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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 Ataféï 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 numéroter 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.

Instruction et acceptation d’article

A partir du volume 2 de la présente édition, les dates de réception et d’acceptation des textes sont marquées, au niveau de chaque article. Deux (02) à trois (03) instructions sont obligatoires pour plus d’assurance de qualité.

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LITTERATURE

Towards Humanising Individual Desires: From Iconoclastic to Allegorical Reading of the Epic *Gassire's Lute*

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Abstract:

This work discusses the interrelationship between personal desires, ambitions and societal laws in a conflicting atmosphere. It also points to the raising of social responsibility as a stop to individual's drive for lawlessness in society. It is believed the instabilities observed here and there all over the world are mainly motivated by different ambitions that the authors refuse to relinquish for the sake of the societal harmony and peace. And because such people are powerful and influential, their desires are not often evaluated or controlled at the right time.

Key words: desire, ambition, power, society, morality, laws, and respect.

Résumé :

Ce travail vise à montrer l'interdépendance entre les désirs et les ambitions personnels et les lois sociétales dans une atmosphère conflictuelle. Il vise aussi à mettre en exergue la responsabilité sociale comme un frein contre les hors-la-loi de la société humaine. C'est un fait que les instabilités observées par ici et par là dans le monde entier sont principalement motivées par les différentes ambitions que les détenteurs refusent de délaissier pour l'intérêt de la paix et l'harmonie sociétale. Et comme ces teneurs sont des gens importants et d'influence, leurs désirs ne sont pas souvent évalués et contrôlés au bon moment.

Mots clés : désir, ambition, pouvoir, société, moralité, lois, et respect.

Introduction

It is a commonly established proof that societal life, be it personal or collective, turns around motivations, desires and ambitions of the different people in the society, because «the individual is a juncture of ambiguous forces which programme him/her», in the terms of Soyinka, (1990: 38). For harmony to prevail in the human society, laws and regulations are established at different levels in order to regulate people's

actions and reactions generated by their desires and ambitions. As a result, the so-called pragmatism which, according to Wells (1954: 13-14) «asserts that only our mind really exists, that the natural and social world exists only in our sensations and ideas, will and emotions”», is to be condemned and banned.

Despite this agreement among people, some people hold more onto their desires and ambitions than to the detriment of the societal laws. Nubukpo (2015: 125) opines, in this case, that «the means, whether fair and foul used to achieve the identified goal do not matter much, in the sense that no moral or ethical assessment of the strategy used should affect the character’s enjoyment of the end result». Such a situation creates conflicts and instability in the world, because according to Cook (1977: 4) «the individual is seen first and foremost as part of a corporate whole, and his existence as part of the social pattern overwhelms any private life he might lead within the confines of his own consciousness». Prisons and other measures are taken to reinforce the respect of societal regulations when people are found guilty, but it becomes more difficult if the violators are powerful and important people of the society. At the two levels, it is important to know that «the study of abnormalities or [...] deviations in behaviour is important not only because of the prevalence of the disorders and the social problems they create, but also because such a study has contributed greatly to the understanding of moral behaviour», Lindzey (1968: 27).

The epic *Gassire’s Lute* has shown through characterisation this controversial atmosphere whereby personal ambitions and societal laws are in conflict. In this epic, the protagonist, Gassire, has an ambition that needs to be humanised for the safety of the kingdom but because of his social status and rank, the inhabitants have belatedly realised the danger Gassire stands for in their society. This work aims to elaborate on how personal or inward unquenched ambitions and desires end up jeopardizing social surrounding lives. It also discusses how morality should stand as a stop to these desires and ambitions in the society. In other words, how do individuals in communities handle Freud’s notion of “id”, “ego” and superego” so as to preserve social peace and harmony. Trilling (1976: 282) lays emphasis on the primary role of literature when

he observes: «the most elementary thing to observe is that literature is of its nature involved with ideas because it deals with man in society, which is to say that it deals with formulations, valuations, and decisions some of them implicit, others explicit».

