo*) may serve to organize the plot of the story (Okpewho 1992: 76-77). As such, while one can view the entire story as a large cyclical pattern (*Dikènga*), one can see smaller repetitions within the larger repetition. In other words, there is a *Dikènga* within a *Dikènga* within yet another *Dikènga*. This phenomenon of micro patterning like the macro structure could be thought of along the lines of fractal patterns within fractal patterns where smaller patterned repetitions resemble the larger scale patterned repetitions (Eglash 1999). In other words, as above (*i.e.*, large-scale), so below (*i.e.*, small-scale). Thus, the structure of these tales is functional and meta-theoretical on multiple levels.

In this article, we have demonstrated worldview correlations and structural parallels between Akan *Ananse* stories and Yorùbá *Ìjàpá* tales using the *Dikènga* cosmogram as a framework and Extended Analogy Layering (EAL) as a method of understanding situated in the temporal/spatial Afrikan context.

Conclusions

In conclusion, stories help the listener to understand that time and space are cyclical, which is something that has been known by Afrikan people from ancient times. This understanding may be contrasted with the notion more commonly associated with prototypical Eurasian societies in which time is generally seen as taking place in linear motion. According to Mengyu and Prosser (In Press):

> The scientists and philosophers after the Renaissance followed Aristotle's suit, and they thought of time as a kind of object in **linear** motion as well […] The physical interpretation of absolute **time in lineal motion**, together with industrialization and civilizational progress helps cultivate the future-time orientation in most countries of the western world (Mengyu and Prosser In Press) (emphasis mine)

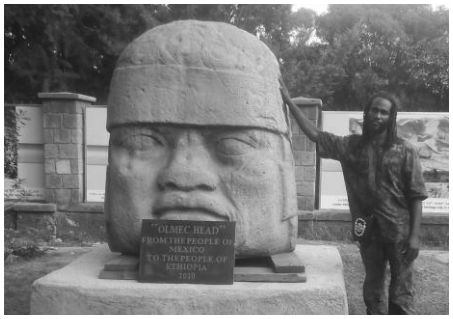


Figure 11: Author posing with Olmec Head replica from Mexico in Addis Ababa, 2015 (Photo Credit Terrence Johnson)

However, as Afrikan scholars, it may behoove us to be careful of Eurasian claims regarding the so-called universality of their culturally-specific ideas including the notion that time is always linear, among others (Ani 1994). Such notions may not be appropriate or fitting in the Afrikan context especially in light of the fact that by and large Eurasians, at one time, also thought that the world was flat (Simek 1996). At that same time that Eurasians were saying this, Afrikans such as Abu Bakr II and others before him had already travelled to the western hemisphere where they left evidence of their presence in the form of huge multi-ton monuments such as the Olmec heads (as shown in Figure 11) of Tres Zapotes, San Lorenzo and La Venta in what is now modern-day Mexico (Van Sertima 1976). Given the preponderance of evidence there can be no doubt as to the Afrikan's advanced knowledge of the circular nature of spatial realm commensurate with Afrikan knowledge of the temporal and material.

While it seems that after interacting with Afrikans, pale Eurasians have updated their concept of space in terms of moving towards a more Afrikan understanding that the world is actually round, for the most part, they have neglected to necessarily update their concept of time as an essential aspect of understanding the space-time continuum. The continuum between time and space is also found in the concepts of *dt* 'continuous spatial eternity' and *nḥḥ* 'recurrent temporal eternity,' which were written adjacent to each other to convey complementary aspects of infinity /eternity in scores of texts throughout the history of ancient *Kmt. Dikènga* provides us with a prototypically Afrikan understanding of space AND time as cyclical. Indeed, as evinced on the sarcophagus of *Wrš-nfr* 'Wereshnefer,' (at the center of which is a "living sun")[7] as shown in Figure 12, conceptions of the world as round pre-date Eurasian claims to "discovering" this ancient Afrikan knowledge by well over 1,000-2,000 years, by conservative estimates. Further, as can be seen on the sarcophagus and in the *Dikènga* cosmogram, because the human being is seen as a "living sun," the anthropocentric model and the heliocentric model are actually one and the same, as the movements of the microcosm are a reflection of the movements

