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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,

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Ligne éditoriale

Volume : La taille du manuscrit est comprise entre 4500 et 6000 mots.

Format: papier A4, **Police:** Times New Roman, **Taille:** 11,5, **Interligne** 1,15.

Ordre logique du texte

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

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

Références

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

plus, consultez ces normes sur Internet.

Présentation des notes référencées

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

La gestion des citations :

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

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

Résumé :

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

Résumé ou paraphrase :

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

Exemple de référence

Pour un livre

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

Pour un article tiré d'un ouvrage collectif

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

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

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

référence mère dont elle est consécutive. Exemple : *ibid.*, ou *ibidem*, p. x.

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

Typographie

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

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

Tableaux, schémas et illustrations

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

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

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

The Dent of Domestic Violence on Peace and Justice

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Abstract:

The aim of this study is to use the creative work of Andreas, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*, to shed light on the consequences of domestic violence in African communities, and how the collective grassroots respond to it in the attempt to effectively put an end to it. The study borrows from cultural studies' "commitment to an ethical evaluation of [...] society" and its feminist advocacy of agency of the active culture consumer. It finds that some institutions and individuals delay the end of domestic violence, which violates the rights of women and deprive them of peace.

Keywords: domestic violence, victim blaming, peace, justice, cultural studies, feminism, agency.

Résumé :

Cette étude analyse la représentation de la violence domestique dans *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* de Neshani Andreas. Elle démontre que la perception de la paix et de la justice telle que créée dans le corpus est une tentative de toucher du doigt les rôles que la société et les institutions religieuses jouent dans la vie des victimes, ainsi que de créer la paix dans la vie de ces derniers. L'étude fait emprunt à « l'engagement des études culturelles en faveur d'une évaluation éthique de la société [...] » et à son plaidoyer féministe en faveur de l'action du consommateur culturel actif. Elle a trouvé que certaines institutions et individus retardent la fin de la violence domestique, qui viole les droits des femmes et les prive de paix.

Mots clés : Violence domestique, accusation de la victime, paix, justice, études culturelles, féminisme, action.

Introduction

The controversial issue in Domestic Violence (DV) is that in response to it, some people believe it is morally wrong; however, most actions to stop it seem to echo a paradoxical response. Domestic violence has been

presented and discussed to have devastating consequences on the victims, ranging from physical wounds, post-traumatic disorders, and financial instability to even death. In a similar perspective, Antai's study on a group of Nigerian couples found that the controlling behavior of a husband is more likely to turn into abuse of the woman, "[t]his study indicated that controlling behavior by husband/partner was strongly associated with physical and sexual violence" (2011: 10). It is however worth noting that DV as discussed in a few critical works is a phenomenon that affect both men and women, even though women have been socially labelled as more susceptible to be the victims or the battered (Mulawa, Kajula, Yamanis, Balvanz, Kilonzo, and Maman 2018: 2).

In Andreas's *The purple Violet of Oshaantu*, Mee Kauna was subjugated to physical and psychological violence by her husband, Shange. Her children were also witnesses to this sort of violence and Kauna even lost a pregnancy while her husband brutally assaulted her and left her bleeding (Andreas, 2001). Yet, the characters in this fictional work have differently reacted to this violence, as very few condemned it while a larger group justified it using cultural and traditional expectations and institutions. One wonders how the victim herself reacted to her own predicament.

A few scholars such as Mahoney (1991), Shalleck (1997) and Schneider (2002) have argued that victims of domestic violence develop a sort of passivity and familiarity with the abuse they experience that they find it difficult to leave the abusive relationship or actively stand their ground. The victim's reaction to her own abusive marriage is definitely Neshani Andreas's concern in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*; yet contrary to the passivity observed with some victims in such abusive relationships, the character of Mee Kauna, after what seemed to be her inability to leave her dysfunctional husband, was able to mark and stand her ground by refusing to comply with the cultural and traditional expectations that demand a widow cries and mourns her deceased husband. One may wonder why this issue of domestic violence is important when the world is facing one of its most dreaded and challenging pandemic, the Covid19. It is evident that with its confinement necessity and its change of what

normalcy used to be, Covid-19 is creating more domestic violence victims than ever, consequently threatening peace in families and creating instabilities and injustice in societies. However, while this paper does not intend to discuss Covid-19 and domestic violence, it shows the current state of issues it represents in our communities and the necessity not to overlook it. Through *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* and with the purpose to shed light on the consequences of domestic violence in African communities and the responses of the grassroots to such violence in the attempt to effectively put an end to it, this paper argues that despite the unbecoming nature of domestic violence and its devastating effects, a victim's protesting response becomes an opportunity for victim-blaming in the name of culture and traditions, a social injustice that needs to be addressed to establish peace and justice for the victims and their community.

