

## Okot p'Bitek's revision of aspects of Percy Bysshe Shelley's *The Mask of Anarchy*

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### Abstract

This paper examines the extent to which Okot p'Bitek revises aspects of Shelley's *The Mask of Anarchy*. It begins by establishing the theoretical background to revisionism and takes as its working statement a key passage from Wordsworth. The substance of this passage is pursued and related to Johnsonian newness which, implicitly, is a neo-classical revision of the Wordsworthian stance. This position is pursued further in twentieth-century theoretical views as espoused by T.S.Eliot especially his view about relationships between texts. This section ends by drawing Harold Bloom into the paper's theoretical framework and indicating which of his revisionary ratios are seen in p'Bitek's revision of Shelley's poem. The next section of the paper justifies p'Bitek's revisionism and the third part applies two of Bloom's revisionary ratios to Okot p'Bitek's *Song of Prisoner* and *Song of Soldier*. The paper ends by assessing p'Bitek's anxiety. It affirms that p'Bitek achieves identity and poetic distinction in revising aspects of *The Mask of Anarchy*.

### Theoretical Background – Revisionism

... my brain  
Worked with a dim and undetermined sense  
Of unknown modes of being; in my thoughts  
There was a darkness, call it solitude  
Or blank desertion. [At this moment]  
...huge and mighty forms, that do not live  
Like living men, moved slowly through my mind  
By day, and were the trouble of my dreams.<sup>1</sup>

At a moment of poetic creation, according to the English Romantics<sup>2</sup>, the renovated spirit weaving a cloak of his new selfhood, and now totally characterless<sup>3</sup>, significantly, often extends the self into other selves, objects, situations, and events. These are the "unknown modes of being" that the poetic genius or imagination encounters, works upon, and, finally externalizes in the form of words so that other human beings may joy to read them since the words sensitize them, especially so in the context of poetry of the English Romantic period, which, as we know, was a direct response to the nakedness and hostility of life generated by the Industrial Revolution. But before the poet, like Wordsworth in the above lines, even encounters other selves, the brain or imagination has to undergo other transformative processes. It is necessary for it, for instance, to experience "a dim and undetermined sense" of other lives, let alone be exposed to "darkness", "solitude/or blank desertion". Experiencing these

anguishing moments becomes not only a means of entering the stage of purity often required for romantic communication, but is also a vehicle through which channels or links to other selves or states of being can be gained. In the case of Wordsworth above, these are realized as "...huge and mighty forms, that do not live/Like living men ...." We can surmise that these forms are not only the realities of the economic, cultural, and socio-political conditions that characterised life in England of the Industrial Revolution, but also aspects of his own past, readings, and other experiences. These are the truths that move 'slowly through [his] mind/By day' and "trouble" his 'dreams.' By "dreams" here we mean various states of poetic creation, states in which the charged and renovated or pure spirit, encounters and wrestles with various kinds of existences and images.

It is for these reasons that the artefact or poem that results from this experience cannot, surely, remain autonomous since it is evidently an amalgam of various states of being, experiences, and images from the poet's previous readings. This is not to suggest, however, that the poem is not original. The originality of the poem arises from the way in which the poet treats the material or the "modes of being" that he encounters in referential creation.

This is the case Johnson sees in his ne-classical revision of the works of Shakespeare. In his view, there is nothing wrong in "new-naming"<sup>4</sup> other material, so long as the product or artefact pleases and instructs simultaneously. His position that "... in the productions of genius, nothing can be styled excellent till it has been compared with other works of the same kind,"<sup>5</sup> implies the unavoidability of "new-naming" other material so as to produce a new position. It seems that Wordsworth is, in his creative endeavours, aware of Johnsonian newness.

The other critic who is aware of this creative inevitability is T.S.Eliot. In his view:

No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead....<sup>6</sup> [Poetry is] ... a living whole of all the poetry that has been written.<sup>7</sup>

Eliot's position is thus a revision or a refinement of the Johnsonian position in the twentieth century. It is also a clarification of Wordsworth's position with which this paper started. But in doing so, Eliot "...problematised the question of the relations between poems, and between poet as and poems ...."<sup>8</sup> It is thus now not possible to say that "... relations between poems are ... something we can assume in any simple, undialectical way."<sup>9</sup> Harold Bloom's study of creative revisionism, poetic influence, or poetic misprisionment<sup>10</sup> extends refines and this position.

