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Editorial

La *Revue Internationale de Langue, Littérature, Culture et Civilisation* (RILLiCC) est une revue à comité de lecture en phase d'indexation recommandée par le Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES). Elle est la revue du Laboratoire de Recherche en Langues, Littérature, Culture et Civilisation Anglophones (LaReLLiCCA) dont elle publie les résultats des recherches en lien avec la recherche et la pédagogie sur des orientations innovantes et stimulantes à la vie et vision améliorées de l'académie et de la société. La revue accepte les textes qui cadrent avec des enjeux épistémologiques et des problématiques actuels pour être au rendez-vous de la contribution à la résolution des problèmes contemporains.

RILLiCC met en éveil son lectorat par rapport aux défis académiques et sociaux qui se posent en Afrique et dans le monde en matière de science littéraire et des crises éthiques. Il est établi que les difficultés du vivre-ensemble sont fondées sur le radicalisme et l'extrémisme violents. En effet, ces crises et manifestations ne sont que des effets des causes cachées dans l'imaginaire qu'il faut (re)modeler au grand bonheur collectif. Comme il convient de le noter ici, un grand défi se pose aux chercheurs qui se doivent aujourd'hui d'être conscients que la science littéraire n'est pas rétribuée à sa juste valeur quand elle se voit habillée sous leurs yeux du mythe d'Albatros ou d'un cymbale sonore. L'idée qui se cache malheureusement derrière cette mythologie est que la littérature ne semble pas contribuer efficacement à la résolution des problèmes de société comme les sciences exactes. Dire que la recherche a une valeur est une chose, le prouver en est une autre. La *Revue Internationale de Langue, Littérature, Culture et Civilisation* à travers les activités du LaReLLiCCA entend faire bénéficier à son lectorat et à sa société cible, les retombées d'une recherche appliquée.

Le comité spécialisé « Lettres et Sciences Humaines » du Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES) recommande l'utilisation harmonisée des styles de rédaction et la présente revue s'inscrit dans cette logique directrice en adoptant le style APA.

L'orientation éditoriale de cette revue inscrit les résultats pragmatiques et novateurs des recherches sur fond social de médiation, d'inclusion et de réciprocité qui permettent de maîtriser les racines du mal et réaliser les objectifs du développement durable déclencheurs de paix partagée.

Lomé, le 20 octobre 2020.

Le directeur de publication,

Professeur Atafèr PEWISSI,

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Ligne éditoriale

Volume : La taille du manuscrit est comprise entre 4500 et 6000 mots.
Format: papier A4, Police: Times New Roman, Taille: 11,5, Interligne 1,15.

Ordre logique du texte

Un article doit être un tout cohérent. Les différents éléments de la structure doivent faire un tout cohérent avec le titre. Ainsi, tout texte soumis pour publication doit comporter:

- un titre en caractère d'imprimerie ; il doit être expressif et d'actualité, et ne doit pas excéder 24 mots ;
- un résumé en anglais-français, anglais-allemand, ou anglais-espagnol selon la langue utilisée pour rédiger l'article. Se limiter exclusivement à objectif/problématique, cadre théorique et méthodologique, et résultats. Aucun de ces résumés ne devra dépasser 150 mots ;
- des mots clés en français, en anglais, en allemand et en espagnol : entre 5 et 7 mots clés ;
- une introduction (un aperçu historique sur le sujet ou revue de la littérature en bref, une problématique, un cadre théorique et méthodologique, et une structure du travail) en 600 mots au maximum ;
- un développement dont les différents axes sont titrés. Il n'est autorisé que trois niveaux de titres. Pour le titrage, il est vivement recommandé d'utiliser les chiffres arabes ; les titres alphabétiques et alphanumériques ne sont pas acceptés ;
- une conclusion (rappel de la problématique, résumé très bref du travail réalisé, résultats obtenus, implémentation) en 400 mots au maximum ;
- liste des références : par ordre alphabétique des noms de familles des auteurs cités.

Références

Il n'est fait mention dans la liste de références que des sources effectivement utilisées (citées, paraphrasées, résumées) dans le texte de l'auteur. Pour leur présentation, la norme American Psychological Association (APA) ou références intégrées est exigée de tous les auteurs qui veulent faire publier leur texte dans la revue. Il est fait exigence aux auteurs de n'utiliser que la seule norme dans leur texte. Pour en savoir

plus, consultez ces normes sur Internet.

Présentation des notes référencées

Le comité de rédaction exige APA (Auteur, année : page). L'utilisation des notes de bas de pages n'intervient qu'à des fins d'explication complémentaire. La présentation des références en style métissé est formellement interdite.

La gestion des citations :

Longues citations : Les citations de plus de quarante (40) mots sont considérées comme longues ; elles doivent être mises en retrait dans le texte en interligne simple.