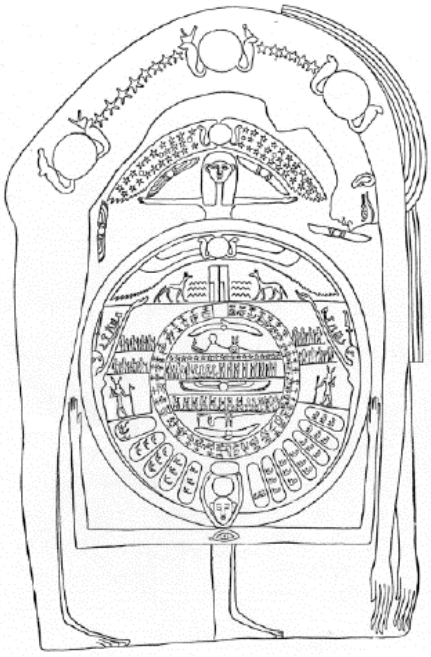


Figure 12: Map of the world as round on the sarcophagus of Wereshnefer ca. 380-300 BCE (Keel 1997: 38)

[7] The winged sun symbol, which appears at the center of the sarcophagus relief is attested at least from ca. 2487-2475 BCE to the reign of *Sꜣḥw-rꜥ* 'Sahure', if not earlier to ca. 2575–2551 BCE during the reign of *S-nfr-w* 'Sneferu.' (Shaw and Nicholson 1995: 305). Expounding upon this concept, it is interesting to note the fact that one of the main appellations of the ruler in *Kmt* was *sꜣrꜥ* 'Son of the Sun.'

of the macrocosm and vice-versa. We find that the view from Afrikan antiquity parallels the view from traditional Afrika. According to Fu-Kiau:

> When you have a circle of the Kongo cosmogram, **the center is seen as the eternal flame.** It is a way to come closer to the core of the community. If someone is suffering, they say "you are outside the circle, **be closer to the fire.**" To stand on the cosmogram is to tie a social knot, bringing people together. Dikenga is from the verb kenga, which means "to take care, to protect," but also **the flame or fire from inside the circle**, **to build and give life** (Fu-Kiau 2001b) (emphasis mine).

In other words, this phenomenon constitutes a fractal within a fractal. Thus, we see that for the Bakôngo as well, the human is at the center, yet the human is seen as a "living sun," making the model both anthropocentric and heliocentric simultaneously and without contradiction (Fu-Kiau 1991: 8, 9, 30, 46). Interestingly, modern-day scientists are now coming to understand what Afrikans understood, articulated and according to which they lived several thousand years ago. According to noted astrophysicist Dr. Neil deGrasse Tyson:

> Stars die and are born in places like this one – a stellar nursery.
> They condense like raindrops from giant clouds of gas and dust.
> They get so hot that the nuclei of the atoms fuse together deep within them to make the oxygen we breathe, the carbon in our muscles, the calcium in our bones, the iron in our blood. All of it was cooked in the fiery hearts of long-vanished stars.
> You, me, everyone **we are made of star stuff.**
> […] The planets, the stars, the galaxies; We, ourselves, and **all of life. The same star stuff** (Tyson 2014) (emphasis mine).

This apparent "modern" scientific revelation can be dated back to over 4,000 years ago to the Coffin Texts ca. 2060 - 1785 BCE, written in *Kmt*, wherein the texts expound upon "The Four Great Achievements of *Rʿ* 'Ra' (*i.e.*, the Sun) At Creation Time":

> Words of The One of Hidden Names, Lord of the Universe;
> Says he before those who calm the storm during the voyage of [Ra's] companions:
> […]
> **I accomplished four great acts**
> **inside the portal of the horizon**.[8]
> […]
> **I created the deities from my sweat,**
> **and humans from the tears of my eye** (Obenga 2004: 120-121) (emphasis mine).

