

Language and Communication in a Structuralist Society

Wincharles Coker (PhD Student)

Department of Humanities

Michigan Technological University,

Houghton, MI, USA

wcoker@mtu.edu

Language and Communication in a Structuralist Society

Abstract

In what ways does the structuralist paradigm of language speak to the underlying constructs of human communication and modern society? How should the dynamics of a postmodern society be understood while they remain largely structuralist? In order to answer these two broad questions, I consider in my analysis that language is both a system, and an abstraction of the social structure. By considering the nexus among language, communication, and society, I reflect on how communication is a form of social and symbolic action, which calls up issues of ideology, power and dominance; thus, communication is not just considered as a linear cybernetic transfer of information. As the global society, the African society faces challenges and constraints because of these constructs. The contribution of this article lies in the emphasis of the links which exist between these challenges and these constraints. The paper concludes that studying societies through the structuralist paradigm allows us to see in great detail the position of the self in relation to hegemonic and power dominance. In a word, when we communicate we must be political; our communicative acts are in themselves, *mutatis mutandis*, partisan and ideologically motivated.

Keywords: language, communication, society, structure, asymmetry

1. Introduction

The nexus between language and communication is particularly fascinating. There is a sense in which one is privileged over and above the other in scholarly circles, although such a medley of intellectual clamors is out of place here. But broadly construed, language is a social currency by which humans trade to meet their communicative ends. It is a material medium for communicating thoughts and feelings, though not the only means. Language is, therefore, the exclusive property of humans, given that it distinguishes us from animals (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Yule, 1996; Aitchinson, 2001). In all media of communication, spoken, written, or computer-mediated, language is employed as a means of communication. So too, communication, John Dewey (1992) avers, basically refers to the use of language. What I intend to do, *ipso facto*, is to demonstrate how the underlying constructs of structuralism in language and communication reflect, and condition postmodern society. I hope to situate my exegesis in

the throes of social and critical theories as they find expression in the works of members of the Frankfurt School, as well as postcolonial discourses. In what follows I provide a svelte overview of language as a system that has inheres a discernible structure, and an abstraction of the social structure, and that language primarily “serves the means of communication” (Levi-Strauss, 1958: 5). I would like to think of communication as a form of social, symbolic action which calls up issues of power and dominance, and not just as a cybernetic transfer of information (*See also* Carey, 1982; Mattelart, 1996). Or so I believe.

2. Language and Structuralism

Although the Russian phonologist Nikolai Troubetsky is thought to be “the illustrious founder of structural linguistics” (Lévi-Strauss, 1958: 2), a well-informed reading of structural linguistics can hardly do without the Swiss French linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure. In his posthumous *Course in General Linguistics*, Saussure (1916) links up the study of language with structuralism, the dominant thinking of his epoch as “an attempt to apply linguistics to the study of the impersonal effects of social structures and political systems” (Elliott, 2009: 55). In this light, structuralism is a shaping principle: It orders, influences, determines the lives of individuals within the ebb and flow of social, political, historical, and of course linguistic factors, which in turn determine, and further constrain individual choices, decisions and values.

For Saussure a meaningful inquiry into the structure of the language of a culture must proceed with an inquiry into the *signs* of that language. The linguistic sign, Saussure writes, evokes an arbitrary association between a *signifier* (a sound or image) and a *signified* (a mental image, or its denotatum) of *langue* (the abstract collective structure of a given language) distinct from *parole* (idiosyncratic individualized utterances of *langue*). There is no such intrinsic value, for instance, in the English word *mother* to refer to the idea it denotes, nor is it different in the

case of the French *mère* or its Latin equivalent *mater*. This association, Saussure insists, ought to be seen as arbitrary. That said, if I enunciate the nominal *fish*, what is there in the internal structure of this word to link it to the ideation of the scaly piscine specie? Do the letters f+i+s+h in themselves constitute this concept? Is it not true that we have come to accept it as the sign or linguistic value, or better still, mental representation of the element? And so I argue, along with the American social behaviorist George H. Mead (1934:75), that “language is not ever arbitrary in the sense of simply denoting a bare state of consciousness by a word”.