Les citations courtes : les citations d'un (1) à quarante (40) mots sont considérées comme courtes ; elles sont mises entre guillemets et intégrées au texte de l'auteur.

Résumé :

- ✓ Pour Pewissi (2017), le Womanisme transcende les cloisons du genre.
- ✓ Ourso (2013:12) trouve les voyelles qui débordent le cadre circonscrit comme des voyelles récalcitrantes.

Résumé ou paraphrase :

- ✓ Ourso (2013:12) trouve les voyelles qui débordent le cadre circonscrit comme des voyelles récalcitrantes.

Exemple de référence



Pour un livre

Collin, H. P. (1988). *Dictionary of Government and Politics*. UK: Peter Collin Publishing.



Pour un article tiré d'un ouvrage collectif

Gill, W. (1998/1990). "Writing and Language: Making the Silence Speak." In Sheila Ruth, *Issues in Feminism: An Introduction to Women's Studies*. London: Mayfield Publishing Company, Fourth Edition. Pp. 151-176.



Utilisation de Ibid., op. cit, sic entre autres

Ibidem (Ibid.) intervient à partir de la deuxième note d'une référence source citée. Ibid. est suivi du numéro de page si elle est différente de

référence mère dont elle est consécutive. Exemple : *ibid.*, ou *ibidem*, p. x.
Op. cit. signifie ‘la source pré-citée’. Il est utilisé quand, au lieu de deux références consécutives, une ou plusieurs sources sont intercalées. En ce moment, la deuxième des références consécutives exige l’usage de *op. cit.* suivi de la page si cette dernière diffère de la précédente.

Typographie

-La *Revue Internationale de Langue, Littérature, Culture et Civilisation* interdit tout soulignement et toute mise en gras des caractères ou des portions de textes.

-Les auteurs doivent respecter la typographie choisie concernant la ponctuation, les abréviations...

Tableaux, schémas et illustrations

Pour les textes contenant les tableaux, il est demandé aux auteurs de les numérotter en chiffres romains selon l’ordre de leur apparition dans le texte. Chaque tableau devra comporter un titre précis et une source propre. Par contre, les schémas et illustrations devront être numérotés en chiffres arabes et dans l’ordre d’apparition dans le texte.

La largeur des tableaux intégrés au travail doit être 10 cm maximum, format A4, orientation portrait.

SOMMAIRE

LITTERATURE	1
L'art de dramatiser et de dédramatiser dans les sociétés orales : Leçon d'une ethnographie de la musique <i>hake</i> chez les eve du sud-est du Togo Yaovi AKAKPO	3
Le plan national du développement comme stratégie curative et préventive au service du développement et de la paix : Un regard d'un littéraire Atafēi PEWISSI & Pédi ANAWI	33
La symbolique de la présence négro-africaine en Amérique latine dans <i>Les enfants du Brésil</i> de Kangni Alem Weinpanga Aboudoulaye ANDOU&Piyabalo NABEDE.....	53
Le parti pris de la paix dans le <i>Tchighida du père Arthaud</i> de Kadjangabalo Sekou Kpatimbi TYR.....	69
The Rebuilding of Ecological Peace in Leslie Marmon Silko's <i>Ceremony</i> Kpatcha Essobozou AWESSO	87
A Marxist Perspective on Mass Oppression and Challenges in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Ngũgĩ wa Mĩrĩ's <i>I Will Marry When I Want</i> Badēmaman Komlan AKALA	101
A Call for Forgiveness and Racial Reconciliation in Patricia Raybon's <i>My First White Friend</i> Malou LADITOKÉ	119
Creative Writing and the Culture of Peace: An Approach to Adichie's <i>Half of a Yellow Sun</i> and Iroh's <i>Forty-Eight Guns for the General</i> Palakyem AYOLA	139
Confidence Dissipation and the Living Together in Meja Mwangi's <i>The Big Chiefs</i> Magnoubiyè GBABANE	157
From Xenophobia to Collusion: A Socio-Educative Reading of Shakespeare's <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> and <i>Othello</i> Casimir Comlan SOEDE & Biava Kodjo KLOUTSE & Hergie Alexis SEGUEDEME.....	169
Literary Appraisal of Superstitious Beliefs in Amma Darko's <i>Faceless</i> Moussa SIDI CHABI	187
LINGUISTIQUE ET TRADUCTION	209
Pronunciation and Semantic Disorders Due to the Influence of the French Language on the EFL Secondary Students Sourou Seigneur ADJIBI & Patrice AKOGBETO	211