To achieve this objective, I use the Freudian classical psychoanalysis criticism summarised by Kelley Griffith as followed «earlier Freudian critics also used psychoanalytic principles to analyse characters in works of literature. They looked upon characters as having motivations, conflicts, desires, and inclinations similar to those of real people» Griffith (2002:139), because «if psychoanalysis can help us better understand human behavior, then it must certainly be able to help us understand literary texts, which are about human behavior. » Tyson (2006 :11). The statement of Freud (1920 :257) in his *Introduction to Psychoanalysis* according to which «literature and the other arts, like dreams and neurotic symptoms, consist of the imagined, or fantasized, fulfillment of wishes that are either denied by reality or are prohibited by the social standards of morality and propriety» corroborates Gassire's attitude throughout the whole epic. My analyses turn around Freud's notion of "id", "superego" and ego" as summarised by Lois Tyson as follows: "the id consists largely of those desires regulated or forbidden by social convention. Thus, the superego—or cultural taboos—determines which desires the id will contain. The ego, or the conscious self that experiences the external world through the senses, plays referee between the id and superego...", Tyson (2006 :25). The work is structured into two parts: Gassire's desires versus morality and *Gassire's Lute* as an allegory.

1. Gassire's Desires versus Morality

Like everybody, Gassire was not born with his desires and ambitions. It is very often and generally believed that there is no smoke without fire. Every human being while growing starts dreaming to achieve something in life as self-fulfilment in society. The seed of what finally germinates in human being as ambition comes from different sources either incidentally or willingly. It is incidental, because people are brought by events to have some desires. It is willing, because it is consciously taken as a decision without any external force exerting pressure on the person. In both cases,

no accusation should be levelled against the person. What matters, is how and when to achieve the desired ambition in the society peopled by other different individuals. In Gassire's case, the epic opens up with a record of remote fall of the kingdom in these terms: «four times/ Wagadu rose/a great city, gleaming in the light of day/ four times/ Wagadu fell/ and disappeared from human sight/ once through vanity/ once through dishonesty/ once through greed/ once through discord.»⁴

This negative record of Wagadu's fall as a result of its men's vanity, dishonesty, greed and discord is well known to Gassire, a young warrior, in the kingdom. Regretfully, this fall happened four times and the whole kingdom had collapsed. This empirical information about the kingdom disturbs a lot the young hero, Gassire. Naturally, the question any sensible person in the kingdom should be asking is: will it happen again? So, pondering over the whole situation, Gassire has only one person to rely on: the Nganamba, his father the king. But the picture the addressee has of the emperor is frightening and deploring when compared to the repetitive fall of the empire in the remote past.

But the Fasa were growing old.
All who had not fallen
in single combat with the Burdama
were growing old.
Nganamba was very old.
Gassire, his son,
himself with eight sons,
each son with sons
Nganamba ruled over them
And over all the Fasa,
And over the dog-like Boroma.
Because of him,
Because he grew so old,
Wagadu was lost (GL: 16-17).

The depiction of the situation in these verses has made things very complicated for Gassire, the young warrior, who disagrees with the

⁴ Atla Jablow, *Gassire's Lute: A West African Epic*, New York: Dutton, 1971.
(Throughout this paper, i will refer to this book as: GL followed with page numbers)

present situation. Not only do they lose the battle, but «the Boroma crept away,/ fleeing from the old Fasa's rule./ again they became slaves to the Burdama» (GL : 17). The whole epic seems to be a monologue taking place in the mind of Gassire, the prince because being slave to people who were their former slaves is unbearable. Gassire then asks a serious but dangerous question: «had Nganamba died sooner,/ would Wagadu have fallen for the first time ?» (GL: 17) Such a question may come to one's mind but never into one's mouth, for it is an abomination or a blasphemy from a child about his father. At this level, (Keble, 1844: 257) one of Freudian scholar states that «poetry is the indirect expression of some overpowering emotion, or ruling taste or feeling...» that is imposed by the poet. However, it is a reasoning procedure to find solution or to understand what is going on. All that has been said so far constitutes Gassire's disagreement leading him thus to start nurturing an iconoclast desire or ambition. The apparent conflict within Gassire is a conflict between his "id", his "ego" and his superego" in Freudian terms. He may be right if it is only his reflection on the situation but Nganamba his father does not choose not to die or to live neither does he choose to grow old. The epic surprises the reader when Gassire is described in the following episode as being troubled by his understanding of the present lot of the kingdom.

Nganamba did not die.
 A jackal gnawed at Gassire's heart.
 Each day Gassire asked his heart:
 when will Nganamba die ?
 When will Gassire be king ?
 Each day Gassire longed for the death of his father
 As a love watches for the evening star to rise (GL: 17).