According to Bloom, revisionism "... is a re-aiming or looking-over-again, leading to a re-esteeming or a re-estimating."<sup>11</sup> Ephebes or latter-day artists often revise precursor works and in doing so often apply Bloom's revisionary ratios<sup>12</sup> without

necessarily being conscious of them. The works being revised attain new identities all right, but are still linked to the precursor works in some significant ways. In other words, the precursor works become launching pads for the new works, but do not lose their identities. Refining his revisionary ratios elsewhere, Bloom finds it fitting to assert that "... there are no texts, but only relationships between texts."<sup>13</sup> This is the position Jonathan Culler also posits as intertextuality. In his view, intertextuality has a double focus : "... it calls our attention to the importance of prior texts, insisting that the autonomy of texts is a misleading notion and that a work has the meaning it does because certain things have previously been written."<sup>14</sup>

According to these positions, there appears, therefore, to be no original artist. To appreciate any poem, it is thus necessary to "look-over-again" and "re-estimate" its true worth and that of its creator. In this way, our knowledge of the existence of artefacts in some kind of 'family' is enriched. This pursuit also enables any critical reader to clutch the historical development of any literary work.

### **Okot p'Bitek and Revisionism**

This is the springboard from which I see the extent to which p'Bitek revises aspects of Shelley's *The Mask of Anarchy*.<sup>15</sup> In his hands, the revision of Shelley's great poem entails new-naming, correction, substitution, expansion, and fusion and often leads him to experiment and gaining a new voice.

He revises *The Mask of Anarchy* both consciously and unconsciously. He encountered Shelley in colonial English classes at Kings College, Budo in Uganda to which he went as a secondary school pupil. Budo was British-styled school. It was indeed "...patterned along the educational tradition of the famous [English] boys' schools of Rugby ... and Harrow ... with its emphasis on producing cultured gentlemen."<sup>16</sup> The production of "cultured gentlemen" was, however, from the viewpoint and philosophy of p'Bitek's British teachers. As a result, at Budo at the time, a pupil grew up knowing more of a foreign culture than his own.

Literature is one subject through which 'cultured gentleman' can be produced. An examination of what was in practice at the time p'Bitek went to school reveals that the literature taught in East Africa, and quite significantly too, was that of the English Romantic period, amongst others:

In schools the ... the English Literature syllabuses ... had the same pattern.

Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, and Kipling were familiar

Names long before I knew I would even make it to Makerere.<sup>17</sup>

Commenting on the kind of language [English] to which children were exposed in West Africa [which was the case in East Africa too], John Spencer observes:

...if we look at the school syllabus, past or present, we get one kind of answer.

Schools have been teaching the English of textbooks, of Wordsworth, Shelley, and Tennyson ....<sup>18</sup>

Okot p'Bitek himself corroborates this picture when he states his rejection of the ideology used at Budo to make him a "cultured gentleman". He does not spare his words : "What they were teaching us was irrelevant to my experience - the Shakespeares and Shelleys ...."<sup>19</sup> Although he argues that the sources of his poetry are oral, especially the songs of his mother, his negation of his school experience is, interestingly, only an affirmation of the extent to which the "Shelleys" firmly gripped his consciousness and formed the "...huge and mighty form[s,] that ...moved slowly through my[his] mind/ By day, and [was] the trouble of my[his] dreams."<sup>20</sup>

As dreamt, as the matter of hi poetry formed in his mind, Shelley remained a silent companion that coloured his imagination. In Budo itself, p'Bitek formed a choir and named it "the Budo Nightingales"<sup>21</sup> little knowing the extent to which he was effectively revising the Shelleys in a different context thus signifying his anxiety of influence and referentiality.

An examination of the nature of those who taught p'Bitek reveals another source of his anxiety of Shelleyan influence. The teachers who taught English in colonial Africa transferred their knowledge of English Literature to African pupils just like British cars were exported to Africa. In discussing "the craft of poetry" in Africa, David Cook<sup>22</sup> makes a reflective observation:

In English-speaking Africa, many expatriate teachers of English belonged to generations reared in the tradition which took the 'romantics' to be the apotheosis of poetry .... No doubt they passed on their inherited prejudices....<sup>23</sup>

Cook's view clearly shows what went into the making of a latter-day Shelley in p'Bitek. I think the motive of teachers who taught in colonial Africa like those of Cook's generation was to create a new African and extend the range and influenced of English Literature overseas. In it is this philosophy that can be seen the common poetic bonds or tradition that link Okot p'Bitek to Percy Bysshe Shelley.