Exploring the Language of Conflict Rise and Conflict Resolution in Elechi Amadi's <i>The Great Ponds</i> : A Systemic Functional Perspective Cocou André DATONDJI.....	231
The Grammatical Representation of Experiences in the Dalai-Lama's Address to the European Union: A Critical Discourse and Systemic Functional Linguistic Approach Albert Omolegbé KOUKPOSSI & Innocent Sourou KOUTCHADE	253
L'insulte comme « une fausse monnaie verbale » en lama : Quand le langage devient un jeu Tchaa PALI & Timibe NOTOU YOUR & Akintim ETOKA	273
La traduction: Dialogue identitaire et vecteur de paix Akponi TARNO	299

LITTERATURE

A Marxist Perspective on Mass Oppression and Challenges in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Ngũgĩ wa Mĩrĩ's *I Will Marry When I Want*

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Abstract:

Exploitation and oppression are often the result of the need of one class to secure personal interest to the detriment of the other. Through the exploration of the playwrights' literary articulations of some forms of oppression, the study explores the problems the lower class is exposed to and the necessary strategies that need undertaking to secure justice where personal interest and the scramble for the material and capital tend to be the guide marks for success. Through the lenses of Marxist criticism and semiotics, the study equally examines the playwrights' discursive strategies put in place to call the readership to cause positive changes in the social arena.

Key words: oppression, lower class, strategies, justice, positive change.

Résumé:

L'exploitation et l'oppression sont souvent le résultat du besoin d'une classe sociale pour sécuriser son intérêt personnel au détriment de celui de l'autre. A travers l'exploration de certaines formes d'oppression des articulations littéraires des dramaturges, l'article explore les problèmes auxquels la classe prolétaire est exposée et les stratégies nécessaires qui doivent être entreprises pour garantir la justice là où l'intérêt personnel et la ruée pour le bien matériel et le capital ont tendance à être les marques de succès. En s'appuyant sur la théorie littéraire marxiste et sur la sémiotique, l'article examine également les stratégies littéraires mises au point par les dramaturges pour lancer un appel au lectorat en vue d'apporter des changements positifs dans le domaine social.

Mots clés : oppression, la classe prolétaire, stratégies, justice, changement positif.

Introduction

For committed Marxist writers, Literature as a source of inspiration from society, should above all, serve the ultimate interest of the masses. According to Marx and Engels:

in countries ... where the peasants constitute far more than half of the population, it was natural that writers who sided with the proletariat against the bourgeoisie should use, in their criticism of the bourgeoisie regime, the standard of the peasant and petty bourgeoisie, and from the standpoint of these intermediate classes, should take up the cudgels for the working class (Marx and Engel, 1988: 64).

For Marx and Engel, Marxist writers should take up the challenge to fight for the liberation of suffering majority people from the yoke of oppression. This perception transpires in different literary productions usually in terms of opposition to capitalism and neocolonialism which are traumatizing and destroying the masses and their world.

Osofisan, as quoted by Oloruntoba-Oju stresses that the challenge of the writer resigns in remaining true to oneself by voicing up what is going on with the masses instead of championing the cause of the wealthy and powerful people of the community: "So it is better to build a society where everybody is happy than trying to make yourself alone happy in the whole multitude poverty" (Osofisan as quoted by Oloruntoba-Oju, 2013: 268). Osofisan denounces here the glaring inequality in a class society whereby some exploit others to become rich whereas the exploited remain poor and miserable; hence he implicitly calls for the challenges to undertake for the progress of the humanity.

Amuta is equally concerned with the role of the African writer as a partisan of the downtrodden masses when he opines that: "[...] radical Marxist literary theory in Africa and parts of the third world is preoccupied with the responsibility of literature and art in the task of national liberation, anti-imperialism and the redressing of social inequities within individual national societies" (Amuta, 1989: 54). The foregoing quote denotes that African masses and people of Third World undergo traumas on the part of the imperial and capitalist empire and their salvation will come only through the capacity and ability of literature and art to initiate dialogue and debate about the possibility of freeing the masses from oppression.

Asika stresses on the same position when he underlines that: “the capitalists exploit the labour and effort of the workers to their own self gain while the workers, the producers of the labour are left with nothing to show for their labour [...]” (Asika, 2014: 32). By complaining about the excessive pressures and alienations inflicted to the majority of the hardworking African people by the privileged class, Asika indirectly suggests that something must be done in order to rescue the victimized peasants, workers, and farmers concerned from their sores. From the foregoing, it can be inferred that for these committed African writers and critics, the oppression of the African masses has become such a crucial issue in their societies to the extent that urgent strategies need undertaking to save these people and henceforth, contribute to peace and development of the African society. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o and Ngũgĩ wa Mĩriĩ’s play, *I Will Marry When I Want* which is the focus of my study, plunges its audience and readers into the heart of a capitalist society with its ills such as class conflict, mass exploitation, excessive craze for money and wealth, land snatching, and religious hypocrisy, through the story of the hero, Kĩgũũnda and his family who finally collapse because of their manipulation by Kĩoi and his group members who force them into a huge church wedding to the detriment of their blessed traditional marriage in order to rob and exploit them. Thus, as playwrights, they believe like Ndibe and Hove in the “contribution to the literature on African conflicts and their resolution” (Ndibe and Hove, 2009: 9). For Ndibe and Hove, the African writers should denounce these societal inequalities and problems through their writings in order to bring peace and development in the society. Their perception, therefore, marries with the ideological target of committed Marxist writers for a classless social environment and their supreme project to fight alongside with the majority suffering people in order to settle social conflicts and injustices.

