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## Aesthetical Discourse on 'Unity Monument' and its Role in Peace-Building in Simpa, Ghana

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### Abstract



This study was informed by the art-based approach to peacebuilding and unity to situate the Unity Monument as a didactic symbol of unity and peace in Simpa. The illustrative case study design was used in conjunction with semiotics to discuss the aesthetical connotations of the unity monument in relation to its nexus to unity and peace in Simpa. Simpa has experienced a protracted chieftaincy feud which resolution continue to hang around the neck of Kingmakers like an albatross. Many approaches have been explored to no avail. What is missing, is the use of art-based approaches to peace. Through literature review, interviews, and observations data was collected from a sample of nine (9) respondents chosen through purposive and convenience sampling techniques to advance an aesthetical discourse and solicit public opinions on the monument as a viable peacebuilding edifice.

The findings revealed a threesome perspective from aesthetes who only consume the hedonistic nature of the monument; the optimists who relate to the unity and peace message in the monument and the skeptics who despite their inclination to the monument as a symbol of unity, doubted its potency in the unity and peace narrative of Simpa. We concluded that while art-based approaches could only do so much, this monument was nonetheless a valid ally (visual reminder) and a physical instantiation to the quest for unity and peace in Simpa.

**Keywords:** Aboakyir, Simpa, Awutu, Effutu, monument, chieftaincy, conflict, unity, peace,

## Introduction

In every community, conflict and disputes have become an inevitable part of life. It appears the elements of conflict are deeply embedded in the human psyche. Conflicts have been known to exist in several countries across the globe. Although Ghana has been described as the centre of peace in Sub-Saharan Africa, various examples show that conflicts occur sporadically (Agyeman, 2021). There are examples from the Ga Mashie Chieftaincy Conflict (Boakye, 2017), the Bimbilla Conflict (Aziz, 2018) and the Bawku Chieftaincy Conflict (Bukari, Osei-Kufuor & Bukari 2021). Most of these conflicts escalate into complex and difficult situations with no easy solution. Such is the situation in Simpa (Winneba) among the Awutu people (the original ethnic and Guan linguistic identity, now known as *Effutufo* (people of mixed backgrounds) by the Akans, mostly Fantes with whom they share boundaries with.

Ephraim-Donkor (2019) claims that since the latter part of the nineteenth century, the Awutu people have clashed in violent struggle for power until 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2015 when the supreme court, finally intervened amidst hysteric commotion in the court room. To him, the chieftaincy conflict is rooted in a clash of cultures resulting in a political quagmire as to which succession mode to follow, the male or female model.

The Acquahs who are for the female model, tasted power as caretakers but refused to cede power back to the original benefactors, the Otuano Royal Family (Gyatehs or Ghartheys) who are for the male model. Consequently, there have been several attempts to unite the two groups and find a lasting solution. Despite the court weighing in favour of the Otuano Royal Family in 2015, the feud continues to exist and heightens during the celebration of the Aboakyir Festival (centuries old festival of Simpa).

We therefore sought to interrogate how the Unity Monument as a work of art, could be a didactic symbol that would ventriloquy the message of peace in Simpa. We reckoned that if conflict is managed creatively, there could be novel solutions that would be mutually satisfactory to both parties. We refer to our subjects by their original traditional names. Therefore, we use Simpa instead of the *Anglicized* Winneba version and Awutu, instead of the *Akanicized* version of Effutu. We do this in recognition of our reverence to the traditions and heritage of the people.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Resolving the chieftaincy conflict in Simpa seems a herculean task for protagonists. For example, negotiations, consensus building, court proceedings and the mediation table have been explored in different ways and on different occasions, yet no solution have been found. What is missing is a nonverbal tool to serve as a constant reminder, a memorial to the founding fathers and a platform to educate the society to live peacefully and united.

Yet, the recognition and appreciation of art as peacebuilding approach is beyond rhetoric. In this domain, art does not only function as a didactic symbol of peace but a peacebuilding weapon that evokes or prompts community change or action. Several studies have shown that the arts are able to respond to, transform, or prevent the occurrence and the negative impacts of conflict and violence (Emovwodo 2017; Halliday, 2017; Halliday 2020).

