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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.
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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

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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...

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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.

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LITTERATURE

A Call for Forgiveness and Racial Reconciliation in Patricia Raybon's *My First White Friend*

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Abstract

The preservation of peace is important for the development of every individual and his country. Thus, without peace, no development is possible and tangible. Hatred as a response to social injustices, political oppressions, racial and religious persecutions, remains more harmful to the victimized than to the victimizer. Peace requires forgiveness and reconciliation among people, ethnic groups and races. Basing on New Historicism as theoretical framework, the study of Patricia Raybon's *My First White Friend* emphasizes the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation in order to guarantee peace among all the human beings.

Keywords: hatred, forgiveness, reconciliation, peace.

Résumé

La préservation de la paix est très importante pour l'épanouissement de tout individu et de sa nation. La haine en tant que réponse à l'oppression et à l'injustice sociale, raciale, politique et religieuse demeure, plus nuisible à l'opprimé qu'à l'opprimeur. Le maintien de la paix requiert le pardon mutuel et la réconciliation entre les individus, les groupes ethniques, les races. En se fondant sur l'approche néo-historiciste, l'étude de *My First White Friend* de Patricia Raybon montre l'importance du pardon et de la réconciliation comme garants de la paix entre les êtres humains.

Mots clés: la haine, le pardon, la réconciliation, la paix.

Introduction

Forgiveness and reconciliation are two concepts which are intimately intertwined and therefore difficult to be separated. Thus, one may wonder if it is possible to forgive without reconciling or reconcile without forgiving. Pondering over these inquiries, it is observable that forgiveness

ranks prominent and therefore remains the first step toward reconciliation. It is noteworthy that both forgiveness and reconciliation are very instrumental for a peaceful cohabitation and prosperity among individuals regardless of their race, ethnic group, culture, political party or religion.

Despite the importance of peace, it is unfortunately and constantly endangered through various attitudes and deeds of people toward one another. Hence, humanity has always witnessed various egoist, racial, and cruel acts and events which jeopardize social cohesion. Numerous are the causes of hatred and antagonism among people. Among these are racism, social injustices, political oppressions, religious persecutions to mention but a few. In order to guarantee peace among people, there is a need to promote forgiveness. The definition of this concept is broad but can be summed up in the passage by Macaskill (2005: 6-7) who thinks that "Forgiveness is understood as an act of pardon or release from an injury, offence or debt. On the part of the forgiving subject, it entails having compassion, releasing someone from an act or attitude that would impede the relationship of those involved." Furthermore, he argues that forgiveness implies forgetting. To this, I wonder how is it possible to forget an injury caused by someone to his/her fellow. Equally, he opines that forgiveness is the "center of the Christian faith" (Macaskill, 2005: 3). Likewise, forgiveness is advocated in other great religions such as Islam. So, forgiveness pervades various sermons given at church and at mosque. Equally, considering the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation as instrumental to guarantee peace, various writers, political leaders and scholars advocate them in their development programs, speeches, books and literary productions.

As already argued, forgiveness remains one of the central issues of scholars among these is Michael E. McCullough (2001: 194) who in his "Forgiveness: Who Does It and How Do They Do It?" underlines that people who forgive are more agreeable and more emotionally stable than those who do not. Ayten (2012: 412) in his "How Religion Promotes Forgiveness: The Case of Turkish Muslims" argues that forgiveness is a central issue of philosophers, theologians and psychologists who have

been studying it for hundreds of years. He shows the importance of interpersonal forgiveness and forgiveness from God. Dealing with the same topic, Witvliet (2001:118), in “Granting Forgiveness or Harboring Grudges: Implications for Emotion, Physiology, and Health”, unveils that unforgiving may endanger the health of people by activating negative intense emotion. In the same vein, Elliott (2011: 240-247) in “Forgiveness Therapy: A Clinical Intervention for Chronic Disease” lays emphasis on the negative impact of hatred on the health of those who suffer from a chronic disease.

Given what is established, this essay intends to scrutinize throughout *My First White Friend* by Patricia Raybon (1997), the importance of forgiveness and racial reconciliation as key components of peace and psychological stability. This work also highlights the causes of African Americans’ hatred toward Whites and how it turns to be more harmful to them than to their oppressor.