The aim of the study is to show and illustrate through Marxist and semiotic lenses, the various forms of mass oppression in Ngũgĩ and Ngũgĩ’s play as well as the strategies put in place to free the oppressed people from their traumas as ways of producing discourses about the contribution of literature to the development of African society. Marxism is an economic and social system based upon the political and economic

theories of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels whose ideology is to seek the welfare of the masses. Marxist approach lays emphasis on the economic factor as the underlying rationale of social disparities and the major decimal that underbelly class conflicts and struggles in literary texts. I will use this theory in the context of my study to scrutinize how the authors picture the class conflict and the struggle of poor people to unveil social injustice and unfairness pictured in the corpus text. Marxist critical approach also has to do with class consciousness and responsibility. To achieve freedom, peace and development in the African society, as it is shown in *I Will Marry When I Want*, each member of the society, namely men, women and children, starting from the poor to the rich, the weaker to the stronger, has a role to play, hence, a responsibility to carry.

I will use linguistic and social semiotics as interpretative tools in my critical analysis. This will help me to base on both form and content to produce meaning of the various signs of the play under analysis. According to Halliday and Hasan, semiotics is “the study of sign systems – in other words, as the study of meaning in its most general sense” (Halliday and Hasan, 1991: 4). In *I Will Marry When I Want*, everything is a sign; and everything ideological possesses meaning: it represents, depicts, or stands for something lying outside itself. The mood, the time, the setting and characters, among others reveal something that stand for something else in the play.

1. Power Maneuvers and Dictatorship in *I Will Marry When I Want*

Set against the background of mass oppression in Kenya by the post-independence African leadership, *I Will Marry When I Want* debunks human predicaments in a social class setting through diverse forms among which power maneuvers and dictatorship that victimize African masses and their environment. Power is “a possession of control, authority, or influence over others” (Merriam-Websters, 2007, <http://wordcentral.com.cg>, 14/04/2020). It means the power of dominating others and having them under one’s influence. Because of the authority some people have over others, they tend to impose their will or their laws on the latter for their own profit. This is called power maneuvers sustained in the play through some responsibilities, roles, and advantages

of high placed characters to the disadvantage of other characters condemned to manipulation and poverty. As for dictatorship, it is a form of government in which one person or a small group possesses absolute power without constitutional limitations. Dictators usually resort to force or fraud to gain political power which they use through intimidation, terror, and the suppression of basic civil liberties. In the play's context, Ngũgĩ W. T. and Ngũgĩ W. M. set a social environment in which they create some characters who misuse their powers to dictate their own rules to other characters in order to let their readers and audience be aware of the political oppression the African masses face in their communities for the purpose to call for a positive change in the society. It takes the shape of a group of Christians and their leader who go through the village to impose the hymn that the whole village must accept to build a church and collect money and whatever they have put aside to the God of the poor to have the favor and salvation from God. The leader of the Christian group strategically chooses the village leader, Kĩgũũnda's home to spread their Christian will and ideology as it appears in the following extract:

LEADER:

We belong to the sect of the poor,
Those without land,
Those without plots,
Those without clothes.
We want to put up our own church.
We have a haraambe.
Give generously to the God of the poor
Whatever you have put aside
To ward off the fate of Anania and his wife⁷

In the above, the spell of the church leader who takes advantage of Kĩgũũnda and the villagers' poor status to lead them to God for the erection of the church and '*haraambe*', public fund-raising, as a means for security, protection and salvation, is hypocrisy, irony, imposed and guided by personal motives rather than a project meant for the wellbeing of the village, society, and nation. What evidences this claim is the

⁷Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Ngũgĩ wa Mĩrĩ, *I Will Marry When I Want*, Great Britain: Heinemann, 1982, p.8. Subsequent quotations are from this edition and will be parenthetically included by the page number as (IWMWW).

literary construction of the characters identified as the villagers, being poor and miserable because they lack food, clothes and shelter. The very prayers, aspirations and needs of these people at the moment is at least a little supply for food to fill their bellies, shelter, and additional money to help them make the two ends meet. Controversially, the leader's spell smoothly disorients them from these constructive views by directing their senses to a waste of money and giving away whatever they have put aside for their survival to unknown destinations and a god. Such a move will increase rather these people's suffering and poverty. Hence, the spell of the church leader and his group members is set to manipulate the villages psychologically and subjugates their mind to use their energy and effort to the only benefit of the church, its leader, and his sect. The attitudes and deeds of the church leader in context is metaphoric and it symbolizes the typical actions of any leader in a class society in the sense that the name 'LEADER' is capitalized and generic in the above extract.