But *langue* becomes the locus of Saussure’s object of study in, at least, two respects. First, *langue*, in his thought, is the universal principle that binds a homogeneous ethnolinguistic society. A study of the signs of the language of a speech community, say French, then, is the study of its internal linguistic structures in terms of its meaning making processes, Saussure may argue. Second, a focus on *langue*, according to Saussure, is appropriate inasmuch as it lends itself to the discovery of universal linguistic principles and laws governing the linguistics of cultures, especially when pursued from a *synchronic* perspective. Or as Noam Chomsky (1975: 5) intimates, “By studying the properties of natural languages, their structure, and use, we may hope to gain some understanding of the specific characteristics of human intelligence”. But if the language of a people is not inchoate but structured, why the same cannot be said of their society? In a way, Saussure’s goal, I am inclined to think, was to understand the universal principles of language; he aimed at discovering the science of human communication in society: *semiology*.

3. Communicating in a Structuralist Society

A global, structural perspective to the semiology of human communication, to borrow from Saussure, calls to mind the constitutive processes by which communication manifests in society.

According to John Dewey (1992), communication is structural because it is the basis of communitarian societies. In the thinking of Jürgen Habermas (1996), a structured society creates “a network for communicating information and points of view” (p. 360). And though Habermas writes within the context of public sphere, it is important to note that such points of view could consider, *inter alia*, issues of ideology, hegemony, class struggle, and power relations. It is for this reason that the works of Michel Foucault will remain seminal to the study of structuralism in modern society. With Foucault originates the concept of power which creates an asymmetrical core/periphery structure. In his emblematic article “*Panopticism*” (1975) Foucault argues that society has been ordered in a manner that privileges an omnipresent surveillance of the periphery by the capitalist, upper class. The Panopticon machine constantly keeps its gaze on everyone unbeknown to them that they are being watched. Foucault writes: “He is seen, but he does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication...The Panopticon is a machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad” (p. 182). Such an apparatus, then, results in dissymmetry, disequilibrium, and difference in a consciously hierarchized society. This system, in Foucault’s words, “constitutes a compact model of the disciplinary mechanism” (p. 180). It is that which identifies, individuates, and determines the individual’s station: No trespass.

For Foucault there are two basic ways of communicating with individuals in society to constantly exercise power over them. This can be achieved either by controlling their relations, or by separating out the potentially dangerous elements amongst them. Segregation and differentiation are the main processes. One other means is through subtle coercion by which all authorities, the school, the prison, the hospital, exercise control over the individual by creating what Foucault calls a “binary division and branding” (p. 181). According to this anti-rhizomatic thought to wit Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1980), one is either brilliant or dull, as in the

case of the school, mad/insane, if one happens to be incarcerated in the four walls of the prison, normal/abnormal so long as one happens to be a patient. So conceived, authorities, Foucault intimates, reduce humans to atomic particles just so they could measure, supervise and correct them in an effort to maintain conformity, law, and order. In this way, all of society has been structured to so behave, and act accordingly so that discipline becomes a component of our schemata. It is this hierarchization that, for instance,

...creates disparities that continue to increase between the core and the periphery of the capitalist system, which led the economist Immanuel Wallerstein to say, in a dialogue with Braudel, that capitalism is “a creation of the inequality of the world” and that it can only be conceived in a vast and “universalist” space (Mattelart, 1996: 164).