To carry out this work, I deploy the new historicist approach in order to elaborate on Raybon’s *My First White Friend*. This theory lays emphasis on the impact of the historical and geographical settings in the production of a literary work as its advocates such as Laurie G. Kirsznner and Stephen Mandell (1997) suggest. In their view, literature does not exist outside time and place. Equally, this theory allows the use of various books from history, geography in the scrutiny of a literary text. Thus, the historical and geographical settings of *My First White Friend* are useful in the scrutiny of the author’s text. This work is structured around two main points: firstly, I elaborate on the causes of African Americans’ hatred toward Whites and its aftermaths on them. Secondly, I deal with the call for forgiveness and reconciliation for a better cohabitation and promotion of peace and prosperity between the white and the black races.

1. African American’s Hatred against Whites: Causes and Aftermaths

For many centuries, the relationship between Whites and Blacks in America has been characterized by oppressions, exploitation, dehumanization, contempt and hatred. In fact, since their forceful

removal from their dear continent Africa and their deportation to America to be enslaved, Blacks have been nurturing hatred toward the white race. Sometimes, slaves resist violently against their masters. In the same vein, in dealing with Blacks' enslavement in America, Struglinska (2015: 14) reveals that "some of the methods of slaves' resistance against plantation owners were attempts to escape or even kill their masters. Sometimes, slaves even gave rise to small revolts, but without noticeable consequences."

Slaves were neither allowed to have a family nor own a land. They had no access to literacy and healthcare services. In a nutshell, they were scoffed of all their human rights. Still, elaborating on slavery, Struglinska straightforwardly qualifies it as:

An outrageous and reprehensible part of the history of the United States. It was not only a practice that allowed the Blacks to be considered less than a thing, but also a system in which African Americans did not have any opportunities for a normal life. They were kept in horrible and inhumane conditions, forced to arduous and debilitating work for food and a poverty-stricken accommodation (Struglinska, 2015: 4).

This above passage shows sufficiently how slavery is indeed an outrageous and inhumane practice toward the black race. They have suffered from it for about three centuries before it was legally abolished. The Emancipation Proclamation issued on January 1, 1863 was supposed to open a new era for former slaves. In the proclamation, President Abraham Lincoln declared: "I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States and parts of States are, and henceforward shall be, free" (Urofsky, 1994: 37). Unfortunately, this declaration did not put a total end to Blacks' cross station. That is why former slaves and children of former slaves are still fighting against various forms of oppression, stereotypes and dehumanizing practices. With regard to this, Blacks have no other choice than to continue hating their former masters, the Whites. Thus, in his dealing with the causes of hatred and violence in

America, Ergüner-Tekinalp (2009: 1067) lays emphasis on the fact that:

Decades of racism and oppression have created wounds for African and White Americans and resulted in unresolved relationship dynamics. Although the racial tension has been explained as a result of continued racist attitudes; unfinished business resulting from failure to seek forgiveness and offering forgiveness may be one explanation for the ongoing racial tension between African Americans and White Americans.

Indeed, slavery and racism have extremely injured Blacks in America and wherever they were deported. South Africa is equally a country where Blacks have suffered pitifully on their own land from Whites' racial oppressions and discriminations. As an example, Nelson Mandela (1990: 178) underlines that black students used to pay more for their school tuition than Whites. Alongside with Ergüner-Tekinalp, I believe Blacks' hatred toward Whites is logical. Moreover, so long as racism is practiced, hatred and violence between Blacks and Whites will never cease. Slavery, racial discriminations and oppressions have imbedded hatred and violence within Blacks in the world over. As a result, African Americans' violence against the White Americans remains a response to the countless prejudices their forefathers underwent and the rampant injustices the young generation still undergoing. Raybon's autobiography is one of these African American literary works which deal with the plight of blacks people in America.