The theoretical framework and methodology takes into account the notion of hegemony and agency in cultural studies. It uses an interdisciplinary approach to discuss domestic violence in African context, mainly due to the gap in African literature research on the issue of domestic violence. Cultural hegemony has by definition "[...] facilitated analysis of the ways in which subordinate groups actively resist and respond to political and economic domination" (Cultural Studies, para 5) Applying this notion of hegemony to our context suggests that one considers the effect of control and domination that the perpetrator of Domestic Violence (DV) uses on their victim; this also calls for analyzing the active response and critical mind of the subordinate or the victim, hence their consciousness and the agency they exercise to overturn their condition. The topic on domestic violence is better dealt with in the light of this theory because the cultural hegemony theory "opened up fruitful work exploring agency, a theoretical outlook which reinserted the active, critical capacities of all people" (Cultural Studies, para 6), Two main axes govern this paper, the devastating effects of domestic violence on Kauna and the victim blaming amidst the active response of the victim.

1. The Roots and Horrors of Domestic Violence: Life in an Abusive Relationship

In “Where’s Peace in this Movement,” Finley (2010) argued that oppression was not created only through norms and values where some were oppressed and others were the oppressors, but also through “structures, institutions and methods” (Finley, 2010: 59). In other words, cultural norms and values were not the only roots of oppression, but oppression was also created and sustained through institutions, structures and methods. And, domestic violence (DV), a method of oppression has usually been to maintain the patriarchal rule of society; it was sustained through the control one partner had over the other and in most cases, the male partner’s control over the female (Kelly, 2011; Catalano, 2007). However, it is worth conceding, as Zacarias, Macassa, Soares, Svanström, J. Antai (2012: 492) have pointed out that women could also be perpetrators of violence, in which case, some few studies had related such female perpetration of violence to mental health issues. Reflecting on the causes of domestic violence, Huang and Gunn (2001: 791) argued that, “[f]raming partner violence as a feminist issue, activists stressed that violence against women was due to the patriarchal and sexist values of American society.” In the same feminist framework, and in discussing the historical root of DV in Western culture, hooks (1984: 118) established a relationship between patriarchy and domestic violence and stated that domestic violence was,

inextricably linked to all acts of violence in this society that occur between the powerful and the powerless, the dominant and the dominated. While male supremacy encourages the use of abusive force to maintain male domination of women, it is the Western philosophical notion of hierarchical rule and coercive authority that is the root cause of violence against women, of adult violence against children, of all violence between those who dominate and those who are dominated.

This passage showed that the rule of thumb was approved by patriarchy and conferred authority, control and power to men, hence a social system of binary opposition wherein men ruled and women were ruled. hooks (1984) by exposing the root of domestic violence hinted to the fact that

all types of violence stemmed from the power structure existing in a patriarchal society. In the same regard, Huang and Gunn (2001: 791) stated that “violence against women was due to the patriarchal and sexist values of American society,” consequently establishing correlation between domestic violence and patriarchy. This correlation is seen in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* through the violence the male character, Shange, exercises on his wife, Kauna, and how a great part of the Oshaantu community justifies Shange’s unfaithfulness and abusive behavior (Andreas, 2001: 3). Gender based differences in patriarchal societies entail discrimination of the sexes and the privilege given to men. Thus, the bestowal of power and control to men over women in a society like Oshaantu leaves the women powerless, controlled, and worse without any rights to think and decide, judge and act for themselves. Probing the issue of the origin or the cause of domestic violence, whether in the real life of African society or specifically in the fictional community of Oshaantu, would come down to asking whether the African society or the Oshaantu community has always had a patriarchal dominated culture, or whether patriarchy has been introduced to it. The answer to this question might raise a whole lot of controversial answers on the origin of patriarchy in African culture. In the context of the fictional work, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*, the author presented us with perspectives from not only the patriarchal system in Oshaantu, but also from the religious aspect, specifically Christianity, which has been historically discussed as having been introduced to African culture by western colonizers.