With advances in science and technology, Foucault’s Panoptism reverberates all the more. Our helpless detachment from the internet, the cellular phone, and such new communication technologies such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube further intensify the surveillance project such that it is difficult if not impossible to act unnoticed. I argue that such perpetuity is itself destructive because it wrongfully interferes with the privacy of the masses. But what is there to be weary of if one is right before the law? Why should the hardened criminal not feel that they are under constant surveillance? Why should the guilty citizen who just sped off pass the traffic light feel relieved? Does it not make sense to feel under pressure and insecure under such circumstances?

And as if this capitalist project does not suffice, the masses have been further plunged in the abyss of excessive consumerism, the mass culture and neo-hedonism. Humanity’s incessant but often bogus obsession with materialism attracts the attention of two of the Frankfurt School’s influential thinkers: Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer (1944). The German authors focus on the sociopathologies that belie the structure of postmodern society vis-à-vis individual self

consciousness. In their critical theory of society, Adorno and Horkheimer argue that the belief that the fundamental structure of modern societies is reason needs reconsideration because it is “nothing but sheer illusion” (cited in Elliot, 2009: 21) against the backdrop of two seemingly senseless world wars. The point is made that mass culture and the commercialization of almost every single atom of production in society have brought with them a kind of brainwashing and dependence on the media, Hollywood and the capitalist ideas of entrepreneurs. So construed, humans have become so consumed in the things they amass that they are shaped, defined and identified by them. Reason, in a consumerist culture, is interpretive of what the individual possesses, more so than in terms of what they think of, no less than how that thinking is processed. In a sense then, the Cartesian maxim “*cogito ergo sum*” in today’s rationality is less appealing than “*consumo ergo sum*”. Adorno and Horkheimer (1991: np) write:

Today the culture industry has taken over the civilizing inheritance of the entrepreneurial and frontier democracy – whose appreciation of intellectual deviations was never very finely attuned. All are free to dance and enjoy themselves, just as they have been free, since the historical neutralization of religion, to join any of the innumerable sects. But freedom to choose an ideology – since ideology always reflects economic coercion – everywhere proves to be freedom to choose what is always the same.

At this point it is instructive to stress that the workings of capitalism through the instrumentality of the mass culture, and the mass media, coupled with the desire to consume *en masse* in modern society leads to one thing, and yet dreadful: domination. Domination, in this scheme of things, also operates at least at two strata—the self and the socio-political. When the individual self is dominated and consequently subjugated under the claws of a capitalist project, they are but reduced to what Adorno (1967) describes as *psychological de-individualized social atoms*. In this state the individual, for the most part, regrettably develops a fetish for a high culture, the reality of which is illusory. This domination of the human sense of rationality, or what Noam Chomsky (1975) terms ‘human intelligence’ is what Adorno and Horkheimer point

to is the lot of an enlightened system. At the realm of politics, individuals are in a like manner conditioned through the presentation of the stimuli of the mass media to elicit responses of compliance, patriotism, and social order. But is that how helpless the masses are, and have no control over the Id, to sound a bit Freudian? If the masses are so incapable of making rational, sound judgment concerning matters of the *polis*, as Walter Lippman so believes in *Public Opinion* (1922), what then is the basis of democratic states?

4. Selfhood, the Public, and the Mass Media in a Structuralist Society

Perhaps we could trace the roots of this problematic to the diminished authority of the father-head in the family system. In *Eros and Civilization* (1956), Herbert Marcuse reads political undertones into the cathartic nature of individual consciousness resulting from humankind's rationality outside the horde. Marcuse argues that the role of the father as the leader who instills ego in and represses the id of the son is no longer functional in the current dispensation due to the father's latent and incapacitated roles in his household. His position as father is severely threatened as his children no longer look up to him for socialization and education, and rather turn to other agents such as peers, the school, the church, and of course the mass media—the state. But there would have arisen no harm had there been a positive impact on the rational mind. The point is made then that when the instinctual drives of collective ids do assemble in the public sphere or society, they are, in the process of time, given direction by the ego of a leader, although this leadership or direction may not be as objectively conscientious to sift the good from the bad, Marcuse observes. It is this kind of leadership, in his view, that results in the kind of fascist, communist, oligarchic, totalitarian societies that have plagued the progress and development of an ego-conscious civilized humanity. For rather than suppress and sublime the id of our human

selves, this instinctual drive has conquered the reason-part of our being through the conscious manipulation of capitalist projects chief among which is the mass media, Marcuse regrets.