In fact, Patricia Raybon's *My First White Friend* is a novel in which Patricia, the protagonist and Bill, her father have endured racial oppressions, discriminations and various forms of injustice. Being tremendously affected by these phenomena, Patricia develops hatred toward her oppressors, white people. Raybon portrays Bill Smith as a hardworking and competent black man. Yet he is professionally disadvantaged, discriminated against by his white bosses. As a result, his

job does not provide him with happiness as Raybon (1997: 33) writes: “he was one of the smartest, hardest working auditors at GAO (...) but something went wrong. He couldn’t laugh easily”. As a tangible proof, he is denied promotion; even his white trainees were promoted and became his bosses as the following passage shows it: “he even trained white men, who then passed over him for jobs: white boys out of college going to Bill Smith to get trained, then getting promoted and leaving him behind” (Raybon, 1997: 33). Bill’s situation is a common fate of most Blacks who work for the white masters in the United States of America, the land of justice and equal opportunity as the Founding Fathers proclaimed it to be. Such forms of injustices revolt African Americans. Clearly, promotion at Bill’s company depends only on skin color, not on competence as Raybon observes: “as hard as he worked, he was still black” (Raybon, 1997: 33). As a consequence, Bill’s black skin color overshadows and outplays his proficiency. As a victim of racism, he warns his daughter Patricia about white people’s wickedness and injustice which the latter describes in the following:

he tried to warn me as a child. He held my hand and took me to the mountains. Then he formed the words, in a hundred different ways, which made me understand one hard, important thing: it doesn’t matter that nobody sees your face or knows your name.... Don’t trust them. Beware of them (Raybon: 1997, 38- 39).

So strange and wicked are racists that they even practice discrimination at church. As a matter of facts, Bill once entered a church ministered by a White; he was chased merely because he is Black (Raybon, 1997: 74). This example shows that African Americans and Whites should not attend the same churches as Jim Crow laws recommended in America. Bill was dumfounded by this. Affected psychologically, he has kept this scene in mind for many years and told it to his daughter in order to raise her awareness about the country in which she is living.

Like her father, Patricia is not spared of racism. It is noteworthy that white children inherit racism from their parents and oppress their peers.

For instance, as Patricia rides her bike in their new district at Northglenn, surprisingly, a little white girl insulted her as the following passage reads:

A little girl, no more than six, looked up at me riding my bicycle down Melody Drive one day and the word sprang whole without effort from her tiny, pink lips. You're a nigger, she said, pointing matter-of-factly, then she went back to playing. There is a shock that paralyzes when that word is spoken, even by six years old (Raybon, 1997: 88).

Patricia was shocked by this little girl's abuse and was even tempted to retaliate by thinking of murdering her as she states: But "'nigger' is an accusation. It always requires a response. That day on Melody Drive, I had to ask myself: do I now try to kill this child? Do I beat her half silly and ride off into the sunset satisfied, and justified too?" (Raybon, 1997: 88) Patricia's desire to counterattack this little girl is the common reaction of most people who undergo abuses as McCullough (2001: 1994) states: "most people are motivated (at least initially) to respond to transgressions with other forms of negative behavior. Eventually, Patricia decided not to retaliate but suffered quietly and, emotionally. Like her, so many African Americans, whether children or adults suffer psychologically from various verbal abuses and oppressions. In fact, insults affect people emotionally. It also impacts their psyche. In the context of African Americans, many do not bear to be called "nigger." For this word is used in a pejorative way. "Nigger" is highly offensive for Blacks or dark-skinned people. Patricia is in fact a dark-skinned girl and could not tolerate to be called "nigger" by a little girl who cannot even apprehend the meaning of her statement. Though, she was deeply affected by this insult, Patricia did not inform her parents but only begged her father to let her go back to their former black district. The incident with that little black girl is not unique. Racial assumptions and abuses are daily matters in America. Continually, Patricia remembers when she was abused with her friends by some white boys when they went on skiing:

A year or so later when I, in fact, take the ski train to Winter Park with a black teen group from Denver, we are harassed the whole way there and home again. 'Go back to Africa! Black monkeys! Bush babies! White teens,

boys mostly, jeered in our faces, taunting our intentions to do a white thing like a ski, on white snow on white Mountains right next to white people. Go back. They spat out their rage, even making fun of our clothing (Raybon, 1997: 61).

The scrutiny of this excerpt unveils various mockeries, belittlements and degrading thoughts of some white people about Blacks. In their view, Blacks are apes, and uncivilized bush men. Therefore, they are not supposed to ski, especially on a ground which is reserved to white people. Patricia is equally affected by this incident.