In respect of this, we explored the Unity Monument as an artistic approach to peacebuilding in Simpa by engaging in an aesthetical discourse and to ascertain the viability of the monument as a non-verbal peacebuilding edifice. Apparently, no studies on the monument as a work of art have been undertaken, and this article sought to fill the gap.

## **Literature Review**

Whilst interrogating the monument, we dwelled on Epskamp's (1999) product-based art approach to peacebuilding as a guide. With this approach, the artistic product itself was the primary goal. Hence, we did not fashion our argument on the sculptural process. We did this by exploring a dual semiotic system of communicating meaning, visual and linguistic perspectives intertwined.

The monument was placed in context of the chieftaincy feud through the aegis of semiotics. Bal and Bryson (1991) posit that when a particular work of art is

placed in context, it is usually the case that a body of material is assembled and juxtaposed with the work in question in the hope that such contextual material will reveal the determinants that make the work of art what it is.

Monuments as artworks have been used severally as symbols of unity and peace. Various authors including (Emovwodo 2017; Halliday 2020 and Davis & Gamble 2020) claim that the arts can be used in peacebuilding due to their therapeutic nature. Artworks have the potentials to heal, express and describe fears, anxieties, and other feelings when talking or words fail or seem unsafe. Furthermore, it is evidenced that the arts can be used to raise public awareness, to create safe spaces (if only temporary) for a physical, emotional, or psychological break in the cycle of violence (Halliday, 2017).

In the United States of America, the first memorial to Abraham Lincoln, was built in 1868 to remind a once deeply divided country about the man who brought it together. The Statue of Liberty was and remains the United States' symbol of unity as a nation.

Moreton (2021) states that after World War II, Japan erected numerous monuments for unity and peace around the country and the world. For example, a peace tower built in Osaka in 1948 was dedicated to peace and the victims of World War II. Banerjee (2021) claims that the tallest statue in the world, the 'Statue of Unity' is dedicated to the Iron Man of India, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel for being the architect of modern India and his role in uniting more than five hundred princely states in India.

In Africa, the 32nd African Union Summit in Addis Ababa in February 2019 was opened with the unveiling of a statue in honour of Emperor Haile Selassie I for his founding role in the creation of the organization (African Union [AU] 2019). The statue of Julius Kambarage Nyerere of Tanzania at the Nyerere Square in Dodoma, Tanzania, was in part erected for his activism and support for AU. In recognition of Kwame Nkrumah's unity agenda, Lentz (2017) recount that in January 2012, Ghana's President John Evans Atta Mills unveiled an imposing statue of "Osagyefo ('The Redeemer') Kwame Nkrumah," as the inscription reads, at the forecourt of the new African Union building in Addis Ababa.

In Ghana, the *Obi-nka-bi* and *Nkonsonkonson* Adinkra symbols usually printed in clothes, pottery, and metalworks, have historically emphasized unity and peaceful relations with one another. Kwami (2013) revealed that Kofi Antubam was commissioned by Kwame Nkrumah to make a painting that would be a sign of unity for Ghanaians.

As noted by Kappler (2017), monuments, such as statues, constitute important platforms on which different versions of peace and social justice are implicitly narrated and discussed. The Unity Monument in Simpa exudes a significant potency in propagating unity and peace following the internecine kingship struggle.

The two parties involved in the internecine kingship struggle in Simpa are the Otuano Royal Family (Gyatas, Gyatehs or Gharteys) and the Acquahs. Ephraim-Donkor (2019) explains that whilst the Gharteys trace their ancestry to the patriarch Kwame Gyata Ayirebi Gyan whose grandson, Osimpam Bondzie-Abe founded Simpa, the Acquahs are non-royals and are decedents of Princes Ayensua, whose son (King Acquah I) was made a caretaker King in place of Ayensua because she was a female and only males accede the throne.