How dare he ask such questions to himself? From the stanza, it becomes clear that Gassire's ambition is amoral and devilish if he unfolds it to anybody. At this point, Tolman (1968 : 6) has to remind us that people's «minds are essentially streams of inner happenings». The stanza shows a kind of gradation in Gassire's feeling: that is, from a questioning mind he moves to a longing heart for his father's death. Until then nobody knows of Gassire's desire because all this happens inside Gassire. This is his psychological streams of thoughts. Putting it on the back of negative

spirits, or on the unconsciousness, Gassire may be excused as being tempted as long as he can deal properly with this wish or desire unknowingly to anybody. In other words, nobody should blame Gassire for having bad ideas or intentions as long as he does not act to achieve it or voice it to anybody, for what comes to the mind of people cannot be controlled or checked by any apparatus nor by anybody. Thousands are people in the world who happen to have dangerous ideas but succeed in dispelling them and have full control over themselves because of the societal laws and moral requirements. The only danger that results from this embodiment is what Freud calls repression of the unconscious - the storehouse of those painful experiences and emotions, those wounds, fears, guilty desires, and unresolved conflicts. Surprisingly enough, Gassire does not heed to the societal and moral requirements in the kingdom to hold back his antisocial and animalistic desire. In other words, his ego fails to play the referee role between the his “id” and “superego.” Then the poem shows to the reader, through the diction and the psychological status of the young hero, a Gassire beyond understanding.

Each day Gassire's rage and longing grew.
Sleep passed him by.
Gassire lay, and jackal gnawed at his heart.
Gassire lay, and anguish climbed into his throat (GL: 19).

As Gassire continues pondering over the situation his belief that his father is the stumbling block for him to free the kingdom from the Burdama grows to a crescendo. The stanza highlights this through the use of «anguish climbed into his throat» which reveals his impatience to voice out his desire in order to find means to achieve it. Equally important, this is the chart of Gassire's psychological status: in the beginning, it is only an idea in his mind but afterwards it moves into a longing in his heart creating in him a rage that is now leaving his heart to land in his throat to become a statement finding its accomplishment.

As Gassire can no more sleep because of the turmoil in his heart, what is left for him is a way to achieve his ambition. And of course, the following verses bring the addressee to witness Gassire in the hut of the

wise old man, Kiekorro. Their discussion goes as follows: «one night he could no longer rest./ He sprang from his bed,/ leaving his house./ To the wise man, Kiekorro, went Gassire./ “Kiekorro!/ When will my father die?/ When shall I carry his shield and sword?» (GL: 19-20). At this point, the motivation of Gassire has appeared fully to the reader. It is out of context for a child to desire the death of his father just because he believes to avenge himself on their enemies. This character of Gassire seems in the beginning of the epic to be a hero fighting for the welfare of the kingdom but the step he is taking disqualifies him and is leading him to villainy before the whole kingdom, for he «values his personal safety and welfare above that of the flock» (De Souza, 2001: 51). But the wise old man does not hesitate to tell him the truth as their discussion continues: «Ah Gassire!/ Nganamba will die soon enough./ But you will never carry his sword and shield./ Sword and shield will others inherit./ You will carry a lute./ and your lute shall cause the loss of Wagadu!» (GL: 20).

Despite the fact that the wise old man does not rebuke Gassire for his desire as a member of the kingdom and as a child, he does reveal to him his destiny which will rather cause the loss of the kingdom. If the strong hold of moral and societal laws and requirements has failed to cripple Gassire’s “id” in his wrong ambition, the revelation of the wise man should at least reinforce his “ego” on his wrong path. The revelation here is that Gassire will rather carry a lute which is an instrument for bards or poets or singers, but he will rather become a poet not a warrior and this will cause the loss of Wagadu. But as adamant and stubborn, Gassire challenges the old wise man in the following verses: «Kiekorro!/ You are not as wise as I thought./ How can Wagadu be lost?/ Her heroes triumph daily./ Your vision is false,/ and you are a fool./ Kiekorro!» (GL: 20). At the mention of these insulting and injured declarations of Gassire, the wise old man should summon a meeting of the elders of the kingdom to dissuade Gassire and if possible punish him, for he is succumbing to his “id” instead of the “ego.” But the wise old man Kierkorro fails to fulfil his duty, maybe because of the fact that Gassire is the prince and a war leader in the kingdom. He simply answers back: «ah Gassire!/ you may not believe what I say now/ but your fate will lead you/ to the guinea

hens in the fields./ you will hear and understand/ what they say./ they will tell you your fate/ and the fate of Wagadu» GL:20).