Patricia's new school remains the place where she suffered more from racism. In fact, when they moved to Northglenn, her father decides to enroll her in an all-white school. On their way, in the school bus, no student would like to sit close to her, as it is the case in the class and in the lunch room. Besides, her teachers are equally racists, especially her English teacher. She always avoids choosing her to answer questions and finally gives her poor grades unfairly at the end of the year jeopardizing Patricia's formal education. In addition to this, her teachers turned her name Patricia into Patty, which is in fact insulting, and humiliating. Above all, on one occasion, during breakfast, some white students threw at her head back some juice and food, but the overseers who saw it did not react in order to chastise them. Against all odds, they prevented Patricia from going to toilet in order to clean this dirt and change her clothes. She was forced to stay in the classroom with her smelly head and garments (Raybon, 1997: 90-93).

With regard to these various oppressions, forms of injustice and discriminations, Patricia, Bill and many other Blacks undergo in the fictional United States, the protagonist has no other choice than developing hatred toward Whites. Her attitude toward the oppressors seems justified. Patricia has embedded this hatred from her childhood till her forties. Eventually, she realized that she was committing suicide. Her hatred sets her in a posture of auto-destruction as she narrates it throughout her autobiography. In the prologue, Raybon expresses powerfully her hatred toward Whites as she discloses it in the following

passage: “So I hated quietly and politely and pleasantly and I smiled a lot. That is my style-smiling” (1997: 1). Considering various oppressions Patricia endured at school when she was only a little girl, she could neither oppose overtly and violently her classmates, her teachers, nor her school administration. So, she was compelled to bear hatred in her heart. This attitude transformed her into a hypocrite and it led her to pretend to love and obey Whites. Such is the attitude of most Blacks in America. As most are powerless, they cannot express overtly and courageously their resentment but rather internalize it and suffer quietly and emotionally.

Still, in *My First White Friend*, Patricia’s cold attitude vis-à-vis Whites has worsened her plight which was already precarious and pathetic. She is compelled to be passive in order to maintain a seeming peaceful cohabitation with them. The following passage underscores equally her aversion against white people.

I was the most agreeable hater I know-quiet and mannerly and middleclass and smiling- (...) I hated with a mannerly vengeance that wasn’t neat but wild and messy and ugly because it was trapped inside of me, and was an integral part of me- so much so that I didn’t recognize it as hate, but as some kind of justifiable indignation (Raybon, 1997: 5).

Like many Blacks in America, as stated in the passage above, hatred became part of Patricia’s life to the extent that she could not get rid of it. Her hatred is due to her thirst for justice and equality but unfortunately, they seem to be unattainable dreams. As a result, like Raybon, most African Americans who are oppressed always feel like avenging themselves in order to appease their hatred. After many years of hatred, Patricia realizes that her attitude is rather erroneous because she is destroying herself as the following passage reads:

I am determined now to understand how my hate started, then figure finally how to slay it. Because hatred has hurt me good over these long years. It has crippled me and cheated me and mugged me and left me scarred and

impotent and dumb. And hate has done those things to me, it has done those things to millions like me (Raybon, 1997: 13).

Examining this passage, I underline that Patricia's hatred is more harmful to herself than to her enemies. She stresses that it "crippled" and rendered her "impotent," because her own hatred prevented her from going forward. She is imprisoned by her own contempt. In the same vein, Witvliet et al. (2001: 118) underscore that "When people hold a grudge, they stay in the victim role and perpetuate negative emotions associated with rehearsing the hurtful offence." Thus, instead of concentrating on how to strive to achieve their dream, like Patricia, most abused people rather focus on their abusers. Therefore, their hatred becomes a source and a cause of their stagnation. Though, she is alive, Patricia realizes that she is practically dead because of her hatred. As she shares the same lot with most of her race fellows, she realizes that, like her, they are equally dying or are already dead because of their hatred as Raybon writes:

I see others every day. They are walking around dead or dying or dumbstruck- on needles and egos, in churches and on dance floors, at corners and in courthouses, at jobs and shops and temples, in tents and palaces (...). Victim. That is our name. But we can't wear that label anymore. Don't fit that label. Don't fit because it isn't humanity's destiny to be stupid and lost. And if that is true for blacks, it certainly is true for whites still "imprisoned and enthralled" (...). So, I will argue my case against victimhood- for all of us but first for myself (Raybon, 1997: 13).