Ayensah (2013) claims King Acquah's father was a Fante from Egyaa but lived in Simpa as a merchant. Since the people of Simpa are Guans who are traditionally proponents of the male mode of succession, King Acquah's ascension to the throne was a breach from the norm. This paved way for several non-royals to accede the throne. Today, a singular mistake of the Kingmakers in 1858 is hanging around the neck of Simpa chieftaincy like an albatross, indeed a milestone (Ayensah, 2013). Inferably, Simpa have got her comeuppance for allowing non-royals to accede the throne. Reverting to the original priest-king system of leadership to pave way for absolute peace, truth and development that had eluded Simpa for over several decades has been a herculean task as many approaches have been explored to no avail. This study thrives on the therapeutic and didactic nature of art to interrogate how the Unity Monument would provide an alternative and a more creative way of mediating the feud in Simpa.

## **Methodology**

The study was conducted in the arts-based research paradigm and the illustrative case study with semiotic analysis. Data was collected through reviewing related articles, interviews, and observations.

We anticipated that a one-shot interview might not produce information of adequate quality, quantity, and validity (Read, 2018). So, the interviews were conducted before and after the Aboakyir Festival. A sample of nine respondents was chosen from a population of patrons and aesthetes who were privy to the unity monument through a triangulation of sampling techniques including

purposive and convenient sampling. Leavy (2017) writes that arts-based approaches favour smaller sample sizes so out of sample, seven respondents were selected based on the criteria that they were natives of Simpa who know about the Unity Monument and see it on regular bases. They included the Unity Square Curator (USC), the Municipal Chief Executive (MCE) of Effutu, one (1) art lecturer from the University of Education, Winneba (UEW), three natives from the Effutu Municipal Education Office (EMEO) and one student from UEW. The remaining two respondents were selected by convenience. These were tourists who elected themselves to be part of the study after visiting the Unity Square during the Aboakyir festival.

Though the interviews were unstructured, we created a guide with seven items focused on the study. The interviewees were allowed to 'think aloud' whilst expressing their thoughts and feelings freely about the monument. First, each respondent was asked to express their perception about the monument. They described the scene, the activity, the poses and gave their own interpretations of the statue. Finally, they were asked to indicate how they think the monument would serve as a symbol of unity and peace in Simpa. We have included some verbatim quotations from the respondents where need be. Through interviews, we were able to exploit language as a semiotic resource.

Observing the monument at the Unity Square, provided a different way of seeing from what had been seen whilst sculpting. Since the eye usually sees what the mind already knows (Nease & Haney 2018), we were cognizant of the visual composition to divulge the visual semiotic resources readily available. Though we agree the engagement we had individually with the statue was private, we realized a shared perception and the interpretations we made from our eyes were symmetrical.

## **Analysis and Interpretations**

On Tuesday, October 19, 2021, the Unity Monument depicting three men (Figure 1) erecting a flag was unveiled by the President of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo at the Unity Square. With a height of eight meters including its pedestal, it is a comparatively small statue but with an enormous history and traditions capable of forging a significant reputation. However, relative to its environment, it is recognizable and worthy of not just being a legible map.

From a site specificity perspective, the Statue's reputation as a sign of unity cannot be separated from its environment. The Unity Square, where the

monument is erected, is the gateway to the older southern half of Simpa and a popular Y-intersection (Winneba Traffic Light). At this intersection, three connecting roadways to the various suburbs of Simpa unite. The unity of the roads there resonates the unity concept portrayed in the monument.



**Figure 1:** *Theophilus Kwesi Mensah, Unity Monument, 2021. Fibre Reinforced Polymer. 8 X 3 X 2.5 Metres. The Unity Square, Winneba. Courtesy of Edem Dedi Photography.*

Commissioned in 2018 by the Honourable Alexander Kwamina Afenyo-Markin, Member of Parliament (MP) for Effutu as part of his Effutu Dream Project of developing Effutu. Amoah-Asare (2021) posits that the Unity Monument was just to enhance beautification at the Winneba traffic light and attract people to the area whilst improving tourism. Rightly so, this view seems to be the popular opinion of shallow aesthetes as Panwum (2021) agrees that the monument is just one of the aesthetic transformations of the landscape of Effutu that Afenyo-Markin is undertaking for Effutum.