If one believes in fate as an unchangeable and God-chosen path and an end for somebody, then the old man Kierkorro may be excused or understood when he does not try to dissuade Gassire or inform the elders about what is taking place in the kingdom. But in a society whatever is the belief of a person, the moral and societal laws must stand as a brake to refrain anybody from dislocating and destabilising the harmony and cohesion of the society. Howell underlies the importance of context for behaviours' understanding in these terms: «behaviours do not have meanings inherent in them, but rather particular meanings dependent upon specific systems of shared sense-making. Thus the meaning or correctness of behaviour cannot be known or judged without understanding the culture from which it stems» (Howell, 1982: 187). Every desire and ambition in a society must be humanised to allow everybody to collaborate for better life. Gassire is the prince and it is his right to take over after the death of his father. What he needs is patience and wisdom to do better than his father and not such an iconoclastic ambition. Driven by his headstrong feeling, he goes to the guinea hens in the field and is surprised by what he hears:

Gassire wandered into the fields.
He heard the guinea hens.
Gassire drew closer to them.
A guinea hen sat upon a bush and sang:
“hear the Dausi!
Hear my deed!”
the guinea hen sang of its battle with the snake.
The guinea hen sang:
“All creatures must die, be buried, and vanish.
Kings and heroes die, are buried, and vanish.
I, too, shall die, shall be buried, and vanish.
But the Dausi,
the song of my battles,
shall not die.
It shall be sung again and again.
It shall outlive all kings and heroes.
Hoooh! That I might do such deeds!

Hoooh! That I might sing the Dausi!
Wagadu will be lost,
But the Dausi shall endure and live! (GL: 24)

This confirmation of the guinea hen of what the wise old man Kierkorro told Gassire is a turning point as far as the theme of the epic is concerned. Gassire will reveal his real inward motivation in asking for the death of the Nganamba. Beyond his preoccupation as far as the domination of the Burdama over the empire is concerned, the addressee is brought into the mind of Gassire who displays his nature. «Gassire went again to old wise man./ »Kierkorro!/ I was in the fields./ I understood the guinea hens./ the guinea hen boasted that the song of its deeds/ would outlive Wagadu./ the guinea hen sang the Dausi./ tell me, / are there men who know the Dausi?/ and can the Dausi last beyond life and death?» (GL: 26). The Dausi the guinea hen sings for Gassire in the forest, has shed light on Gassire's unconscious desires. The Dausi shows clearly that kings, heroes, and kingdoms, except the Dausi, vanish from human sight. And as a result, when Gassire comes back to Kierkorro, their discussion highlights Gassire's ambition: «and can the Dausi last beyond life and death?» But this epiphany was not known to Gassire himself. He thinks once a king he will be famous and outlive everybody, but this is what he has reproached to his father in the beginning of the epic. As the narrative goes along, it dawns on Gassire that what he desires cannot be found in kingship but rather in being a bard, poet. As the two characters – Kierkorro and Gassire –continue their discussion, the reader is left to see the consequence of Gassire's ambition on the kingdom. The old man reveals to him:

the Dausi could be sung/ only by those of the second rank,/the Diaru./ The Diaru fought/ not so much as warriors,/ to win the battle of the day,/but as drinkers,/ to relish the fame of the evening,/but you Gassire,/ now that you will no longer be/ the second of the first,/now shall you be/the first of the second./ and Wagadu will be lost because of it./ and Gassire answered :/then let Wagadu be lost! (GL: 17)

In Gassire's first reflection over the situation of the kingdom, the reader is tempted to believe he worries about the fall and disappearance of the

kingdom. But given what he confesses himself in the above verses, his callousness is plainly revealed. His real desire is to live in people's hearts even after his death. Put differently, Gassire is looking for fame got not in fighting wars but in the Dausi, the song of the war. Freud's categorisation of human mind into three functions explains as well Gassire's inclination:

id (which incorporates libidinal and other desires), the superego (the internalization of social standards of morality and propriety), and the ego (which tries as best it can to negotiate the conflicts between the insatiable demands of the id, the impossible stringent requirements of the superego, and the limited possibilities of gratifications offered by reality (Abrams, 2005: 258).