### **Okot p'Bitek's Revision of *The Mask of Anarchy***

Of Bloom's six revisionary ratios, the ones that p'Bitek effectively uses to revise Shelley's great poem are "Clinamen, Swerve or Poetic Misprision"<sup>24</sup> and "Apophrades or the Return of the Dead."<sup>25</sup> In clinamen, " a poet swerves away from his precursor, by so reading his precursor's poem as to execute a clinamen [or swerve] in relation to it. This appears as a corrective movement in his own poem, which implies that the precursor poem went accurately up to a certain point, but then should have swerved, precisely in the direction that the new poem moves."<sup>26</sup> In p'Bitek's *Song of Prisoner*<sup>27</sup> and *Song of Soldier*<sup>28</sup> the new direction is towards a dramatised version of life and the placement of the individual 'I', Okot p'Bitek himself, at the centre of events. In this condition, he typifies the lament of the people. In the second revisionary ratio, " the later poet, in his final phase,... holds his own poem so open again to the precursor's work that at first we might believe the wheel has come full circle .... But ... the new poem's achievement makes it seem to us, not as though the precursor were writing it, but as though the later poet himself had written the precursor's characteristic work."<sup>29</sup> This is typical of p'Bitek's *Song of Prisoner* and

*Song of Soldier.*

These two songs are Shelley's *The Mask of Anarchy* in content, and, to a certain extent, in form. Although separated by some one hundred and sixty years, the economic and socio-political events that inform the English poem and the two Ugandan poems seem to be the same and the three of them thus appear to be under a common sky.

Shelley's poem arises from the massacre by drunken soldiers of hundreds of oppressed workers in St. Peter's Field, Manchester on 16 August 1819.<sup>30</sup> Okot p'Bitek's clinamenic and apophraditic revision of the Shelleyan reality indicates that these are the "...huge and mighty forms, that do not live/Like living men...."<sup>31</sup> that, like Wordsworth in the working statement above, grip him in conscious moments and then revisit him "spontaneously"<sup>32</sup> in the intense moments of poetic creation, hence his revisionism. The results of these engagements are *Song of Prisoner* and *Song of Soldier*. But p'Bitek's *Song of Prisoner* also arises from two events : first, his imprisonment in Kisumu, Kenya, on account of his 'laughter' –he always laughed – and a slip of tongue in a bus incident, and, secondly, the assassination of his friend, Tom Mboya, in Nairobi.

These catalytic situations produced the interesting intertexts. The political situation in Kenya and his imprisonment lead p'Bitek into anguishing moments. His description of his mental state is telling:

There is a carpenter  
Inside my head,  
He knocks nails  
Into my skull<sup>33</sup>

The two situations which are a source of his torture are likened to "a carpenter" knocking nails into his skull as if he were a piece of wood. The personification of political action and the fact that he is rendered an inanimate being reflect the paradox of living in the seventies in East Africa and concretize both the paradox and drama of human existence.

P'Bitek follows his precursor to a certain extent and, in a typical clinamenic fashion swerves to revise, rewrite, and correct Shelley. Shelley's equally excruciating situation inspires him to expose the sordidness of England in 1819:

As I lay in Italy  
There came a voice from over the Sea,  
And with great power it forth led me  
To walk in visions of Poesy.<sup>34</sup>

It is 'a voice' that tortures Shelley, not a 'carpenter'. The voice leads Shelley to

engage in 'poesy'; the carpenter knocks nails into p'Bitek's head. Both experiences are similar. P'Bitek's also leads to action. It is this that leads him to write *Song of Prisoner* so he can expose the nakedness of his life. He is bitter. Shelley seems calm at the stage reflected by the above paragraph, p'Bitek revises the paragraph by correcting it or giving it life in a new context and climate. By so doing, he gives Shelley's experience new life.