But if individuals tend to be driven more by passion than by reason how do we then participate in rational public deliberations? For Jürgen Habermas (1964), the public sphere is an institution that mediates between social life and the State. He insists that there can hardly be any public opinion without the public sphere because it is the public sphere that guarantees access to all citizens. But there can be no such thing as the public sphere without the public. Habermas believes that the public constitutes an assembly of rational private individuals with the rights of freedom of assembly and freedom of association, and are capable of expressing diverse opinions concerning both private and, for the most part, public affairs. Recent studies in the culture of self-expression in the electronic media in Ghana show that the right to free speech is sometimes, however, abused (Coker, 2011; 2012a; 212b).

Habermas makes a clear distinction between the media of the public sphere and the political sphere. Although both could be said to play a complementary role in a liberal democracy, the former mainly refers to the various media, newspapers, radio, television and lately new communication technologies, by which information is transmitted to and influenced by target audiences in the large public body. The author also notes that the role of the press has undergone a serious transformation, that is, from one of forming public opinion to that of expressing private sentiments. The political sphere, on the other hand, has to do with public discussions relatable to matters of the *polis*, or its administration. In a word, a study of the public sphere is a study of how the rational views of the masses are coordinated, regulated and dealt with within the atmosphere of democracy and freedom of expression.

It is important to note that the term *public sphere* came into prominence not until the eighteenth century. This is as a result of the functioning of the bourgeois society led by aristocrats, feudal lords, kings, and princes. What this means is that the act of expressing individual opinions were highly repressed if not regulated, for it was these privileged few that had the imprimatur to so do, and act in behalf of the public. There was a climate of repression and silence because individuals' views and opinions were considered inchoate, prejudiced and less important. On this note I wonder if Jürgen Habermas had come into contact with the work of Walter Lippmann's *Public Opinion* (1922) in which the latter argued that the views of the public are bogus to the running of the State because their views are steeped in stereotypes and false judgments of the real world.

Given the changing function of the media, Habermas criticizes the collapse of the private sphere and public sphere to what he terms *the refeudalization of society* such that today there is hardly no distinction between the two. Michel Foucault's concept of *Panopticism* neatly ties in here. Everything one does in the privacy of their homes, for instance, is under the scrutiny of the public eye in this age. Habermas also has a word on the institution 'public relations work', and says that they are all but propagandists that seek to harmonize public opinion to prevent dissent and affront.

5. Beyond Structuralism: Africa on the Spotlight

The above discussion even becomes poignant from the standpoint of postcolonial theorists. In a postmodern society, it is important to note that the notion of structuralism will certainly have its own limits I have already demonstrated. Frantz Fanon's 'The Fact of Blackness' (1952) is one such example. Confessedly, the reading of the chauvinism against the black race in the eyes of a

black man is not an easy task, though I refuse to be tempted to act blindly in defense of my race. I should say, at the outset, that the plight of the Negro, as they were called few decades ago, is an intriguingly perplexing oxymoron. Frantz Fanon's is yet another gory depiction of the pain of being perhaps mistakenly born black in a world in which order, progress and rationality is defined by those who believe they have been ordained by the heavens to govern the Earth: a certain manifest destiny.