Gassire seems to be unbalanced socially speaking as these three Freudian psychic functions are concerned. His "id" is stronger than his "ego" and this has affected dangerously the "superego." It is at this level that Gassire's personal ambitions and desire start affecting the whole kingdom, because as he goes to the smith to ask him to make him a lute to sing the Dausi, the smith warns him: «I will make you a lute/ but it will not sing» (GL: 27); and the condition which must be met before the lute would sing, is to give it a heart through the blood of his children in wars.

The lute is but a piece of wood.
Without a heart it cannot sing.
You must give it a heart.
Carry the wood on your back when you go to battle
The wood must ring with the strokes of your sword.
The wood must absorb the blood of your blood,
The breath of your breath.
Your pain must be its pain.
Your fame its fame.
The lute cannot then be just the wood of a tree.
It must blend with you and your people.
Therefore it must live not only with you,
But with your sons.
Then the singing that comes from your heart
Will echo in the ear of your son
And live on in your people.
And your son's life blood, oozing from his heart,
Will live on in this piece of wood.

Only then will it sound.
But Wagadu will be lost because of it.
Gassire said:
Then let Wagadu be lost! (GL: 30)

Humanising one's desires and ambition is what is needed to give a chance to the world to have peace and harmony at its different layers. Many conflicts and wars that trouble the whole world are motivated by people's ambitions that conflict with societal and moral laws which are supposed to stand as brakes for any deviation. In Freudian terms, people's id seems to suppress their superego and ego for the prevalence of harmony in the society. Prisons and other measures so far implemented are not more sophisticated than the hold morality should have on each one in the society.

People must avail themselves for morality and societal laws to govern and control them otherwise the risks ahead will be unbearable for the future generation. Gassire's desire and ambition should quickly vanish when the condition for their accomplishment require death and sacrifice of his children. But stubbornly enough, Gassire gathers his children and speaks to them as follows: «my sons, today we go to battle./ but the strokes of our swords shall echo/not only through the Sahel,/ but shall ring for the ages./you and I, my sons, will live on./ we shall outlive all other heroes./ we shall live on in the Dausi» (GL:30). Gassire's desire has blinded him to a point where the death of his children means nothing to him. He has completely destroyed his ego to the detriment of his id. Gassire's behaviour at this level goes in the same line with Nagenda (196854) who believes that «as far as I am concerned, my part in the society is not necessarily to make the society better than I found it». He needs to understand that he is after all a human being living in a society that has its requirements. His personal ambition has severely destroyed his family instead of building it. After all, who will benefit from such fame if all his children are decimated on the altar of his own desire?

For seven days Gassire rode with the heroes to battle.
And every day he took one of his sons with him
To be the first in the fighting.
And on every one of these days

Gassire carried the body of one of his sons
 Over his shoulder and over the lute
 As they rode back into the city.
 Thus, at the end of every day
 The blood of one of his sons
 Dropped onto the lute.
 After the seven days of fighting
 There was great mourning in Dierra.
 All the heroes and all the women
 Wore their mourning clothes of red and white.
 All the women wailed.
 All the men were angry.
 Before the eight day of the fighting
 All the heroes of Dierra gathered
 And they spoke to Gassire:
 Gassire, this must come to an end.

.....
 As for us, we desire more life than fame.
 And while we should not like to live fameless
 We have no wish to die for fame alone (GL:34-35).

The elders have reacted belatedly to save Gassire from his folly. The possible reason of their delay is the fact that Gassire is the prince and a war leader in the kingdom. Without morality guiding people's desires and ambitions, the world will easily experience and suffer a third world war. People's id should not prevail over their ego and superego. Gassire needs to be lectured on the choice he makes as an individual in the society and if need be, he must be dissuaded by all means to consider lives around him. Even though the lute sounds after all for Gassire, it is in the wilderness in Sahara where he is only with his youngest son and some slaves. What is in fact the fame he blindly wishes to achieve? Many people have such wrong desires and ambitions and destroy henceforth thousands of lives erroneously creating conflicting zones, wars, animosities and worries everywhere in the world. There is an urgent need to humanise dangerous desires and ambitions that take root in the society for better life. In Freudian terms, people's ego must do the job of negotiating successfully the conflicts between their id and their superego. In other words, people must align their desires with the societal regulations. Looking at how the narrative contradicts with the essence of heroic epics, one wonders if the whole episode is not rather an allegory.