Examining the passage above, I apprehend that in Raybon's view, hatred renders the person who hates powerless and lifeless. So, the victimized who embed hatred in their heart, instead of injuring their victimizer rather harm themselves and endure a double suffering. So, as Raybon puts it above, though African Americans are moving, dancing, going to churches and everywhere, they remain dead, lifeless. So, it is high time they stopped hating Whites; this will alleviate their suffering and lead to reconciliation. African Americans' violence, murder and every sort of

delinquency as response to Whites' racism lead inevitably to their incarceration or death sentence as it is the case with Bigger Thomas in *Native Son* (Wright: 1940).

2. Forgiveness and Racial Reconciliation

Forgiveness and reconciliation are inescapable components to maintain peace for together living and for the advancement of humanity. Therefore, they need to be upheld and promoted by each individual.

Given what is established above, instead of hating white people for their various forms of injustice and oppressions, African Americans and the whole black race should rather forgive them. For their oppressors are equally victims of their own wickedness. Considering this fact, Martin Luther King, deemed it better to avoid violence toward the oppressors but claimed pacifically races' equal rights in the United States. Considering his strategy, Raboteau (2016: 5) argues that "King's nonviolent philosophy insisted upon an unstinting love that did not permit outward violence or the inner violence of anger, hatred or even resentment and was not conditioned on the goodness of the other." Thus, King's appeal is very powerful, pacific and devoid of any violence. Though forgiveness is difficult to implement, each individual should strive to overcome his/her outward and inner violence and manage to love the oppressor.

African Americans should not expect white people's repentance before forgiving them as King puts it. Still, Raboteau recalls a sermon King delivered after the death of four young black girls in a bomb attack in a Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, September 15, 1963. Faithful to his nonviolent philosophy, he seized this opportunity to call for forgiveness and reconciliation between Whites and Blacks in the United States, by declaring:

Their death says to us that we must work passionately and unrelentingly to make the American dream a reality. So they did not die in vain. God still has a way of wringing good out of evil. History has proven over and over again that unmerited suffering is redemptive. The innocent blood of these little girls may well serve as the

redemptive force that will bring new light to this dark city. So in spite of the darkness of this hour we must not despair. We must not become bitter, nor must we harbor the desire to retaliate with violence. We must not lose faith in our white brothers. Somehow we must believe that the most misguided among them can learn to respect the dignity and worth of all human personality (Raboteau, 2016: 5).

Scrutinizing the excerpt above, it is clear that, King is a messenger of hope, peace and unity between races. He is opposed to any violent retaliation of his race fellows. He believes that through their forgiveness, their oppressors would finally forsake their inhumanity and treat them in a better way with dignity. Blacks should not seek for justice by using violent means.

Elaborating on forgiveness in Africa, Annabella and Cowden (2003: 5) distinguish two types of forgiveness: decisional and emotional. While decisional forgiveness consists in forswearing revenge against the offenders, treat them as human beings, the emotional one goes far beyond it. In fact, emotional forgiveness consists in showing sympathy, empathy and love toward the offenders. In the same line with the foregoing, Blacks should feel compassion for their offenders in order to release them from their heart prisons as it is the case of Patricia in *My First White Friend*.

In order to reconcile opponents, the offender is supposed to acknowledge his/her misdemeanor and show evidence of repentance, contrition. Unfortunately, by ignorance, pride or stubbornness, some offenders negate the accusation and therefore could not ask for forgiveness. Consequently, they are ready to keep on injuring their victims. Such is the case of most racists in America toward Blacks. From the slavery era until today, they have kept on belittling, oppressing, discriminating against Blacks in various ways without any remorse. Whatever the case, Blacks are urged to forgive and promote a peaceful cohabitation with their unrepentant offenders. Forgiveness is compulsory for one's own

psychological tranquility as it is the case of Patricia's in *My First White Friend*. Finally, when she decided to forgive, to stop hating her oppressor, she started living (Raybon, 1997: 13). Forgiveness should not require compulsorily the offenders' contrition and repentance. In America, as most Whites have inherited racism from their ascendants; it would be difficult to admit their offence against Blacks overnight. For racism, oppressions and injustices seem to be unremittingly linked to their genes. Thus, for their own tranquility, Blacks should strive to forgive unconditionally. Macaskill sustains this opinion and argues that: "religions have provided role models of individuals who were able to forgive great injustices" (Macaskill, 2005: 3). So, African Americans should emulate them.