It is visible through the text that the church leader could have been loyal and right, had he advised the villagers and their leader to use their money and various contributions to develop the village. It includes providing them with potable water, building hospitals to meet their sanitation needs, schools to educate their children, or creating jobs for the unemployed because most of them suffer from water and health problems, illiteracy, and unemployment. Ironically enough, the public fund-raising and contributions ideologically imposed on them are set to fill the pockets of the leader and his local as well as foreign collaborators as shown in the play. Such an ironical move of the leader and his sect in the play, meant to abuse morally the poor villagers in order to impose personal wills on them, is a kind of a psychological oppression and profitable business designed for the only needs of the sect, not for the village. The aim of the church leader and his group is that once they succeed in getting the leader of the village drunk with their religion, the latter will easily drive the whole village into their trap. Therefore, the choice of Kĩgũnda and his home by the church leader for the preaching is strategically oriented. Serequeberham expresses the typical issue of the implicit abuse of power and mismanagement by some religious representatives and their members on masses in the following terms:

In all of this, it has to be noted that Europe--fascist or democratic--undertook the domination of the world and Africa not in the explicit and cynical recognition of its economic-colonialist interest, but in the delusion that it was spreading civilization and beneficially Christianizing the globe (Serequeberham, 1998: 236).

Serequeberham informs the reader and spectator about the implicit and hypocritical nature of religion used in Africa to exploit and oppress masses. The irony and hypocrisy related to the issue as highlighted in the play is the use of God's name, the church, and poor people's contributions to dispossess them to the detriment of the rich. Through this, the playwrights illustrate how in the real society, some church leaders and their members take advantage of the poor status of the mass and ironically use God's name as means to abuse their mind and exploit them for their own profit.

As the aim of the first Christian group has failed in the play, another mixed Christian group composed of rich business people, lawyers, bankers and the villagers' employer, Kĩoi, with the same mission of eating habit, have been sent to Kĩgũũnda and his people. This is shown through the unexpected visit of the sect of the rich led by their leader, Kĩoi, to Kĩgũũnda and Wangeci. As planned, Ndugĩre first uses his financial position and biblical preaching as a means to enfeeble or hypnotize the mind of Kĩgũũnda and Wangeci by giving them false testimonies about the tremendous prosperity of his businesses and life from the very time he has accepted Kĩoi's company and his Christian ideology. The aim behind all this is to bold the mind of the Kĩgũũndas to come closer to their group so that they can rob and exploit them. Kĩoi rather bases himself on the poverty of the Kĩgũũndas, his wealth and position as an employer, and a friend in Christ to reinforce Ndugĩre's stand by condemning the couple's first blessed traditional marriage and forcing a bank loan and a huge church marriage on them for their social salvation.

To add, the objective in the above is to drive them into a situation that will allow the sect to grab their land and wealth. The proof is that once the couple accepts the bank loan against their remaining plot of land to organize the demanding and imposed church marriage, their land is auctioned and grabbed by the bank to which Kĩoi himself is secretly the director because Kĩgũũnda cannot pay back on time. This leads to an open fight ending up with his dismissal from work and the family's collapse in the play. Instead of looking into the matter for justice and peace, the court rather sides with Kĩoi and his son who worsen the situation for the Kĩgũũndas by abusing their daughter sexually simply because Gathoni is poor. This explains Kĩoi's smile in the following stage direction and his attitude toward the girl's parents who decide to sue them to court: "Kĩoi: [smiling]: Did you say court? Or law? // Run. Hurry up. // We shall see on whose side the law is! //" (IWMWW: 100-101). The reader and the spectator expect Kĩoi to look into the matter to find a solution for the welfare of the two families but the protection he has from law makers and decision takers allow him to reject all accusations. Through this, the authors indirectly denounce the issue of some people who use their money to bribe law makers and decision takers in order to have their protection whenever they find themselves guilty.

The playwrights also implicitly denounce the dramatic consequences of power maneuvering and tyranny of some rulers in that they alienate the masses' traditional cultures and lead to a society's downfall. As it is illustrated in the play, Kĩgũũndas' blind acceptance of the imposed huge church marriage to the detriment of their first traditional marriage symbolizes an attack and a denial of the poor people' cultures and traditional values, a move which leads to the family's collapse in the play. This even explains Wangeci's total confusion toward the end of the play: "Wangeci: The Kĩois buried us alive." (IWMWW: 108). "Wangeci: What shall I now do? // Where shall I now turn? //" (IWMWW: 104). Wangeci's utterances exhibit the abuses and denial of their traditional cultures as well as their total collapse and loss of the whole family shown respectively in the foregoing extracts through the use of the expression "buried us alive" and her questioning showing their incapacity to find

their ways and directions. The idea of mass oppression is also shown through the economic lives of the people.