2. *Gassire's Lute* as an Allegory

The reading of this epic, *Gasire's Lute* surprises more than one reader because of its characterisation as far as literary norms about character development is concerned. In other words, the reader finds it very difficult to characterise the main character Gassire as a hero, a villain, a protagonist, an antagonist or an anti-hero. Gassire does not fit into any of this kind of characterisation. This is one of the reasons why this epic is looked at in this work as an allegory, for Gassire is rather a symbol used by the poet to have a critical look at the society. According to Turnbull et al. (2015: 36), an allegory is «a story, play, picture, etc.. in which each character or event is a symbol representing an idea or a quality, such as truth, evil, death, etc...». An allegory is any story, writing be it a poem, a play, novel that stands as symbol to have a say on societal or individual problems. In the words of Amuta, (1989: 148.), «symbolization is a primary artistic vehicle by means of which meaning is presented in its ideological essence». Put in the context of human social organisation, Gassire's desires are inhuman and iconoclastic. His determination to achieve his ambitions regardless of the damage he causes to his society characterises him as a callous and foolish person. The question that troubles the reader is: what does this epic contain as good for readers? In this section of the article, the discussion turns round *Gassire's Lute* as a political allegory if one considers Abrams' definition of allegory in these terms:

An allegory is a narrative in prose or verse, in which the agents and actions, and sometimes the setting as well, are contrived by the author to make coherent sense on the 'literal,' or primary level of signification, and at the same time to communicate a second, correlated order of signification. We can distinguish two main types: historical and political allegory, in which the characters and actions that are signified literally in their turn represent, or 'allegorize,' historical personages and events' (Abrams, 2005: 5).

Gassire as a character in this epic shows the rude and raw human nature. One may go further to qualify him as a cannibal, a savage, a barbarous and an uncivilised prototype that needs to be humanised or civilised to fit into the norms of human society. However, the other side of the coin shows him as a revelation of potential individuals with their dangerous

ambitions whose achievement creates troubles for the stability of life on the earth. The notion of social responsibility by Kovacevic (1975: 38-39) needs to be clear to such individuals when he observes that «if every man's duty is to be successful, and if he has no responsibility at all for his fellow men, it follows that he will crush the weak whose interests conflict with his own». Politically, Gassire epitomises dictators whose sole will is to have power as long as they will regardless of both the use they make of it and its aftermaths on their population. Beware, by dictators it is not meant only people in power but also the people desiring the same power having egoistic, selfish and revengeful motivations.

In *Gassire's Lute*, Gassire stands for these two groups of politicians. In the shoes of those who are commonly referred to as political opponents, Gassire draws this conclusion after analysing the reasons of Wagadu's fall: «Had Nganamba died sooner, / would Wagadu have fallen for the first time?» (GL:17) For Gassire, the kingdom would not have fallen if his father had died sooner for him to take over. Or, if he were earlier on the throne he would defend successfully the kingdom to maintain its domination over the Boroma. Gassire's hypothetical declaration is similar to the discourses that are served during political elections and campaigns whereby the leader in power is held responsible for all that is negative in the country. And as a solution, the opponents ask for his replacement if not his chase by riot –political meetings, strikes, marching of protest, and so forth. In other circumstances, it is to ask his death by rebellion and wars as Gassire further asks the old wise man Kierkorro: «when will Nganamba die? When will Gassire be king?» (GL: 17); «when will my father die?/ when shall I carry his shield and sword?» (GL: 19-20). Such questions from a child about his father are not to minimise, for Gassire has stepped beyond the filial requirements. The hidden implication the epic harbours in the portrayal of Gassire is his stance as a symbol for political «greed, vanity, dishonesty and discord» (GL: 13). As a political opponent, Gassire will not stop at asking just the question but will start planning the death of his father: «each day Gassire longed for the death of his father/ as a lover watches for the evening star to rise» (GL:17). Just like political opponents go to different people asking for advice, help and solutions but will never accept any of the suggestions if they are not in

their favour, Gasire goes to the wise old man Kierkorro for advice but once what is suggested to him does not fit his desires, he rejects it.

Nganamba will die soon enough.
But you will never carry his sword and shield.
Sword and shield will others inherit.
You will carry a lute

.....
Kierkorro!
You are not as wise as I thought.

.....
Your vision is false,
You are a fool.
Kierkorro (GL:19).