Due to their importance, Raybon makes forgiveness and reconciliation the central problematic in her life story and tells how her protagonist succeeded in forsaking hatred to embrace forgiveness. Thus, she states: "so I will write this book. I must trace my journey from rage to racial reasoning. From hate, to love, even from enemies to friends" (Raybon, 1997: 14). In fact, Raybon's *My First White Friend* urges her black fellows to forsake hatred and violence against white people and love them unconditionally. Thus, love must be African Americans' antidote to hatred instead of avenging themselves. According to Raybon, a genuine love is devoid of any interest, favoritism and goes beyond the skin color as she states in the following passage: "Love that big transcends self. It must certainly transcend race. It doesn't trivialize race; it rewrites its context. And effect of that shift, of course is to liberate the most compelling emotional force — human love" (Raybon, 1997: 12). As Raybon puts it, love is indeed an emotional, attractive and affectionate force every human being is supposed to embody. Love should transcend ethnicity, racial, religious and any social groups. It enables the white people to consider other races as equals. Continually, Raybon declares that: "I didn't have to hate white people, or black people, or hate myself. Remarkably, I even could love us all if I tried" (Raybon, 1997: 53). The prevalence of love can prevent conflicts and misunderstandings would be solved pacifically without having to use any forceful and destructive means. So, Blacks and Whites need to reconcile for their common

prosperity. Both races need to be forgiven for they are all victims of a system which has involved them all unwillingly.

Forgiveness requires a powerful decision to forsake one's pride and hatred. Raybon thinks that in order to succeed in forgiving others, she ought to forgive herself, her family members, her history and finally white people (Raybon, 1997: 10). Considering her method, African Americans and the oppressed people in general should emulate her in order to achieve a veritable and complete forgiveness. Her method has a cathartic importance. Examining Raybon's self-forgiveness, I observe that it consists in accepting herself equally as a sinful person. Therefore, she also needs to be forgiven. So, forgiveness should be applied to oneself first, before being able to forgive others. Besides, Patricia decides to forgive racists because they are unconscious of their deeds. They delude themselves into "a false form of superiority that has left them in a pathological and schizophrenic state — somebody by now should've come up with a solution for them" (Raybon, 1997: 47). Sharing her view, I sustain that a schizophrenic should not be accountable for his/her behavior and deeds. Such people need absolution.

The prevailing antagonism between black and white races in America, South Africa and in the world over deserves to be fixed. Like belligerents, there should be a desire to put an end to this conflict which will never be won neither by Blacks nor Whites. It rather endangers more peace and therefore, their common prosperity. As a result, Raybon proposes a "racial truce" between Whites and Blacks (Raybon, 1997: 52). The sole solution to attain peace and reconciliation is to stop considering one another guilty. Both Whites and Blacks should transcend their racial pride. Furthermore, racial barriers should be broken, and racial troubles deserve to be settled pacifically (Raybon, 1997: 68).

While Raybon suggests self-forgiveness and love as antidotes to hatred, Barbara A. Elliott in her *Forgiveness Therapy* thinks that,

through increasing self-knowledge and self-acceptance in therapy, clients can grow in understanding and compassion and become prepared to extend forgiveness

to another who has harmed them. Accomplishing emotional forgiveness transforms the person from a victim who is still controlled by the offender into an independent participant in life (Barbara, 2011: 243).

Thus, in order to succeed in forgiving racists, African Americans should strive to know themselves and have compassion for their offenders as already stated. As Barbara puts it, forgiveness is a form of self-liberation from the oppressors' claws. Individuals who do not forgive remain slaves of their own hatred and their victimizer.