2. Shadows of Socio-Economic Decadence in the Play

The aim of this section is to show how the masses have been ruined in sectors of economy in the play. The economic status that prevails in the dramatic world of Ngũgĩ W. T. and Ngũgĩ W. M. is that of unemployment, exploitation, and poverty in the masses' circle. Unemployment is the lack of job. Exploitation refers to the unfair treatment of workers, employees, and farmers by their masters in order to benefit from their work and resources in the play context. As for poverty, it is,

a state where an individual is not able to cater for his/her basic needs of food, clothing and shelter; is unable to meet social and economic obligations, lacks of gainful employment, skills, assets and self-esteem; and has limited access to social and economic infrastructures such as education, health, potable water, and sanitation; and consequently has limited chance of advancing his or her welfare to the limit of his or her capabilities (CBN report as quoted by Anaté, 2015:113).

The above quote about poverty matches with the situation in the context of the play whereby many characters suffer from food shortage, lack of shelter, and unemployment. The symbolism that appears in the flashback of the stage direction of the play is illustrative:

Kĩgũũnda's home. A square mud-ochred, one-roomed house. The white ochre is fading. In one corner can be seen Kĩgũũnda's bed. In another can be seen a pile of rags on the floor. The floor is Gathoni's bed and the rags, her bedding. Although poorly dressed, Gathoni is very beautiful. In the same room can be seen a pot on three stones. On one of the walls there hangs a framed title-deed for one and a half acres of land. Near the head of the bed, on the wall, there hangs a sheathed sword. On one side of the walls there hangs Kĩgũũnda's coat, and on the opposite, on the same wall, Wangeci's coat. The coats are torn and patched.

A pair of tyre sandals and a basin can be seen on the floor.
(IWMWW: 3)

The tiny room of Kĩgũũnda made of mud which is even falling symbolizes poverty. It means that Kĩgũũnda, the villagers' leader, in the play, lacks financial means to build a decent cement-house with many rooms. The falling aspect of his single roomed-home denotes the ongoing economic hardship he undergoes because, if his situation has improved, he could have renewed his house. Since he cannot change it into a nice cement-house or add at least more mud rooms, it means his financial situation is declining dramatically because the undertaking of such projects demands money.

In addition, the poor status of the family compels them to live in a single room with Gathoni, their grown-up daughter. The lack of adequate beddings and a bed for the latter, as well as clothes and furniture for the whole family are the hallmarks of poverty that the playwrights articulate for the reader to infer the degree of poverty and misery Kĩgũũnda and his family are exposed to. The symbolism of torn and patched coats for the couple denotes two things to the reader and audience. First, it indicates that the people concerned lack financial means to provide themselves with new ones. The poor conditions force them to patch and use the single coat each of them has, even if they are worn out. Second, it deeply symbolizes the root cause of the hardship of these characters who have been ruined and devastated in their patrons' farms, industries, and works to the extent that they are left empty-handed and with torn clothes for protection. This phenomenon of enslavement calls for anger and frustration which are explained by a hanged-sword in Kĩgũũnda's room as imagery for fight to be used by the oppressed family for justice. Again, their single room is used as a waiting room, a bedroom and a kitchen because they receive visitors, sleep and cook in the same room as their beds and a pot on three stones are found in that room. Through this, the playwrights give the opportunity to the reader and the spectator to witness the extreme poverty of the villagers and their leader who are the symbols of the downtrodden class in the play. Facts from the play show that the villagers and their leader devote themselves to hard work in the

factories and farms of their local masters and employers while the latter snore in beds in decent homes, drive comfortable cars and show up money and wealth everyday through their attitudes and deeds. The reader and the audience question how people who have been employed for so many years and work so hard can remain poor and miserable whereas their employers and masters enjoy such high privileges. Evidence from the play relates their economic hardship to their unfair treatment at work. The harvest and wealth that they obtain through hard work, rather benefit other people whereas they receive tiny salaries which cannot enable them to fill their bellies, build good houses, or drive comfortable cars. Ajidahun (2012: 118) is equally concerned with the same reality about African downtrodden when he echoes that: “It is ridiculous to see a great number of people in a society wallowing in poverty while the rich people are openly and arrogantly displaying their wealth without having the slightest compassion for the poor. This situation breeds crimes.” He raises here the issue of the extreme poverty and misery which make the talented African people suffer and die every day in the eyes of some highly placed people who never come for help.