The massive transformation of the Winneba Traffic Light is not a mere beautification agenda. Akin to its novel name: Unity Square, the intentions of the protagonist were to communicate a sense of beauty in unity. This view was corroborated during the Aboakyir festival when one of the respondents said: "When there is unity, everything is beautiful. You see how unity has made this year's celebration beautiful" (Staff 3 of EME0, 2022).

Sartwell (2022) wrote that the key Socratic text for Neo-Platonism and for the idealist conception of beauty – expresses an aspiration toward beauty as perfect unity. Therefore, as much as the monument preaches unity, there was need to ensure that its aesthetic appeal is not compromised. After all, the two ideas go hand in glove.

From an interaction with the USC, it emerged that "people come here to admire the sculptures and just take pictures because the place is nice to them. They do not care about the meaning of the monument" (USC, 2022).

During the Aboakyir Festival, one of the respondents confirmed what the curator said by insisting that "this statue has brought another dimension to the festival, it has attracted a lot of tourists. People keep taking pictures and admiring it from various angles" (Staff 3 of EME0, 2022).

Again, the MCE said that "early on, I brought some foreigners, our brothers, and sisters from Charlottesville who have adopted Winneba as their second home to see the statue. They were more than happy and excited" (MCE, 2022).

Inferring from the above, the aesthetic appeal of the monument and the transformation of the Winneba Traffic Light is not in doubt. The kind of transformation observed recalls Booncham, Chantachon and Lao-Akka (2011), who revealed that there are constructions in public parks for people to appreciate aesthetics of the sculptures and environment. There occur feelings of relaxation and pleasure to see beautiful things. Yet, the aesthetics of this monument has not been overridden by its conceptual values. This disagrees with Kuspit (2004) who claims art had come to an end because it had lost any aesthetic importance in the post-modern world.

Owing to the magnitude of transformation of the space and its apparent aesthetic connotations, the monument has become an espousal for compatibility between commerce and commemoration. The curator admitted to exploring the possibility of commerce: "we have begun to collect a token

from people who come here to see what we have. It is just a way of keeping the place running” (USC, 2022).

On the other hand, the statue shows not just an aesthetically astute display of artistic ingenuity but also, it embodies a sense of political and dynastic history of Simpa. It reminds the natives of their past and the need to foster unity going forward. Whilst speaking freely about their impressions of the monument before the 2022 Aboakyir Festival, one respondent remarked: “I hope my people will look at this statue one day and stop throwing stones at each other during Aboakyir. I cannot wait to witness Aboakyir 2022. It would be the first Aboakyir with this statue here” (Staff 1 of EMEQ, 2022).

Similarly, this skepticism in the voice of the above interviewee was mirrored during the festival as depicted in the following sample statement: “This is just a structure, so until the natives accept to live in peace, this is just built. Without the conscience of the people, there will be nothing like peace” (Tourist, 2022.).

Whilst some respondents were skeptical, others were rather positive. For example, one of the respondents exclaimed, “Can’t you see that this year’s Aboakyir has been beautiful? I have not heard of any insinuating words or songs. All parties are peacefully processing without mischief” (Staff 3 of EMEQ, 2022).

Similarly, the MCE said:

Gone are the days when we used to have fights and some sporadic misunderstandings here and there among the groups. Everyone looks up to this a sign of unity. Both *Tuafo* and *Dentsifo* went to the bush and thanks to the gods, both had significant catch (MCE, 2022).

This monument is not ephemeral, it makes permanent, the narratives that surrounds it. Kirsten (2020) claims the permanence of statues and large-scale memorials in many ways make permanent the discourses and ideologies that statues or memorials carry traces of. Inferably, the message of unity portrayed in this statue translate into an indelible quest for a possible end to the political quagmire in Simpa. This permanence attribute of monuments is connected to the materials with which they are sculpted.