The condition in which p'Bitek finds himself in the seventies in East Africa leads him, in another moment, to dramatise and expose life by asking such obstinate questions as:

What is Uhuru  
When all my thoughts  
Are deep and silent rivers  
Blocked up by concrete walls  
Of fear and black suspicion?  
.....  
Why are the words I speak  
Captured and locked up  
In a safe?  
Open this steel gate  
And let me out.<sup>35</sup>

It is little wonder that p'Bitek seems to laugh at Uhuru or East Africa's political independence. He is bitter. In his view, political independence is a mockery of British colonialism. It is a situation in which there is no freedom of expression and one in which human beings, thoughts, and words are 'captured' and 'locked up'. His attempts to gain freedom fall on deaf ears. His dramatization of the reality of existence in the above passage and metaphorical rendering of truth are captivating and jolting. Use of the question form deepens and concretizes his message. This is one context in which he is apophraditic. Shelley seems to have come back from the dead to direct the latter-day p'Bitek. In spite of it, the treatment of p'Bitek's experience in a different context gives him some distinction as a poet.

P'Bitek thus seems both to follow his precursor to a certain extent in the above passage and to swerve to revise it. But in the same passage, *The Mask of Anarchy* also seems to have come back from the dead.

Shelley in the precursor passage below finds himself in a situation that is more or less similar to p'Bitek's. But he again remains calm yet bitter:

What is Freedom – ye can tell

That which Slavery is, too well –  
.....  
What art thou, Freedom? O! could slaves  
Answer from their living graves  
.....  
Spirit, Patience, Gentleness  
All that can adorn and bless  
Art thou – let deeds, not words, express  
Thine exceeding loveliness<sup>36</sup>

While Shelley who is in an oxymoronic world of “freedom” and “slavery” addresses his economic and socio-political problems by being sarcastic in his obstinate questioning, P’Bitek remains lively, dynamic, and dramatic and, in this sense, revises his precursor poet significantly. His appeal is immediate.

Perhaps the most frightening moments in p’Bitek’s life are those he spent in post-Idi Amin Uganda . In tranquility, he recollects the actions f Amin’s murderous soldiers. He creatively encounters one of them here:

He arrived soon after midnight;  
.....  
His torchlight lit up the horizon  
Like the rising sun.  
His black face  
Hidden under the bush hat,  
His eagle eyes burnt fiercely  
Like molten iron.  
He caressed the butt of his gun  
.....  
He sneezed:  
A dark whirlwind engulfed the land  
Gripping her tightly

Like a python  
Strangulating a waterbuck  
Like the killer  
Throttling his victim

He coughed:  
The song of machine guns  
Filled the air  
Mad jets tore the sky in fury  
Scattering death across the land,  
Ten thousand mad dogs  
Broke loose,  
Blood gushed  
Like the swollen Nile  
After the rains in the mountains.<sup>37</sup>

[Underlinings Mine]

In this passage p'Bitek draws on his dramatic skill to expose the reality of life under Idi Amin. He appears to be an observer and commentator on the drama of human existence in Uganda under Idi Amin. His aesthetic distance enables him to control his emotions and judge things objectively. His use of similes like those that give us the effect of the soldier's torchlight that was "like the rising sun"; his eyes that burnt "fiercely", "like the molten iron", his sneezing that gripped the land "like a python/Strangulating a waterbuck", and blood that gushed "like the swollen Nile" show the anguish, pain, desperation, death, and hopelessness meted to human beings in Uganda of Idi Amin's period by fellow human beings. The metaphor "mad dogs" underlines the squalidness of life in Uganda of the seventies.

The above passage is another in which p'Bitek's precursor poet comes back from the dead to observe and direct life. P'Bitek's reading of Shelley's passage shows how strong the precursor is in his experience. In his revision, p'Bitek follows Shelley to a limited extent and allows him to take over his creative imagination. The relationship enables p'Bitek to live and write his experience in a different light.

In Shelley's experience of 1819 in England, the soldier is seen metaphorically as "murder" and he proceeds thus:

I met Murder on the way –  
He had a mask like Castlereagh  
Very smooth he looked, yet grim;  
Seven blood-hounds followed him:  
.....  
He tossed them human hearts to chew  
Which from his wide cloak he drew.  
.....  
Next came Anarchy : he rode  
On a white horse, splashed with blood;  
He was pale even to the lips,  
Like Death in the Apocalypse.<sup>38</sup>

[Underlinings Mine]

Highly metaphorical, Shelley's text is stronger. It is little wonder that p'Bitek's attempt to revise it, is to bring it back from the dead. So many years after its composition, the metaphors of death are still as effective as they were in 1819. Fellow human beings, soldiers, are called "murder" and "blood-hounds" to whom "human hearts" are tossed so they can "chew" them. The massacre of human beings is "anarchy." How terrifying! Shelley maintains aesthetic distance and underlines his concern effectively. This is how he legislates for his society.