Whether it is patriarchal cultural influence, societal learning and exposure, or biblical interpretation of marriage and its expectations in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*, the reader has witnessed the devastating effects of domestic abuse on Kauna, ranging from physical injuries, death of her baby, health issues and psychological trauma (Andreas, 2001: 49; 58-61). The psychological traumas on her children were not the least to mention (Andreas, 2001: 58-59). The Nigerian author D. Antai (2011: 9) noted,

Evidence shows that about half of the women in abusive relationships sustain physical injuries [...]; these injuries

vary from minor to life threatening injuries. Minor injuries (scratches, bruises, welts) are most common, whilst others, such as lacerations, knife wounds, broken bones, head injuries, broken teeth, burns, and bullet wounds occur with decreasing frequency.

Through this, Antai showed that domestic violence oftentimes led to physical abuse to even death. In the case of Kauna, she was subject from minor to severe physical bruises to the death of her unborn baby. After another horrible beating from her husband, Kauna's bruises and wounds left scars that would remind her of "the horror of physical abuse" (Andreas, 2001: 64). The reality of domestic violence in African societies goes beyond mere creative stories and is common more than one would think. Thus, D. Antai (2011: 6) established a link between Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and traumatic physical health consequences among 2008 Nigerian demographic women, aged 15 to 49 years old. This case study though conducted on Nigerian women in 2008, shed light on the prevalence of domestic violence and its physical health consequences on African women, even today. Besides the horrors of physical abuse, the psychological trauma constituted lifetime health problems that affected the reasoning and common sense of the domestic violence victims. As a matter of fact, the victim Kauna could be said to have been psychologically traumatized as she came to view marriage and domestic abuse as the normal way all marriages should function. Thus, Kauna assumed every husband beat their wife, and so the opposite was beyond her understanding,

Usually, he beats me for nothing, but this time I am not sure if it was for nothing. I did something. I am just not sure what. [...] Then she [Kauna] looked at me as if she had suddenly remembered something. 'Your husband doesn't beat you?' 'Nooo,' I answered, totally surprised by her question. 'Has never beaten you?' 'Has never beaten me.' 'Not even a slap?' 'Not even a slap.' 'You are lucky,' she said, giving me one look and turning her back on me to face the mud wall (Andreas, 2001: 64-65).

This passage highlighted the instant where Kauna's perception and understanding of marriage was flawed by the abusive relationship she was in. To her, it was strange to hear that there existed a functional marriage, like that of her best friend Mee Ali, where no beating and no slapping occurred. Through this passage, we could also conclude that Kauna was traumatized to the extent that she has come to espouse her community's benevolent sexist justification of domestic violence. Thus, she justified the beating her husband gave her to "something" she has done, yet she was not sure what exactly she did (Andreas, 2001: 64). Through this analysis, it is incumbent we all note that nothing justifies domestic violence, even if the victim does something.

There are civilized and peaceful ways to respond to and solve any domestic misunderstandings. The author took the opportunity through this dialogue between Mee Ali and Mee Kauna to bring the reader's attention to the fact that it was not a favor to a woman to be fairly treated by her husband whether she was right or wrong, or whether she was from a low or high class. In fact, as one could recollect from the following lines, it should be the norm for a partner to fairly and lovely treat their counterpart, "Yes, Michael is a good man and I am grateful for that. I just don't know what people want me to do. Kneel down at his feet and say, 'Thank you, Michael, for marrying a low class'? I am not lucky, I simply do not deserve to be treated like a filthy animal" (Andreas, 2001: 65). Through these words, the author drew our attention to the abnormal view society laid on a marriage in which the man behaved well and appeared to be outside the so said gender norms society set up between a man and a woman. It is obvious the Oshaantu society didn't see it as the norm when Michael was respectful and loving towards Mee Ali. It doesn't see it normal for a high class man as Michael to marry a low class as Mee Ali. It was thus unfortunate to see that society created cultural and religious discriminations that favored abuse of women in relationships, and also expected that class discriminations perpetrate such abusive behavior against women. It is however important to note the irony the author used by having Mee Kauna—a high class woman—in an abusive and dysfunctional marriage, and Mee Ali—a low class woman—in a happy and functional marriage. This is a critique against the ideology