Schmahmann (2018) claims a monument conveys a sense of its own eternalness by being in materials associated with a withstanding of the passage of time. With

Fibre Reinforced Polymer (FRP) as the main material, the Unity Monument is made of such a material of 'eternalness' that is worthy of immortalizing the unity agenda. The FRP rendered the monument rigid, immovable, and permanent, symbolically extending these qualities of stability and solidity to the ideologies and histories signified by it.

The statue's material is one that the natives associate with. With fishing being the traditional occupation, FRPs are used for mending their broken fishing boats due to its durability and noncorrosive properties. Mills (2009) intimates that the artwork's physicality, those aspects that can be sensed and verified by viewers (material), is a first consideration; physicality impacts content and, subsequently, meaning. It is anticipated that an engagement with the monument would create an illusion of a subtle nexus between the viewers and the meaning of the statue, as it originates from a material to which they are privy.

The scene depicted in the monument is not just a generic representation of ordinary artistic endeavor. It attempts to understand the nature of Simpa in relation to the skirmishes ensued from the protracted chieftaincy feud. During the discussions with our discussants on this statue, one of them said:

The three men in this statue stand for the groups of people in Winneba. We have the Gharveys at one side, the Acquahs on one side and the immigrants on one side. You know, Winneba is a cosmopolitan town. We have all the ethnic groups of Ghana represented here (Staff 2 of EMEQ, 2022).

In respect of the above, a careful gaze at the statue depicts the two families involved in the conflict in close juxtaposition with each other. Yet, there is a third party with an obvious keenness in his posture as a support system. The characters in this statue embody the dynastic orientation of the people of Simpa. The two families, Gharveys and the Acquahs live in a heterogenous community with mostly Akans. This is what the monument represents with the three men as shown in Figure 2 below.



**Figure 2:** *Theophilus Kwesi Mensah, Unity Monument, 2021. Fibre Reinforced Polymer. 8 X 3 X 2.5 Metres. The Unity Square, Winneba. Courtesy of Edem Dedi Photography.*

The standing pose of the two men, position them as the main actors of the performance of erecting the flag. Here, the flag denotes development, not the same as its function as an identification symbol by the *Asafo* companies. The *Asafo* which literarily means 'people of war' are a militant group that defended civic interest in the past. Simpa has two *Asafo* companies, *Tuafo* Number One and *Dentsefo* Number Two. The two companies hunt for a live deer in a competition in which the first to catch a deer is declared the winner during the *Aboakyer* festival. The squatting figure with glaring scarifications on his face alluding to his Akan origin, only provides support. What is striking is the cohesion between the figures, rendering the existing conflict oblivious in the quest to develop the Simpa State. With the main actors well positioned, the supporters intuit the need to get along. The unity ideology is then ultimately encapsulated as one of

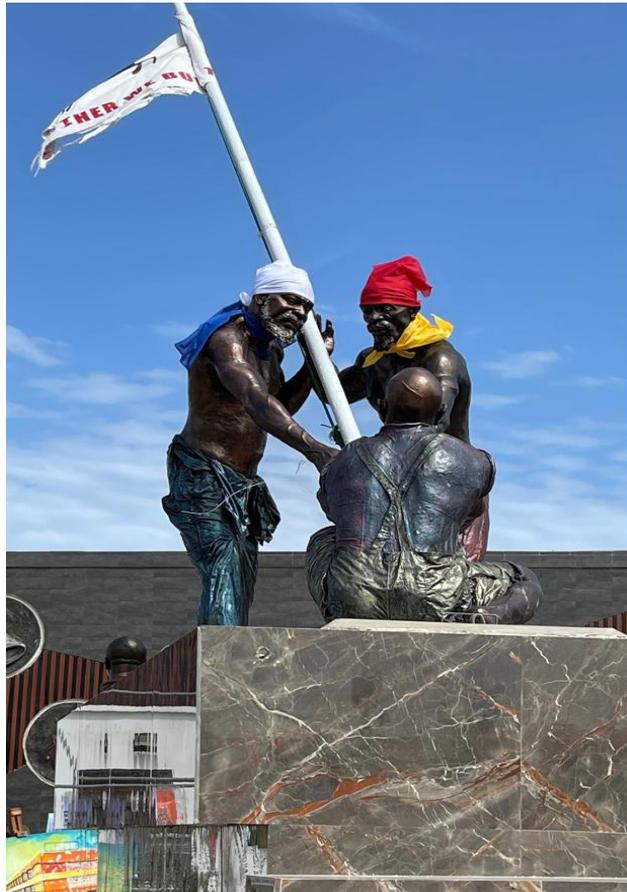
the respondents said: "With all the three men involved in fixing one flag, I see unity of purpose clearly displayed in this monument" (Student of UEW, 2022).