The lack of mere salt for the meal and money to care for the family in Kĩgũũnda’s home is symbolically put to an aesthetic and socio-economic ends. Kĩgũũnda symbolizes it in the play as follows: “Kĩgũũnda: They don’t know the phrase, ‘increased wages’! “ (IWMWW: 20). The testimony of Kĩgũũnda about the origin of mass poverty in the play is a reality in our society. It takes the reader and the spectator to the real world whereby some employers, landlords hardly consider the conditions of their employees and workers in connection with their current needs and social change. There is increase on the price of goods in the market, house rent, plot of land but the leaders and employers hardly manage the working conditions for workers to face the new social trend. These contradictions in the masses’ circle pose a problem with negative impacts that the reader and the spectator encounter in the play context. The poor status of Kĩgũũnda and his family exposes them. It affects their morality and dignity. As the wise and dignified, Kĩgũũnda has become very poor and miserable, he easily gets into the traps of his enemies who use this opportunity to rob his land and exploit his daughter. The case in point is

that Kĩgũũnda is forced to give away his remaining land against money to organize the huge church marriage imposed on them. And his daughter has to exchange sex with money to take care of herself. The overall situation ruins and brings the family to the point of collapse. This situation ironically symbolizes how some people in the real world drive others to poverty and misery so that they can continue exploiting and oppressing them. The situation proves that Ngũgĩ W. T. and Ngũgĩ W. M. world is selfish and guided by the pursuit of personal interest whereby money and wealth have become the only guideline for joy and happiness whereas discipline, hard work, and morality which should bring about mutual understanding, peace, and social wellbeing are overlooked. This situation illustrates the glaring mass oppression and calls for challenges in the play.

3. Challenges and the Vision of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Ngũgĩ wa Mĩrĩĩ

The aim of the section is to show how the playwrights call for the responsibility of each class member individually and collectively to help to mangle the issue of mass oppression in vogue in their play for peace and development of the society. Mass education is one of the means to help to deconstruct mass oppression in the play. To achieve this, the playwrights create characters such as Kĩgũũnda, Wangeci, and Gathoni who are easily exploited in the play because of their illiteracy and ignorance. "Kĩgũũnda is a hard worker" (IWMWW: 80), strong and wise. But, as he lacks school education, his abilities, capacities, reflections and critical mind are not developed enough to demythologize the myth of the tricks and traps of their oppressors.

The same thing goes with Wangeci whose illiteracy wraps her senses and prevents her from listening to her neighbours' advice about the trick and malice of their exploiters who feign to love them. She blindly gets into their trap and pushes her daughter and husband into the same mess and the latter ends up a drunkard and a street dweller. Referring to Mohanty's position, Wangeci stands here as a symbol to urge the African woman to take up the challenge like "...Western women as educated, modern, as having control over their own bodies and sexualities, and the freedom to

make their own decisions” (Mohanty, 1995: 261). Mohanty raises the reader’s awareness to the fact that education stands as a tool to emancipate the African woman and prevent her from oppression. As for their daughter, Gathoni, the inability of her parents to send her to school for education because of her female sex, coupled with her love for money and easy life together with her bad friendship and disrespect for her parents explain her falling into Mũhũni’s trap and final collapse in the play. Through this imagery, the playwrights question the responsibility of children as well as parents toward their children, especially, the girls. As parents, they should guarantee the future of their daughters and children through home and school education instead of pushing the female ones to marriage as is the case of Wangeci toward Gathoni in the play context. This even explains the ironical title of the play, “*I Will Marry When I Want*” set to raise parents’ awareness on the free marriage of their daughters instead of sending them to men for personal benefit.

There is evidence that the playwrights would like children to stick to hard work and listen to their parents for the wellbeing of the family and the whole society. From the foregoing arguments, these two playwrights encourage education as a strategy to end mass oppression in their society because as Jezebel has noticed it, the fate of the oppressed partly stems from their illiteracy: “I don’t blame them. // Many of them cannot read or write. // They don’t know A or B or C. //” (IWMWW: 79). The choice of Jezebel by the playwrights to unveil the secret by relating the lack of education to masses’ sufferings is symbolic and metaphoric. Despite her bad nature, Jezebel has deserved much admiration in bringing two opposing nations together through her marriage in the *Bible*. Similarly, though she belongs to the oppressor’s class in the play, the playwrights have used her as a symbol to open the eyes of the suffering people to believe in the need of their education as a means for their salvation and a positive change in society. At this level of the discussion, the vision of the playwrights is that when men, women, and children are educated, they will be more enlightened and stronger to overcome collectively their social problems. Kharin joins this Marxist view of the society when he has it that:

Only from a dialectical position can one comprehend the objective world and the universal laws for its development. These fundamental laws include the laws of the unity and struggle of opposites, the law of the transition of quantitative changes into qualitative ones and back again and the laws of the negation of negation (Kharin, 1981:261).