of class discrimination in marital relationships, particularly towards women. This study thus concludes that society's view of social class discrimination in marital relationship constitutes another root cause to abuse in marriages; and the example of the cast system in Senegalese culture, better represented in Mariama Ba's *So Long a Letter*, is a good example of this (Ba, 1979 ; and Tamari, 1991).

Besides the physical and mental trauma of domestic violence in Neshani Andreas' work, there were other consequences, such as depression and anxiety (Zacarias et al. 2012), sexual violence (A. K. Saha, A. Saha 2017), among many others, that domestic violence victims in this narrative experienced. Domestic violence causes can thus vary from patriarchal beliefs, institutions and practices, as is the case in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*, to socio-economic conditions of the women themselves as argued by some critics such as D.E. Antai, J.B. Antai (2008) and A. K. Saha, A. Saha (2017).

2. Literary Construction of Societal Paradox: Victim Voice versus Victim Blaming

Society tends to blame victims of domestic violence, especially when the victim threatens to leave or raise their voice, be it to complain or denounce the abusive man in her life. Societal paradox in matters of gender and particularly in regard to domestic violence have made of Kauna a blamed victim. Society blames her not because she was the one who abused her husband, but on the basis of her gender, her wifehood, and the traditional and religious expectations which required that she never breaks her marital vows. Additionally, the Oshaantu community blamed Kauna because of her refusal to cry and mourn her deceased abusive husband. Despite all the mental and physical abuse the late Shange inflicted on Kauna, and despite the knowledge of her family and friends about the violence she was victim of, even her own mother was shocked that she was not crying. This led her people to conclude that Kauna was offending her people and her customs,

‘[...] Ali told me they [Kauna’s in-laws] are angry because I am not crying ...’ ‘You are not?’ the two women called out almost simultaneously.
 ‘shhh,’ Kauna said. ‘No, I am not crying ...’
 ‘No, no, no. you must cry,’ her mother said firmly. [...] ‘This is dangerous, you know,’ Mee Fennie said again.
 [...] Mee Maria [Kauna’s mother] did not say another word. It was hard to tell if she was shocked, surprised or angry with her daughter (Andreas, 2001: 123).

Valor-Segura, Expósito, and Moya (2011) in “Victim Blaming and Exoneration of the Perpetrator in Domestic Violence” alluded to the fact victim blaming often occurred because of Just World Beliefs² and ideologies such as sexist legitimization of violence towards women. In the context of *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*, Mee Maita justified the fact that Shange could go around and flaunt his unfaithfulness with his mistress in front of the whole village and his wife because such a practice and behavior of a man is justified in their culture (Andreas, 2001 : 4). On the other hand, Mee Kauna the wife had no right to even complain because the moment she did, her community negatively questioned whether the violence inflicted upon her was not a result of her failure to fulfill her traditional gender roles. Oshaantu community’s reaction on this case is what Glick and Fiske (1996) called benevolent sexism.

Glick and Fiske (1996: 197) developed a theory of Ambivalent Sexism that connoted Hostile Sexism (HS) and Benevolent Sexism (BS), “Hostile Sexism legitimates violence against women who challenge the power of men [...]” and “Benevolent sexism [...] legitimates negative reactions towards women who do not fulfill traditional gender role expectations” (qtd in Valor-Segura, Expósito, & Moya, 2011). The benevolent sexism is indeed seen in Andreas’s depiction of the village of Oshaantu through its gender views and traditional expectations. Victim blaming was consequently the author’s criticism of gender views and traditional expectations and how that compromised what true justice was,

² “Belief in a Just World is an ideology according to which individuals or groups of people get what they deserve” (Lerner, qtd in Valor-Segura, Expósito, & Moya, 2011).

since the majority of people blamed the victim Kauna instead of blaming the perpetrator of the abuse. They attributed the faults to Kauna's behavior and or to her failure to abide by the "just world beliefs" of their community. The case of Mee Sara in the same narrative of Neshani Andreas was an additional example as she was blamed for the death of her husband Victor, who through his promiscuous behavior and abuse, contracted Aids and died. Victor's family stripped Mee Sara off all her husband's belongings, except the black mourning clothes she was wearing at the time (Andreas, 2001: 102-108). Just like Sara, Kauna's in-laws deprived her of any right of inheritance of her late husband's belongings in spite of the fact that she had children to take care of. Such practices are unfortunately often approved and justified in patriarchal worldview and beliefs.