Another said during the Aboakyir festival that:

They are establishing the township... my understanding is that we all must unite to build the kingdom. You could see from one part that some people are trying to lift the flag with support from another on the other side (Staff 3 of EMEQ, 2022)

The sample statements above, reveals the statue's ability to give pictorial clues that renders the central theme of unity and peace obvious even to ordinary aesthetes. Hence, this statue makes explicit what many monuments makes implicit. The statue projects a simple dual narrative of living in peace and unity in one part and unity in development on the other side.

Their costume is reminiscent of how the *Asafo* members hunt during the *Aboakyir* festival. An important consideration regarding their costume is colour. As deGraft-Yankson (2020) revealed, colour resides deeply within the traditional lives of the Akan people. Such is the situation in Awutu. Colour is held in high esteem so, they do not use it only for its aesthetic appeal. Each of the two *Asafo* groups have their own colours for identification. The colours assigned to the *Tuafo* is black and white or blue and white. For *Dentsifo*, their colours are red and yellow. Viewers can easily associate the figure in blue pants with the *Tuafo* group and the figure in red pants with the *Dentsifo* group. During the festival, the protagonists of the monument clad the two figures in their respective colours as shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3:** *Theophilus Mensah, Unity Monument, 2021. Fibre Reinforced Polymer. 8 X 3 X 2.5 Metres. The Unity Square, Winneba. Courtesy of Ebenezer Kow Abraham*

The concept of unity portrayed in the monument is also embedded in its nature which mirrors kinesthetics. As viewers perceive the monument from different angles, a unilateral impression of togetherness becomes more perceptible. The presentation is as close to the pictorial plane as one can get sculpturally, the statue becoming something like a rotating bas-relief (Gjesdal, Rush & Torsen, 2020). There is no distortion of viewership as people move around or view this monument at a single sweeping glance, which mimics corporeality by way of its performance.

Again, the three figures in the monument portrays unity. Biblically, three represents the Holy Trinity. Longenecker (2022) citing Alexander Schmemmann's observation, indicated that the source of all unity is the Unity of the Holy Trinity.

The three figures form a triune body with a unilateral purpose which bring to light the monuments' cultural and political relevance. Whilst Hui-Chih (2016) citing Wilkinson, (2008, p.249) recount that "in Pythagorean theory (6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C), three represents harmony, the unity (one) and diversity (two)", within the Akan cultural parlance, three is venerated as a good sign and a sacred number. The Akan proverb: *Odumankuma Nyansaboadze se, tikoro nnko agyina* ('God, the great custodian and giver of all wisdom says one head cannot go into council') is used as a democratic tool in settling disputes. Ayiku's (1998) explanation of this proverb indicated that it requires three persons to constitute a council or jury. Similarly, Hui-Chih (2016) revealed that three is usually seen as a lucky number in Chinese culture, possibly because it symbolizes the resolution of conflict. In view of the foregoing, whilst there have been several failed attempts to bring unity and peace to Simpa, with the three figures in this monument, the old aphorism "third time lucky" tradition (Tressidder, 2000) is hoped to materialize.

The figures have been depicted to look agile and strong with facial expression of determination. Historically, the Awutu people are portrayed as fierce and strong people so, Gyeedu (2022) described them as warriors having migrated a long distance as far as Western Sudan to Timbuktu and towards southern Ghana through Gonja land via Dwomma. It is only appropriate to accord the figures an enduring pattern of athletic energy as shown in Figure 4 below.