Yet the above passages to dot tell the whole story of the bitterness of life in both Uganda and England. In his renderings, Okot p'Bitek takes us to another painful context. He situates his drama in that of children. Children lead an equally desperate existence :

My children howl  
Like mad dogs  
.....  
Have you seen  
The mosquito legs  
Of my children?  
.....

My children's heads  
Are bowed down  
With heavy sleep,  
But their stomachs  
Drum sleep off  
Their eyes...!<sup>39</sup>

For p'Bitek's children, starvation is the order of the day. He is angry and this is indicated, again, by his use of metaphors and similes. The children do not 'cry', but indeed "howl/Like mad dogs". Theirs are "mosquito legs". They appear to sleep, yet "their stomachs/Drum sleep off/Their eyes". This is the reality of neglect and total abuse of children. Any society that neglects its children is doomed for ever, yet this is the reality children face in *Song of Prisoner*. They are prisoners in their own society – their imprisonment is evidently mindboggling.

P'Bitek follows his precursor poem closely, again, in this experience and swerves effectively. His dramatization of starvation and stark nakedness here is more telling than that of his precursor poet:

What is Freedom – ye can tell  
.....  
'Tis to see your children weak  
With their mothers pine and peak,  
When the winter winds are bleak, -  
They are dying whilst I speak.<sup>39</sup>

Shelley's rendering of this experience is equally dramatic. It is also seen in the context of 'freedom/uhuru'. Freedom in 1819 in England is to "see... children weak" and "dying whilst I speak {he speaks] while "their pine and peak"[Underlinings Mine]. The verbs "pine" and "peak" reflect the extent to which waste away in a society of social and economic inequalities. Panoramic, objective, and descriptive, Shelley shows his legislative prowess and implicitly appeals for change albeit through words. P'Bitek follows him and then swerves to involve an audience in a similarly dramatic situation and a similar motive. He rewrites the Shelleyan experience in terms of the motive and nature of his poetry. He is closer to his audience and involves them effectively.

Another event portrays suffering and socio-economic inequality differently, yet the effect is the same. Listen:

Listen to the Chief's dog

Barking like a volcano,  
Listen to the echoes  
Playing on the hillsides!  
How many pounds  
Of meat  
Does this dog eat  
In a day?  
How much milk...?<sup>40</sup>

A dog is a man's best friend, all right, but to treat it better than a fellow human being; better than a child, and mothers "pining and peaking" is frightening and sad. But such is the reality of existence in p'Bitek's East Africa of the seventies. Since it eats several pounds of meat and drinks several litres of milk everyday and it is therefore fat, the chief's dog barks "like a volcano" and protects the chief against fellow human beings while children bear "mosquito legs".

The Shelleyan passage that is a precursor to p'Bitek's is short, yet how effective:

What is Freedom? – ye can tell

.....

'Tis to hunger for such diet  
As the rich man in his riot  
Casts to the fat dogs that lie  
Surfeiting beneath his eye<sup>41</sup>

In the context of 1819 in England, freedom is mockery, imprisonment, sickness, hunger and anger as "fat dogs" get fatter. In this passage both revisionary rations can be seen. P'Bitek swerves to locate the Shelleyan experience in his mental theatre and this makes his rendering of it effective. But he also remains apophraditic and returns *The Mask of Anarchy* from the dead.