In *The Purple Violet*, victim blaming went beyond the world just beliefs and the benevolent sexist legitimization of domestic violence to emanate from institutional religious beliefs and expectations. The community of Oshaantu in majority believed that Kauna deserved her fate and suffering because that's what marriage was about (Andreas, 2001: 4). Mee Maita, a female elder from church along with Kauna's mother argued for marriage as being for better and worse with no possibility of breaking that vow no matter what the situation. Out of the various scenes depicted in the novel, one could depict three different categories of victim blaming: for one, Mee Maita believed that it was legitimate for marriage to be "one miserable lifelong experience [...] It is the way of the world ... This is what marriage is all about. This is the real world" (Andreas, 2001: 4). This first category relates to the just world belief discussed by Valor-Segura, Expósito, and Moya (2011). Secondly, the reader witnessed a benevolent sexist view of marriage and domestic violence with negative reactions towards victims of abuse who were thought to have failed in their gender roles expectations and consequently responsible for their fate (Andreas, 2001: 98-108; 123). The third category of victim blaming lied in the strict obedience to biblical and canonical marriage expectations regardless of domestic violence. Mee Maita—a female church elder and Sunday school teacher, as well as Kauna's mother—a church minister's wife, had a "you got in, then stay in it till death do you part" attitude

despite the beatings and betrayals Kauna was victim of. Other statements such as, “you have promised to stay in this thing till death do you part” (Andreas, 2001: 4) equally reinforced this view. Kauna’s mother echoed a similar response to her daughter when Kauna sought advice to leave her abusive marriage, “[y]ou have made a promise before Him [God] and the whole congregation to love and cherish your husband till death do you part. You cannot break your word now” (Andreas, 2001: 67). A close analysis of these responses led one to wonder if the promise or the vow Kauna took before God to be with Shange sealed her fate and held her responsible for any domestic abuse she was victim of.

There is no doubt marriage is sacred and having God as a witness to one’s union should be a commitment of love for life; yet, we can argue that when a partner’s life and wellbeing are at stake, an alternative view of such expectations and rules is necessary especially if the violence perpetrator is not open to counseling and or change. The victim blaming attitude of the Oshaantu community towards Kauna is illustrative of Valor-Segura, Expósito, and Moya (2011: 200)’s study which concluded that as far as victim blaming is concerned, “[h]igher scores indicated that the consequences of the aggression were minimized and the woman in the situation was blamed for the aggression.” Thus, Kauna in spite of all the physical and emotional wounds her husband inflicted on her, her community and families blamed her not only for the violence she is victim of, but also for the death of her husband whose death was clearly indicative of a heart attack, after a night out in his concubine’s house.

Additionally, victim blaming in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* went as far as to deny the victim the right to complain, divorce or leave an abusive relationship. Moreover Kauna had no right to decide how she wanted to behave as a widow. She was expected to passively accept her community’s traditions of crying for a deceased husband despite how abusive the husband had been. For not being the prototype of a passive victim³, Kauna ended up becoming a blamed victim to her community.

³ Ursula Kelly (2011) writes about the so-said passive victims, “[t]he theory of learned helplessness was applied in the late 1980s to battered women; as a result, abused women were considered deficient in motivational, cognitive and emotional

As finally she demarcated herself from the mass of passive domestic violence victims, Kauna created her new identity, that of a proactive victim, a completely different identity that her community would attribute to victims of domestic violence.