The wise old man Kierkorro is clear with Gassire: you will never be the president, but you can become the prime minister. But blinded by his desire and ambition, Gassire rejects the truth and runs after the impossibility of the time. He has drowned his ego in favour of his id. Equally important, his disagreement with the wise old man will reveal another aspect of his ambition later on when the population celebrates his deeds as hero in the fight against the Burdama. Gassire as a prototype of political opponents will not partake in the joy of the population because his only satisfaction lies in having the power:

with the evening he rode into the city,/ and sat in the circle of men
and his sons./ Gassire heard the heroes praise his deeds,/ but his heart
was not with them./ his heart was full of misery and longing,/ longing
for the shield of his father./the shield which he might carry/ only when
his father was dead./ longing for the sword of his father./ the sword
which he might draw/ only when he was king (GL:19).

Such an attitude is observed in political sphere in different countries in Africa especially after elections whereby these opponents are asked to join the government so as to bring their contributions for the sake of peace and harmony of their countries, but they simply turn down the offer looking for means to overthrow the leading government. In his refusal to accept the truth in the above quotation, Gassire's inner mood is shown thereafter as a harbinger of coup d'Etat.

Each day Gassire's rage and longing grew.
Sleep passed him by.
Gassire lay, and a jackal gnawed at his heart.
Gassire lay; and anguish climbed into his throat.
On night he could no longer rest (GL: 19).

When these political opponents, like Gassire in the above stanza, could no longer accept the truth that they will never win elections because of the ruling power's systems, they often opt for war, riot, rebellion and other illegal means to achieve their dreams. What is behind such a definite resolution to overthrow the government is hinted at in Gassire's answer to the wise old man Kierkorro: «but you, Gassire,/ now that you will no longer be/ the second of the first,/ now shall you be/ the first of the second./ and Wagadu will be lost because of it./ and Gassire answered :/ then let Wagadu be lost» (GL: 28). Gassire's answer in these verses is a revelation of what the political opponents finally take as a decision when they are told the truth that they can only become the prime minister but never the president to govern together to save the situation. Gassire prefers the chaos for the whole kingdom if he cannot become the king. The opponents as well prefer to destroy the country when they are not allowed to become the president. The motto of these political opponents is «if is not me, then let us all lose». Gassire's final agreement to carry the lute and sings the Dausi as the guinea hen sings it in the forest shows another secret and sinister deal between political opponents and presidents in power in Africa to the detriments of the population. Sometimes these two political figures would meet outside their countries and agree with each other as follows: I will remain the president and you will remain the main opposition leader but we have the same salary and advantages. To testify to this Machiavellian system, the epic will have Gassire reveal his real motivation behind his efforts and struggles to be king:

Gassire went again to the old wise man.
Kierkorro!
I was in the fields.
I understood the guinea hens.
The guinea hen boasted that the song of its deeds

Would outlive Wagadu.
The guinea hen sang the Dausi.
Tell me,
Are there men who know the Dausi?
And can the Dausi last beyond life and death? (GL: 25)

As wonders never cease, Gassire does not hide his true desire in this discussion with the old wise man. What Gassire is looking for is not actually the power but rather a way to be famous and live beyond all his predecessors. Analogically, Gassire's motivation is synonymous with the political opponents whose ambition is egoistic, selfish, revengeful and materialistic. It is in this vein that these opponents sabotage the collective struggles and the population's quests for the fulfilment of their deal with the presidents while exciting the poor population to support him just not to allow any other political person to replace him as the leader of the opposition. The rest of the narrative shows Gassire determined to achieve his real desire by looking for a smith to make him a lute in order to sing the Dausi which is supposed to outlive Wagadu even if it will engender the definite loss and disappearance of the kingdom.

The lute is but a piece of wood.
Without a heart it cannot sing.
You must give a heart.
Carry the wood on your back when you go to battle.
The wood must ring with the strokes of your sword.
The wood must absorb the blood of your blood,
The breadth of your breadth.
Your pain must be its pain.
Your fame its fame.
The lute cannot then be just the wood of a tree.
It must blend with you and your people.
Therefore it must live not only with you,
But with your sons (GL: 29-30).

