

From the Editorial Team

Dear readers, dear friends:

Welcome to our first issue for 2025. And what a year it has been so far. Those of us living in global Africa have few illusions about the ways in which black bodies continue to be marginalised, villified and physically thwarted. However, few of us might have expected the speed with which these reprisals would occur, following recent political shifts in Europe and the US.

In May 2025, we have been horrified that the US accepted a group of white South African Afrikaners, descendants of colonists, as refugees under the February 7, 2025 Executive Order. This is especially disheartening since it occurred at a time when the US refugee programme had been paused for thousands of others, and the US courts had ordered the government to [at least resume the refugee program](#) for those who had already been approved to travel.

The Critical Investigations into Africa group have condemned this move as follows:

“We remember the violence of South African apartheid, supported by the United States, enacted by the white majority against black South Africans. We remember those murdered and injured in the Sharpeville Massacre on March 21, 1960. We remember the thousands of students and young people attacked with military violence in Soweto. We remember those incarcerated and tortured on Robben Island. To transform the perpetrators [a]of this violence into victims deserving of refugee status is not only a travesty of tragic history, but a travesty of the very meaning of the humanitarian ideal.” (Read the full [CIHA statement](#)).

At the same time human solidarity continues. It is heartwarming that some in the US have condemned this recasting of the descendants of perpetrators into victims. For example, the migration services of the Episcopal Church in the US has refused a directive from the federal government to help resettle the white South Africans who have been granted refugee status, citing the church's longstanding "commitment to racial justice and reconciliation." Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe announced the step in a letter released on May 12, shortly before 49 South Africans arrived at Dulles International Airport on a private charter plane, where they were greeted by a government delegation. Bishop Rowe's words:

"It has been painful to watch one group of refugees, selected in a highly unusual manner, receive preferential treatment over many others who have been waiting in refugee camps or dangerous conditions for years... As Christians, we must be guided not by political vagaries, but by the sure and certain knowledge that the kingdom of God is revealed to us in the struggles of those on the margins. Jesus tells us to care for the poor and vulnerable as we would care for him, and we must follow that command... In light of our church's steadfast commitment to racial justice and reconciliation and our historic ties with the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, we are not able to take this step. Accordingly, we have determined that, by the end of the federal fiscal year, we will conclude our refugee resettlement grant agreements with the U.S. federal government." (Read the [see full statement here](#)).

It is also reassuring that the US Supreme Court on May 16 extended its freeze on the use of the 18th century wartime law to deport a group of Venezuelan detainees, while the matter is litigated in the courts. Notwithstanding these

happenings around us, we at CJAS continue to do the work that we do, with you, dear family, who continue to support us with your article submissions, review work, reading and critical feedback.

In this issue we present readers, with five articles that examine questions of the (re)construction of concepts and characters, and meaning making through stylistic (re)renditioning of language, how this is done and what this could mean for everyday social interactions.

In “Narrating Humanity to the African Child: Deconstructing the Hero Figure in Naana J.E.S. Opoku-Agyemang’s *Who told the Most Incredible Stories*”, Christabel Sam interrogates the place and power of the (fictional) hero. Inasmuch as the figure of the hero is central to how cultures and societies construct themselves and articulate a stable fundamental ethos, normalizing or consolidating existing norms, the hero can also be represented through difficult or challenging characters. Employing the figure of the notorious Ananse in Opoku-Agyemang’s *Who Told the Most Incredible Stories*, Sam explores how accepted wisdom about heroes are subverted, and alternative forms set up through “character foiling”.

In the next article by Joshua Sunday Ayantayo & Adekunbi Eniola Akintola, “Nigerian newspaper negotiation of Victimhood in Banditry report”, we discover how the media encode and decode victimhood in reportage about the activities of bandits. The authors discuss different discursive strategies newspapers use to negotiate Nigerian victimhood in what they refer to as “banditry discourse”, namely, Nigerians as helpless/stranded people, Nigerians as losers, Nigerians as captured people, security agents as “armless”, and Nigerians as innocent people.

“The aesthetic of the Dangme Dirge” by Raymond Teye Akrobettoe examines the aesthetics of the Dangme language by analysing both performance and textual elements in dirges from Yilo Klo and Manya Klo in the Eastern Region,

as well as Adaa and Nugo in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. He also documents the structure, components, and significance of the dirges.

Narratives of the youth as a “social dividend” in Africa who will contribute to economic and political transformation continue to be employed in the Afro-optimist discourse. What is often neglected in these narratives is an objective assessment of state interventions. In “Social justice and infrastructure approach to youth development in Ghana”, Peter Narh interrogates youth responses to policy measures and programmes to develop youth capacities in Ghana. Narh proposes a social justice and infrastructure framework for youth development.

What role do conditional statements and expressions play in everyday discourse and what sense do we make of these? Relying on textual data drawn from existing Dagbani literary works, primary field data, and based on his “native speaker’s introspection”, Samuel Alhassan Issah provides an account of the structure of the conditional clauses of Dagbani, a Mabia language spoken in Northern Ghana.

Finally, we turn to Kaakye, a Kwa, Niger-Congo, language. Levina Nyameye Abunya, Rogers Krobea Asante and E. Kweku Osam investigate the nature of animacy distinction in the various grammatical manifestations of the animacy concept in Kaakye. They argue that animacy is a crucial determinant in the choice of forms and behaviours of nominal prefixes, pronouns, nominal modifiers, concord subject marking, and preferred to inanimate distinctions. Thus, the paper contributes to cross-linguistic studies of the role of animacy in the grammar of languages.

It was with deep sadness that we learned of Marika Sherwood’s departure from this world on February 16, 2025, at the age of 87. Sherwood had been a long-time scholar and activist in the Pan-African struggle, and a long time friend of Ghana and the Institute of African Studies. In this issue we pay tribute to her. We also have a review of Christina Kenny’s

book *Reimagining the Gendered Nation: Citizenship and Human Rights in Postcolonial Kenya* by (James Currey, 2022) by Titilope F Ajayi.

As always, we thank you all for your continued patronage and support. It is our hope that, together we will feel encouraged and empowered to sustain our work on behalf of global Africa in the diverse knowledge-production projects we engage in.

Akosua Adomako Ampofo

Editor-in-Chief

May, 2025