[8] i.e., at the "dawn" of creation.

With Eurasians and those who identify closely with Eurasian history finally starting to understand what the Afrikan has been saying since antiquity – that we are made of star stuff – it is not lost on this author that the reemergence of this knowledge is, itself, an example of the cyclical conception of time so common throughout Afrika. The cyclical conception of time is similarly found in the following Bakôngo proverb:

22. *Ma'kwenda!* *Ma'kwiza!*
matter'go! matter'come
'What goes on (now), will come back (later)' (Fu-Kiau 1994: 33)

Similar to the law of inertia, according to Fu-Kiau, "What flows in a cyclical motion will remain in the motion. Time is cyclical, and so is life and all its ramifications that make change possible through the process of marking 'the dams of time'" (Fu-Kiau 1994: 33).

A parallel proverb is found among the Akan:

23. *Abirekyie* *se:* *"Deɛ* *ɛ-bɛ-ba*
goat says: REL 3SG.INAN-FUT-come
a-ba *dada."*
PERF-come already
'The goat says "That which will come has already come."'
(Appiah, Appiah, and Agyeman-Duah 2001: 47)

Similarly, a Yorùbá poem says:

24. *Àkókò* *ń* *lọ,* *àkókò* *ń* *bọ̀.*
time PROG go, time PROG come
'Time is going, time is coming.' (Schleicher 1998: 7)

While in proverbial form, the non-linear nature of time is stated in the following maxim:

25. *Ìgbà* *kìí* *tò* *lọ* *bíi* *oréré.*
time NEG.HAB set go like horizon
'Time is unlike a straight line.' (Ayoade 1984: 17)

This is in stark contrast with the archetypal Eurasian concept of space (i.e. the world) as flat and the contemporary Eurasian model which still views time as flat. The persistence of this archaic Eurasian notion is still readily

observed via terms such as "timelines," "storylines," *etc.*, as well as in other linguistic and conceptual baggage attached to this prototypically Eurasian mode of thinking.

In this article, we have argued that it is imperative for Afrikan people to use endogenous Afrikan philosophical and theoretical frameworks to analyze indigenous Afrikan phenomena. We have gone further by going beyond mere exhortation to actually using such a framework to analyze phenomena from different parts of the Afrikan world to show an underlying unicity of worldview. We argue that this common foundation of Afrikan thought is readily evident irrespective of its various and diverse manifestations. Indeed, the shared Afrikan worldview can be understood as one entity with many derivative branches. A similar concept can be found in one of the oldest attestations of monotheism as found in the Papyrus of *ɜny* 'Ani' ca. 1600 BCE wherein it states that "God is one and alone and none other existeth with him […] thou one thou only one whose arms are many […] thou one, thou only one who has no second" (Budge 1895: 85, 113). By the same token, Akan, Yorùbá, and Bakôngo culturo-linguistic phenomena can be thought of as various manifestations or "arms" of a shared foundational Afrikan worldview.

In this paper, it has been demonstrated that the application of endogenous cosmological, philosophical, theoretical, and conceptual frameworks can provide innovative perspectives and additional insight to our understanding of the structure of Akan *Ananse* and Yorùbá *Ìjàpá* stories as well as the shared Afrikan worldview, which is the common foundation from which they have arisen (and continue to arise). In conclusion, we will come back to the subject of worldview with which we began so that this article, itself, may also follow a *Dikènga*-like structure through the following quote:

> *Diâdi nza-Kôngo kandongila: Mono i kadi kia dingo-dingo (kwènda-vutukisa) kinzungidila ye didi dia ngolo zanzîngila. Ngiena, kadi yateka kala ye kalulula ye ngina vutuka kala ye kalulula.*
> Here is what the Kongolese Cosmology taught me: I am (a going-and-coming-back-being) around the center of vital forces. I am because I was and re-was before, and that I will be and re-be again. (Fu-Kiau 2001a: xi)

As the sun rises, sets and rises again, so too does the human being and the Afrikan story.

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