**Figure 4:** *Theophilus Kwesi Mensah, Unity Monument, 2021. Fibre Reinforced Polymer. 8 X 3 X 2.5 Metres. The Unity Square, Winneba. Courtesy of Edem Dedi Photography.*

The pedestal fashioned in a triangular form, adds stability and permanence (Frutiger 1989) to the unity and peace narrative the statue depicts. Its low plinth makes the sculptures more approachable. The pedestal bears a plaque inscribed with a statement from the patron of this project, Afenyo-Markin:

Undying gratitude is a debt forever owed to the glorious men and women who paid the ultimate price by giving their lives in the consciousness of service unerringly executed to secure this land and all its invaluable treasures as a peaceful home for the past, present and future generations of Effutuland.

Never in the history of man will Effutu forget the immeasurable sacrifices, valour and efforts made to secure the present and future of a truly grateful people.

The choice of this quotations is crucial. Afenyo-Markin provides a heartwarming tribute to the forefathers of Simpa whilst profusely thanking them for their sweat and toils in building a peaceful home for all including the future generations of Simpa. He conspicuously omits any sign of upheaval even in the past, yet projects peace in the present and for the future as well. This avantgarde posture of the MP is synonymous to (Nguyen, 2019) who insist that monuments and memorials are not only backward-looking; they can be forward-looking and action-directing.

Clearly, whilst commissioning this project, Afenyo-Markin's patronage was exercised in twofold. Firstly, the project was not birthed from a mere dilettante love for art, but with a view to the higher interest of exploring avenues for concretizing a long-term deliberative process of living in peace and unity. Secondly, he fulfilled part of his Effutu Dream promise to transform Simpa into a modern community that would attract tourists. With Simpa's past in hindsight, Afenyo-Markin, deliberately capitalizes on this monument as a physical instantiation to his commitment to unity and peace of Simpa.

## **Findings**

The central theme of the monument was clear and without ambiguity. It emerged that viewers could easily identify with the monument and relate to its meaning. It defies the contemporary approach to art as being more conceptual than being a tangible piece that its audience easily assimilate its meaning.

From aesthetes' perspective, the aesthetic connotation of the monument was more important than its conceptual meanings. In view of the popular mantra, beauty alone is not art, the unity statue packaged the concept of unity in its aesthetic connotations. In this respect, the possibility of the statue generating revenue was being explored as the study revealed that visitors were charged a token to access the pleasures of monument at the Unity Square.

From the optimist perspective, the statue's cultural and political relevance came to the fore. The patrons related the monument to the protracted chieftaincy dispute and situated it as a viable didactic emblem of unity and peace. It emerged that the 2022 Aboakyir Festival was largely successful in part because of unity and peace in Awutu, and the monument could be a physical instantiation to this. The MP did not only fulfill an Effutu Dream promise but also, explored an avenue for concretizing a long-term deliberative unity and peace narrative that would serve as a constant visual reminder in this sense.

Finally, from the skeptics, it behooves on the conscience of the natives to change, until then, the monument would only be a symbol with no impact.

## Conclusion

This article has revealed the nexus of the Unity Monument to peace and unity of Simpa in view of the protracted chieftaincy conflict. It has in many ways illuminated how its possibilities, and the process of being engaged in it, offer an awakening conscience and awareness to dwell in unity and peace which existed when Osimpam Bondzie-Abe founded Simpa. Given the complexities of the chieftaincy conflict and understanding that the peacebuilding field requires tools and approaches that are as varied as humanity, we conclude that while art-based approaches can only do so much, this monument is nevertheless a valid ally and a physical instantiation to the commitment for peace and unity in Simpa. This statue speaks for itself, and we appreciate that no amount of verbiage can vividly describe all what the eyes and minds of its patrons behold. Having the President of Ghana unveil it adds weight to its significance. His presence was not arbitrary, let alone trivial. It simply shows how committed government is towards the unity and peace of Simpa. The Monument stands there, giving everyone in this town hope for unity and peace. Since the interpretation of art cannot be generic, we admit to our inability to absorb all what this monument stands for. We look forward to exploring other interpretations from other researchers.

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