### Assessment and Conclusion

In taking *The Mask of Anarchy* as a model, in engaging in revisionism, Okot p'Bitek, like Shelley, believes in the reformation of his abject society and social institutions so people may live well. He is firm in his view:

I ... hold very strongly that an artist should tease people, should prick needles into everybody so that they don't go to sleep and think everything is fine.<sup>42</sup>

But this is a position often said than done. This why p'Bitek resorts to mental war in order to address reality. It appears that whatever he does, however serious he gets, his words and thoughts will be for ever "locked up" and restlessness in prison remains the only reality :

Open the steel gate,  
I want to join the dances  
Of the world,  
I want to shake my madness  
Off my head,  
I want to forgive  
And forget the past,  
.....  
I want to dance  
All the dances of the world ....<sup>43</sup>

For p'Bitek, imprisonment is as real and concrete as "steel". The prison in which he finds is self has a "steel gate". Unless one has a key, it cannot be opened. P'Bitek did not stay in prison for even a week, yet the effect of prison experience lingers on. The worst reality , in his case, is thus that he is in a 'mental prison'. He is free physically, yet not so mentally. Attempts to have the gate to the mind opened yield nothing. That is why in the passage above, he resorts to wishful thinking : to join all the dances /Of the world/[and] shake madness/Off [his] head". The repetitive nature of his wishful thinking shows the severity of his mental state. He wishes to address this state by engaging in "dancing". The image of "dancing all the dances of the world" indicates the helplessness in which he finds himself in his country which h is a mental prison. His attempt to revise Shelley's view that a poet is an effective barometer of his society is not realisable.

Shelley's position which is the motif of *The Mask of Anarchy*, which p'Bitek attempts to revise is equally not realizable. Words alone cannot open "steel gates" :

Rise like lions after slumber  
In unvanguishable number –  
Shake your chains to earth like dew.  
Which in sleep had fallen on you –  
You are many – they are few.<sup>44</sup>

In spite of this attempt to rouse the English from their deep sleep and bring about

change, Shelley also fails. So does P'Bitek's attempt to revise this position even when, in his re-aiming at Shelley's position, he dramatises the plight of fellow Ugandans. Both wars remain at intellectual level; the wars of words. An ideal conclusion is not reached. An ideal society only exists in creative imagination.

In spite of their inability to bring about desired change to their societies, we cannot easily forget Shelley and Okot p'Bitek. They reflect their decayed societies in *The Mask of Anarchy*, *Song of Prisoner*, and *Song of Soldier* truthfully. Shelley was "a writer often attacked, often extolled, but never forgotten"<sup>45</sup> by his society. Likewise, "the echoes of [Okot p'Bitek's ] voice still drum in our ears; his laments disturb our hearts and his scorpion-tail tongues strings [sic] us to the bone .... Great artist that he was, the more his bones decompose in the grave [in a churchyard in Gulu, northern Uganda], the more his spirit resurrects and gains wider acclaim."<sup>46</sup>

In his poetry p'Bitek new-names his poems in various contexts, he revises aspects of Shelley's *The Mask of Anarchy* in interesting ways. He is in a true intertextual relationship with with one of Shelley' greatest poems. P'Bitek questions, fuses, corrects, and rewrites various moments of this poem. In the final analysis, this creative engagement gives Okot p'Bitek distinct voice and identity as a poet.

In his case, revisionism is not bad after all. It invigorates his creative talent and gives him poetic vision.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Wordsworth. "Book the First: Introduction – Childhood and School-Time". *The Prelude : A Parallel Text*. (1805-06 edition). Ed. J.C.Maxwell. Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1986.56.

<sup>2</sup>All the six major English Romantics, namely, Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, and Keats practise this craft.

<sup>3</sup>Keats. Letter to Richard Woodhouse. 27 October 1818. *English Romangtic Writers*. Ed. David Perkins. 1220.

<sup>4</sup>Samuel Johnson."Preface to Shakespeare." *English Critical Texts: 16<sup>th</sup> Century to 20<sup>th</sup> Century*. ed. D.J.Enright and Ernst de Chikera. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.132.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>T.S.Eliot. "Tradition and the Individual Talent." *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*. Ed. David Lodge. London and New York : Longmans, 1988.72.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.74.

<sup>8</sup>Ann Wordsworth. "An Art that will not Abandon The Self to Language : Bloom, Tennyson and the Blind World of the Wish". *Untying the Text : A Post-Structuralist Reader*. ed. Robert Young. Boston, London and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981. 207.

<sup>10</sup>Harold Bloom. *The Anxiety of Influence : A Theory of Poetry*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973 and *A Map of Misreading*. New York : Oxford University Press, 1975.

<sup>11</sup>Harold Bloom. *A Map of Misreading*. New York : Oxford University Press, 1975. 4.