The expectation that a woman should passively take any injustice in the name of male privilege and gendered expectations, has laid the foundation to assume that most abused women are passive partakers in their abuse, yet Kauna was different; she became the proactive victim endowed with an agency—the one to protest, through a refusal, against the customs of her people. On the one hand, those customs could be viewed as oppressors and other forms of abuse that Kauna decided not to comply with. The agency and proactivity used by some abused women is shown through Mee Kauna's response to her abusive husband's death,

‘Well, I’m sorry you all feel uncomfortable about my behaviour, but I cannot pretend,’ she shook her head. ‘I cannot lie to myself and to everybody else in this village. They all know how I was treated in my marriage. Why should I cry? For what? For my broken ribs? For my baby, the one he killed inside me while beating me? For cheating on me so publicly? For what? For what, Ali? (Andreas, 2001: 49)

Through the above lines, the reader witnessed a different approach to violence of an abused woman—her responsiveness and proactivity—contrary to how society would present or expect such a victim to be. In her statement, Kauna blamed her community for having been silent and indifferent. Contrary to her community's reactions, Kauna shows that honesty to self and to others is better than false pretense and hypocrisy. Kauna listed some of the dreadful abuses done to her, and asked to find one reason that her community could possibly give her that would justify her crying and mourning of her husband. In other words, Kauna insinuates that one normally cries for a dear beloved, for someone dear to

skills,” but Mee Kauna is finally able to break her silence and helplessness and to create a category of “Proactive Battered Woman” (PBW) by refusing to cry and mourn her deceased abusive husband Shange.

one's heart. Yet, the gradation of all her pains leaves her with not even a single reason to go through the performance of her role as a widower. Her choice and personal decision, because they were against traditional customs of mourning in her community, led to the blame of not only being an embarrassment for the family but also for being responsible for the death of her estranged husband. Victim blaming in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* consequently rested upon the community's beliefs in gendered disparities and male privilege as well as the preservation of traditional customs and practices.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study has been to shed light on the consequences of domestic violence in African communities and the responses of society to such violence in the attempt to effectively put an end to it and establish peace and justice for the victims. This also has been to draw attention to the devastating effects of domestic violence that usually go unnoticed and silent in our midst. The work has shed light on Neshani Andreas's take on domestic violence in Namibian society from the different articulations developed in its unfolding: firstly, the roots of domestic violence and its effect on the victim, touching particularly on patriarchal as well as biblical norms, institutions, and societal structures that work to perpetrate such violence in relationships and engender devastating effects on the victim, and these effects range from physical injuries, health issues, psychological trauma, and death. Secondly, we have shown how through literary construction, the author has shown the paradox in society's response to domestic violence as it blamed the victim and justified the abuser, especially when the victim has posited herself to be outspoken and active, contrary to the passive victim that society expected. The paradox was also extended to the religious take on violence in marriages and its approach to resolutions of such violence, all the while pointing out the world just beliefs and the benevolent sexist legitimization of domestic violence.

The study has found that domestic violence is still an acute problem to solve in the male female relationships. Neshani Andreas's position on

domestic violence (DV), through her characterization of both female and male characters in the *Purple Violet of Oshaantu* has also proved that society is responsible for the vulnerability of women through the ways these women were taught to cope with this injustice. From this study, it has resulted that there was an intrinsic link between the cause of domestic violence and patriarchal system of ruling a society. It has also been established that religion, in this case Christianity, sometimes contributed to the perpetration of domestic violence basically through its view and interpretation of marriage vows as unbreakable and the submission of the wife to her husband. Domestic violence was also understood to originate from social class discrimination, yet through irony, the author downplayed this belief by showing that domestic violence can also occur in relationships regardless of the social class. From the discussion of the victim blaming attitude in the text, it has come out that society usually adopts an attitude of victim blaming namely because of the just world beliefs and benevolent sexist systems inherent to its culture; consequently the failure to abide to the beliefs of such a society resulted in a sexist justification of domestic violence. It was also shown that institutional religious beliefs and expectations also played a role in victim blaming. In a nutshell, victim blaming in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* derived from the community's beliefs in gendered disparities and male privilege as well as the preservation of traditional and religious customs and practices. Conclusively, it is incumbent to all to note that nothing justifies domestic violence, whether the victim does something or not, as there are civilized and peaceful ways to respond to and solve any domestic misunderstandings. It is also important to devise ways to bring justice and peace to victims of domestic violence, and this paper calls for future research in that regard.

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