It makes little essence to regurgitate the ontology of black people. The point, as Fanon makes it so lucid, is that the metaphoric furnace black Others are thrown into stems from primordial stereotypes and prejudices. In *Public Opinion* (1922), the revered, perceptive American writer, Walter Lippman says that stereotypes thrive on the economy of thought and effort, and are useful for preventing the human mind to think beyond itself. This motif is also repeated by the French thinker Jacques Ellul in *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes* (1965). I will make no repeat of the historico-racial or epidermal/corporeal racial schema and molds to which the black is made to respond, though it is sometimes arduous to think outside of these labels. One of the worst results of stereotypes and prejudices of racism—including anti-Semitism—is the acceptance of those charges and descriptors leveled against the Other. But who is to blame?

Return to Africa, and you'll face the shock of your life. As an academic, I have come to fully appreciate the plight of being an African much as I love my roots. Your sense of being is deeply challenged by the paradoxes of progress vs. development; patriotism vs. self-accomplishment; knowledge vs. tradition. And in the midst of this labyrinth, think White and here comes your doom, I suppose. You're not white. It's a kind of "autism in the West" such that you're never fully be accepted back at home neither will you be listened to in the white man's land. Wither should we go? Such, I believe, are the problematics we should be considering in

these pressing days and not necessarily the idealization of racial discourses the tendencies of which are divisive and regrettably derisive.

But who is to blame I repeat? Of course we would reminisce the grandeur of the black in great civilizations such as the Empire of Egypt, or the massive kingdoms of Songhai, of Mali, and of Ghana. Of course it is easy to point accusing fingers at He who “wants the world; he wants it for himself alone. He finds himself predestined master of this world and him. He enslaves it. An acquisitive relation is established between the world and him” (Fanon, 1952: 73). I do not in any way seem to sound judgmental nor wish to say that we have no cause to rethink the hermeneutics of our present degeneration. All I am asking is the stoppage of this pseudo-demagoguery, this self-pity and self-hate. Speaking of our conditions in these terms is the rumination of our lost glitter.

But who is to blame when, for instance, all efforts by the last Jeremiahs of our epochs are compromised by the thousands of Tobiahs and Sanballats? Who is to blame when we valorize today the glorification of the Id over against the Ego? How many companies sponsor and support education-driven programs in Africa? Or maybe I am out of touch with reality to so think that it is the age of edutainment. Edutainment, and whatever it is, indeed! Who is to blame when all that we seem to be doing is to apply models of development we have little contributed to? Do we also need to put up skyscrapers as an index of our progress in sub-Saharan Africa? Why should we have to read Shakespeare and not Soyinka, Aristotle and not Mbiti? For if Jacques Ellul’s maxim of “think globally, act locally” is true, then, we would need to rethink our educational system. As academics, we cite others, and yet we are never acknowledged. We confirm the theories and conceptual frameworks of great minds in the West, but we are little heard of. As it stands, our

education is overtly Euro-centric, and covertly Afro-tropic. It is a workshop for Anglo-American capitalist forces, and not responsible to its own people. Pardon me if I sound offensive!

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o makes similar observations. In *Moving the Centre* (1993), Ngũgĩ offers a fresh reading of imperialism in the 'Third' World. According to him, imperialism today can be felt at a much more heightened stage through the mechanisms of neo-colonialism and the leading role of the United States. For him, the main *telos* of colonialism, and now neo-colonialism is to gain "complete ownership of, management and control of the entire system of production, exchange and distribution of the wealth in its home base and those of other nations and territories" (p. 50). It also aims to overcome increasing demands for social change in neo-colonies by dividing, weakening, and countering any form of resistance. Isn't the case of the Arab Spring and the dog-like decapitation of Gaddafi a disturbing reconnaissance?

In the old regime, this form of greed which the imperial powers of the West courted, Ngũgĩ points out, was made manifest by their forceful occupation of the means of production in the conquered colonies. In Ghana, the colonial project officially commenced in March 1884 after tedious struggles between the English and the fragmented, less technologically sophisticated kingdoms of the Gold Coast were over. A similar story is told of the occupation of South America by the United States following the retreat of European powers such as Spain and Portugal, through evasion rather than intervention. Such occupation is clearly depicted in Armand Mattelart's (1996) *The Invention of Communication* in which the author argues that the main motive behind this evasion was to gain access to the means of production in that region. This plunder for wealth and materialism continued on a global scale until the end of the Second World War.