Gassire wants to be famous and the condition to achieve this is the sacrifice of his children but he does not hesitate at all to ponder over the whole lot. Just like some political opponents who sacrifice the poor population by inviting them for marching of protest, riots, revolution, and war with the only goal to maintain their position as the main opponent leader so as to continue enjoying the irresponsible agreement they

sometimes sign with the presidents on their own behalf. Once at home, the reader discovers a Gassire full of joy lulling his children into the combat: «Gassire called his eight sons./ my sons, today we go to battle./ but the strokes of our swords shall echo/ not only through the Sahel,/ but shall ring for the ages./ you and I, my sons, will live on./ we shall outlive all other heroes./ we shall live on in the Dausi» (GL:30). The real motivation of such an action is not explained to his sons as it is with some of these political opponents who explain nothing to the population but a pure lie to invite them to the altar of sacrifice.

For seven days Gassire rode with the heroes to battle.
And every day he took one of his sons with him
To be the first in the fighting.
And on every one of these days
Gassire carried the body of one of his sons
Over his shoulder and over the lute
As they rode back into the city.
Thus, at the end of every day
The blood of one of his sons
Dropped onto the lute.
After the seven days of fighting
There was great mourning in Dierra (GL: 34).

Observing Gassire in his bloodshed actions, it dawns on the people of Wagadu that this is no more what they want by going to war. In this stanza Gassire can be compared to a man Achebe, (1980: 149) describes in these terms «a person who is insensitive to the suffering of his fellow in that way lacks the imaginative power to get under the skin of another human being and see the world through eyes other than his own». As a result,

all the heroes and all the women/ wore their mourning clothes of red and white/ all the women wailed/ all the men were angry/ before the eight day of the fighting/ all the heroes of Dierra gathered/ and they spoke to Gassire:/ Gassire, this must come to an end./we fight willingly, but only as we must/in your rage, you go on fighting/ without need, and without end/ now go forth from Dierra!/take those who would join you/ take your slaves and your cattle/ as for us, we desire more of life than fame/ and while we should not like to live fameless/ we have no wish to die for fame alone (GL: 35).

The belated awareness of the elders of Wagadu is synonymous with the delaying consciousness of the population about the Machiavellian plan against them by their so-called politicians who had long time betrayed them. In their reproach to Gassire, the elders lay emphasis on their discovery of Gassire's dangerous ambition, to be famous at all cost, reminding him that life is more than fame and that they prefer to live while pursuing fame in the normal way. Chinweizu and Madubuike, (1980: 253-254) at this level observes that the «artistic commitment is a matter of perceiving social realities and of making these perceptions available in works of art in order to help promote understanding and preservation of, or change in, the society's values and norms». The poor end of Gassire in desert is observed in the lives of these political opponents who, when discovered in their foolish and deadly game, end up miserably their political activities in their villages forgetfully to everybody. So, the symbolic representation of Gassire on political sphere sheds light on the efforts political leaders must make to humanise their personal ambitions, will, desires, goals or whatever for the sake of the collective peace, harmony, joy and safety.

Conclusion

Throughout this study, the discussion has presented Gassire's desires and ambitions as negative, amoral, savage, and barbarous to the human society. Gassire has a personal desire which jeopardises the whole kingdom. It is argued that Gassire has gone too far in his ambition as the prince to be and has ended poorly his life, because he forgets that for the society to exist «there is a perpetual need for innovative behaviour as individuals are forced to modify the acquired culture to cope with changing circumstance» Barret (1984 :80). The objective in this article has been achieved showing *Gassire's Lute* as a political allegory whereby individual's desires and ambitions need be humanised for the sake of peace and harmony in the society. It also discussed Gassire as a prototype of political opponents in African countries often associated with egoistic, selfish, materialistic, and illusionary ambitions destabilising thereby the harmony and peace their population enjoy. The article has found out some of the Machiavellian plans between political leaders and their

opponents to the detriment of their population. The work has revealed the epiphany about the sacrificial requirements some of the ambitions and desires these political people harbour.

The innocence of the population in political issues has also been analysed in this work. These results have been achieved through a kind of parallelism or analogy between Gassire and political leaders especially the opponents. The sorrowful end of Gassire in the wilderness far away from the kingdom is compared to the abandonment of the population of these political leaders who enter history like villains. Another implication has been observed in the belated reaction of the elders of Wagadu as a symbol for immaturity of the population who does not discover quickly the lies of the politicians and their acolytes. The fundamental truth in this epic is to be found in the words of Oladele, (1984:107), «no citizen has the right to assert his individualism in such a way as to destroy the foundations of society».

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