In order to give a tangible example of her desire to witness black and white races reconciled, in *My First White Friend*, Patricia set aside her hatred and managed to fall in love with a white boy (Raybon, 1997: 69). So, she has strived to cross the impassable line which has ever existed between her and white people. It is noteworthy through her act that, she has decided to follow the steps of some prominent personalities known for their forgiveness, nonviolence and reconciliation philosophy. These people are: Nelson Mandela, Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. In fact, Nelson Mandela was jailed unfairly by the white racists for 27 years in South Africa. When he was released from prison and was later elected President, the whole humanity supposed that he would retaliate against his former oppressors. Surprisingly, he forgave them and even collaborated with them for the prosperity of their country South Africa. Nelson Mandela is an embodiment of forgiveness. With regard to his battle to reconcile South Africans with themselves, without any hesitation Raybon considers him a holy person who should inspire humanity.

In America, Martin Luther King, Jr. is also a legendary example for his pacific struggles for equal civil rights. Aiming at reconciling his race with Whites', he adopted the nonviolent strategy which proved harmless but powerful. Any violent struggle would be harmful to themselves, and transform America into a horrible country jeopardizing their life. Considering Martin Luther King's nonviolence, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964.

Like Mandela and Luther King, Jr., Gandhi is an authentic advocate of nonviolence. According to Gandhi as Raybon paraphrases him, “the weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong” (Raybon, 1997: 68). Understandably, forgiveness requires strength. Forgiveness should not be seen as a sign of weakness but characterizes people of strong mind and spirit. Forgiveness stands as a powerful weapon which helps win and conquer the enemy without having to attack or retaliate violently. Alongside with Gandhi, I sustain that only weak people oppress others or would retaliate violently against their oppressors. Still, forgiveness never degrades but rather shows the grandeur of the person who forgives. Forgiving individuals are people who have surpassed or tamed their natural and animal impulses which lie in them. Naturally, every human being is haunted by the counter attack and retaliation spirit when they are offended. Visibly, it seems normal to practice the law of tit for tat. This rule aims at rendering oneself justice and often, violently. Unfortunately, it ends up transforming society into a horrible and cruel place where peace will never prevail.

As forgiveness is a powerful decision, Raybon insists that it requires power and elevates the person who practices it. Forgiveness soothes opponents psychologically and removes the heavy burden of hatred they carry as she writes:

I saw power in forgiveness, and the forgiveness in power (...) I could even arouse the higher natures of a few others, inspiring them to see hope and the beauty of reconciliation and to believe in their ability to evoke such healing. That is power. And it was like veil lifting, like scales falling from hardened, hopeless eyes. I saw forgiveness- as a healing impetus, a soothing balm... (Raybon, 1997: 16-17).

In the same line with Raybon, Tamera Jenkins hints that “forgiveness may be seen as a viable, alternative response to violence when compared to the feelings of anger, hatred, bitterness, and resentment commonly experienced by those affected by violent trauma” (Jenkins, 2012: 21). Thus, it is better for the offended to forgive than retaliate. In fact, vengeance harms the offended; it does not blossom them.

Still, it is in her unrelenting quest for forgiveness, unity and reconciliation between Whites and Blacks that Patricia decided to teach at an all-white university. Patricia's decision would impact positively her white students. It would help them forsake their stereotypes and belittlement of Blacks as she writes in the following passage:

I teach all days, indeed under this dark covering, and my students must penetrate that barrier in order to learn from me. They must, some of them, therefore reorder their thinking about people who look like me. And I must do the same for them. That is a racial milestone. Maybe even a miracle. That is why I teach white students (Raybon, 1997: 209).

Examining closely Patricia's decision to teach at this university, I uncover her unique objective. In fact, her foremost purpose is not to earn her living but to bring closer two races, Blacks and Whites. It would help them know better one another and drop their biases and eventually their antagonism that will pave the way for reconciliation.

Conclusion

The purpose of this work has been to examine the impacts of social issues such as hatred, forgiveness and reconciliation. The work has highlighted the causes of African Americans' hatred against Whites and has attempted to elaborate on how Raybon advocates forgiveness and reconciliation in her book. The work found African Americans' hatred against Whites as a response to various forms of injustice and discriminations they have been undergoing in America since the slavery era until today. However, the study has argued that their own hatred turned to be another source of their plight as it is the case with Patricia in *My First White Friend*.

The work also found that hatred and violence are not the best solutions to oppression. The research admits that love and nonviolence should be the antidotes to oppression. Still, this work has highlighted that forgiveness is

the first step toward reconciliation with its catharsis effects on those who embody it.

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