But despite the political freedom gained by colonies from the West, the imperial claws can still be felt, and is the essence of neo-colonialism. The problem with the fight against neo-colonialism, which Ghana's first president perhaps failed to acknowledge in his effort at unifying Africa, is that it is an ideological battle. According to Ngũgĩ, this project has been systematic, self-sustaining, and totalizing, encompassing all arenas of life. Neo-colonialism thrives on cultural hegemonies and prejudices. And so through such mediums as the colonial educational system (the school), religion, or rather the Church, and the mass media of communication—print, electronic, computer-mediated—there has been established in the consciousness of citizens in Third World Countries a certain conditioning of inferiority. Such mithridatization, as Jacques Ellul (1965) calls it is that poor nations have been made to not wholly accept a propagandized state of affairs, but more importantly to articulate and use it as part of their national discourses, identities, and body politics (See also Coker, 2013).. For Ngũgĩ, the negative effects of 'cultural control' in neo-colonized states are beyond measure. They have affected such signifiers as “the entire system of education, language and language use, literature, religion, the media” which have resulted in “the transmission of a certain ideology, set of values, outlook, attitudes, feelings etc, and hence power over the whole area of consciousness” (p. 51).

What should we expect of those whom Ngũgĩ call “fake freedom fighters” in the context of Africa, for instance, when they were made to read Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, or Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*? History has shown us quite graphically how ersatz it is to build on structures we have no part in. The whole world is amazed how a country such as Ivory Coast could at a go crawl on its belly just like that after three decades of touted unprecedented economic growth in the furnace of economic turmoil West Africa finds itself.

So grave are the ills of neo-colonialism that today, at least in certain quarters of West Africa, young men refer to the ladies they are enamored of as their “obronis” in Akan (White mistresses) regardless of the glaring skin pigmentation of these ladies. And so goes the old myth that one need not further their journey to the chapel if on their way they meet the White man: they may as well return home: They have seen God himself! Another cultural element is African onomastics. Not too long ago, both the Church, and their missionary schools—whether Catholic, Anglican, Basel or Wesleyan— required of all Ghanaians to bear Christian names, and by that they meant European names. For example Kwame Nkrumah was originally called Francis Nkrumah. So totalizing was the brainwashing that purely indigenous, local names underwent morphemic and semantic engineering. Interestingly, anyone who bore the Fante name Kuntu, which when translated means ‘blanket’ was christened Blankson at church or school, presumably “son of Kuntu”. But this is not too easy to let go as this translation could equally mean “son of the blanket”. I know such semantic extension of Mr. Wood, Miss Fish, or Sir Bird could have caused that influence. But in Africa in general, and in Ghana, in particular, the naming system is a principle of the continuity, metaphysics, ontology, and value systems of clans, and societies. Similarly ‘Andah’ became Anderson henceforth ‘Kumi’ Koomson. Again, so totalizing is the brainwashing that ‘made in Africa’ goods are seen as inferior to Anglo-American, and currently Chinese, products. It is felt everywhere: in our foods, our music, our dressing, our language, our everything!

But Ngũgĩ is not a pessimist. He ends on the note that there are brilliant attempts by a third group of countries in the Third World to cause social transformation as opposed to others who gleefully lean on the old ways of thinking and acting. And I wonder whether Nigeria, Ivory Coast, and of course, Ghana could be found in this circle of optimists. For as the champion of

this crusade, Kwame Nkrumah on March 6, 1957 prayed, “The independence of Ghana is meaningless unless it is linked up to the total liberation of the African continent”.