Explicitly put, Kharin ideologically sustains here that unity among the oppressed is the best weapon to overcome oppression and exploitation in a class society. The aim behind their unity is that the oppressor is financially and materially strong, and has the most sophisticated weapon for the fight, but taken individually, the exploited class is weak. This is pictured in the play by the sword used by Kĩgũũnda, a very strong man, against the gun held by Jezebel, from the oppressor's rank. Despite his physical strength, once "Jezebel fires the gun, Kĩgũũnda falls" (IWMWW: 103) and surrenders. The onomastic of the name "Jezebel", a biblical figure associated with cruelty, murder, and bloodshed has been used by the playwrights to let the oppressed class be aware of the evil nature of their patrons in order to set an alarm for the sense of unity among the exploited party as a strategy to overcome the enemy who may be weak physically but very strong financially, materially, and spiritually. This explains the permanent presence of Gĩcaamba and Njooki by the side of Kĩgũũnda and his family in the play through their various teachings, advice, and ethics. They raise their friends' awareness to avoid the company of the Kĩois because the latter only want to draw them closer in order to exploit them. Despite their awareness raising, advice, and teaching, Kĩgũũnda and his family do not listen to them and let go off the Kĩois hands, a move which finally ruins and confuses them. But still, Gĩcaamba and his wife never give up. They teach and enlighten them to get organized for the benefit of the society instead of accusing and destroying one another blindly:

ALL: The trumpet of the poor has been blown.
Let's unite and organize
Organization is our club
Organization is our sword

Organization is our shield
Organization is the way
Organization is our strength
Organization is our light
Organization is our wealth (IWMWW: 116).

The repetitive use of “organization” in the above verse is a way of insisting on solidarity among the oppressed and showing the supreme importance the two playwrights place in the centrality of this strategy for change in the society. The case in point here is that employees, workers and farmers are the real producers of wealth: “Gĩcaamba: The labour of our hands is the wealth of the country” (IWMWW: 37), but they are forced to sell out their energy and manpower against tiny salary and reward, a thing which oppresses them. Once they are united, they can organize themselves into groups and have their own savings and banks. They will use the money saved to build factories, enterprises, and have large farms to employ more people and share the benefit collectively instead of using that money to fill the pocket of some evil-minded people in churches for instance. From there they will inevitably solve some of their problems which enslave them and set them backward. This position is relevant to Marxist critical approach which strategy is to have masses and committed Marxist fighters come together in a revolutionary struggle to break forces of exploitation and conflicts.

Ngũgĩ W. T. stresses the above position in *Homecoming* as follows: “I believe that African intellectuals must align themselves with the struggle of the African masses for a meaningful national ideal, for we must strive for a form of social organization that will free the manacled spirit and energy of our people” (Ngugi W. T., 1972: 46). Solomon (1973:17), in his following position, shares the same view: “Marxism is the symbolism of dialectical conflict of drama, of the unity of opposites, of revolutionary change, of matter and man in motion, constantly transcending the moment, pointing into the future”. For Solomon, unity and solidarity among the oppressed will show their strength and compel the exploiters to stop oppressing them. Kĩoi, himself, as an oppressor and exploiter in the play has come to the same conclusion: “But these workers cannot let

you accumulate!” (IWMWW: 78) This is a strong statement put in the mouth of the character to question the responsibility of the ‘big ones’ in the play. The authors’ stand is that as long as one party will continue exploiting the other, the exploited party will keep on troubling the peace and tranquility of the exploiter through their various claims. Hence, the playwrights indirectly invite the strong to side and share with the weak for a social cohesion, welfare, peace, and development in the society.

Conclusion

The study has highlighted that the use of power by some leaders and highly placed officers through intimidation and terror to dominate others for personal profits, is at the basis of the rise of the current criminalities, atrocities, conflicts and rampant insecurity that destroy humanity, especially the downtrodden masses. The paper has shed light on the glaring social immorality namely the rejection of some of African cultural values meant to enrich and protect Africa to the detriment of the adaptation of certain foreign beliefs, customs, and practices far from creating discipline, mutual understanding, and peace which are the landmarks of a true positive change and development.

The unconditional love for money and the scramble for material wealth by the ‘big ones’ explain the rampant poverty of employees, workers, and farmers who are hardly rewarded according to their effort and output. Through actions and interactions of characters in their social environment, the research has communicated the social vision of the playwrights as challenges to mass oppression. These range from education, hardwork, unity, and solidarity of the oppressed to consciousness and responsibility of the oppressor in order to help solve some of the problems which alienate people and prevent them from progressing. By doing so, Ngũgĩ W. T. and Ngũgĩ W. M. have succeeded in creating a total positive ideology for the privilege, peace and development of the African society; hence corroborating Pewissi’s womanist perspective that: “the challenges of peace in the world requires serious attention to ethical studies, social commitment through dialogue, understanding, sharing and moral commitments, all of these abiding by the concept of wholeness” (Pewissi, 2017:4).

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