<sup>12</sup>Bloom's six ratios outlined in *The Anxiety of Influence* .14ff are:

- (a) Clinamen or swerve or Poetic Misprision
- (b) Tessera or Completion and Antithesis
- (c) Kenosis or Repetition and Discontinuity
- (d) Daemonization or the Counter Sublime
- (e) Askesis or Purgation and Solipsism
- (f) Apophrades or the Return of the Dead

<sup>13</sup>Harold Bloom. *A Map of Misreading*.3.

<sup>14</sup>Jonathan Culler. "Presupposition and Intertextuality." In *The Pursuit of Signs : Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction*. Ithaca : Cornell University Press, 1981.103.

<sup>15</sup>Shelley, P.B. "*The Mask of Anarchy*." *English Romantic Writers*. ed. David Perkins, New York : Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, In c., 1967.1020-26.

<sup>16</sup>Okot p'Bitek. *Artist, the Ruler : Essays on Art,Culture and Values*. Nairobi : Heinemann Kenya,1986.2.

<sup>17</sup>Nguigi wa Thiong'o. "The Quest for Relevance". *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literatures*. Nairobi: Heinemann Kenya, 1986.91.

<sup>18</sup>John Spencer. "West Africa and the English Language." ed. *The English Language in West Africa*. London: Longman, 1971.4.

<sup>19</sup>Okot p'Bitek. *Artist, the Ruler : Essays on Art, Culture and Values*. Nairobi : Heinemann Kenya,1986.47.

<sup>20</sup>Wordsworth. "Book the First: Introduction – Childhood and School-Time". *The Prelude : A Parallel Text*. (1805-06 edition). Ed. J.C.Maxwell. Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1986.56.

<sup>21</sup>Okot p'Bitek. *Artist, the Ruler : Essays on Art,Culture and Values*. Nairobi : Heinemann Kenya,1986.3.

<sup>22</sup>David Cook spent 15 years at Makerere, the last 0 [ March 1967 to March 1977] as Professor and Head of the Department of Literature.

<sup>23</sup>David Cook. *African Writers: A Critical View*. London: Longmans, 1977.36-39.

<sup>24</sup> Harold Bloom. *The Anxiety of Influence : A Theory of Poetry*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.14ff.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.15ff.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.14.

<sup>27</sup>Okot p'Bitek. *Song of Prisoner. Two Songs*. Nairobi: East African Publishing House,1971.7-118.

<sup>28</sup>\_\_\_\_\_. *Song of Soldier. Artist, the Ruler : Essays on Art,Culture and Values*. Nairobi : Heinemann Kenya,1986.111-114.

<sup>29</sup>Harold Bloom. *The Anxiety of Influence*.15

<sup>30</sup>Introductory note to *The Mask of Anarchy. English Romantic Writers*. ed. David Perkins. 1020.

<sup>31</sup>Wordsworth. "Book the First: Introduction – Childhood and School-Time". *The Prelude : A Parallel Text*. (1805-06 edition). Ed. J.C.Maxwell. Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1986.56.

<sup>32</sup>Wordsworth, *Preface, Second Edition of the Lyrical Ballads. English Romantic Writers*. ed. David Perkins. 328.

<sup>33</sup>*Song of Prisoner*.42.

<sup>34</sup>*The Mask of Anarchy*. 1020.

<sup>35</sup>*Song of Prisoner*.90.

<sup>36</sup>*The Mask of Anarchy*. 1022-24.

<sup>37</sup> *Song of Soldier*.111.

<sup>38</sup>*The Mask of Anarchy*.1020.

<sup>39</sup>*Song of Prisoner*.17-23

<sup>39</sup>*The Mask of Anarchy*.1023.

<sup>40</sup>*Song of Prisoner*.22.

<sup>41</sup>*The Mask of Anarchy*.1022.

<sup>42</sup>Okot p'Bitek. *Conversations with African Writers*. comp. Lee Nichols. Washington DC: Voice of America, 1981.251.

<sup>43</sup>*Song of Prisoner*.117.

<sup>44</sup>*The Mask of Anarchy*.1022 and 1026.

<sup>45</sup> David Perkinns.*English Romantic Writers*.957.

<sup>46</sup>Onyango Mak'Akumo. "Okot's genius : Do we respect talent enough?" *Sunday Nation* (23 September 1990):19.

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