6. Conclusion

By way of summary, I have sought to demonstrate the relevance of structuralism as it held sway in linguistics and communication to the systematic study of modern societies. Language, and I mean communication, and society are comparable to the obverse and converse sides of the coin. One of the sides does not preclude the other. A final observation to make is that the structuralist paradigm to the study of society allows us to see in great detail the position of the self and their consciousness in relation to hegemonic and power dominance over us. Structure is the system. It is the thing itself *tout court*.

References

Aitchison, J. (2001). *Language change: Progress or decay* (3rd ed). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Adorno, T. W. (1991). *The culture of society. Selected essays on mass culture*. London: Routledge.

Adorno, T. W. & Horkheimer, M. (1967). *Dialectic of enlightenment*. New York: The Continuum Publishing Corporation.

Berger, P. L. & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. New York: Anchor.

- Carey, J. (1982). The mass media and critical theory: An American view. *Communication Yearbook*, 5: 18-33.
- Chomsky, N. (1975). *Reflections on language*. New York: Pantheon.
- Coker, W. (2013). Public opinion and propaganda in 20th century America: The case of the Lippmann/Dewey Debate. *Journal of Society and Communication*. 2013: 84-108.
- (2012a). Mobile communication and the culture of self-expression: The case of SMSing to radio in Ghana. *Journal of Media and Communication Studies*, 4(6): 123-133.
- (2012b) Complaint strategies of SMS texts in the context of radio panel discussions in Ghana (pp. 215-226). In D. F. Edu-Buandoh & A. Appartaim (eds.), *Festschrift in Honour of Professor K. E. Yankson*. Cape Coast: University of Cape Coast Press.
- (2011) Freedom of speech and the discourse of flaming in Ghana: Evidence from radio panel discussions. *Abibisem: Journal of African Culture and Civilization*, 4: 83-96.
- Dewey, J. (1992). On discovering communication: Pragmatism and the pursuit of social criticism. In H. Hart (ed.), *Critical Communication Studies: Communication History & Theory in America*. New York: Routledge.
- Elliott, A. (2009). *Contemporary social theory*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Ellul, J. (1965). *Propaganda: The formation of men's attitudes*. New York: Vintage.
- Fanon, F. (1952/2008). The fact of blackness. In N. Badmington & J. Thomas (eds.), *The Routledge Critical and Cultural Theory Reader*. London: Routledge.

Foucault, M. (1975). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. New York: Random House.

Gilles, D. & Guattari, F. (1980). *A thousand plateaus*. Trans. Brian Massumi. New York: Continuum.

Habermas, J. (1996). *Between facts and norms: Contributions to a discourse theory of law and democracy*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

----- (1964). The public sphere: An encyclopedic article. *New German Critique*. 3: 49-55.

Lippman, W. (1922). *Public opinion*. Charlottesville: MacMillan.

Levi-Strauss, C. (1958) *Structural anthropology*. Allen Lane: The Penguin Press.

Marcuse, H. (1956). *Eros and civilization*. New York: Vintage Books.

Mattelart, A. (1996). *The invention of communication*. London & Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press.

Ngũgĩ, W. T. (1993). *Moving the centre: The struggle for cultural freedoms*. Nairobi: EAEP.

Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, self, and society from the standpoint of a social behaviorist*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press.

Saussure, F. (1916). *Course in general linguistics*. Paris: Open Court.

Yule, G. (1996). *The study of language*. (2nd ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wincharles Coker holds a Master of Philosophy degree in English Language and Linguistics from the University of Cape Coast, Ghana where he is currently a lecturer at the Department of Communication Studies. Since his graduation in 2011, he has developed keen interest in affective communication, the interface between plebiscitary discourse and mass communication as well as new media, critical discourse studies and rhetoric. His recent works have appeared in *Media Dialogues*, *Journal of Society and Communication*, *Mass Communicator*, and *Journal of Media and Communication Studies*. At present, Wincharles is undertaking an archival study of public opinion and free speech in Ghana in relation to its relevance for democracy.