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Editorial

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

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

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

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

Lomé, le 20 octobre 2020.

Le directeur de publication,

Professeur Atafèr PEWISSI,

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Ligne éditoriale

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

Ordre logique du texte

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

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

Références

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

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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.

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LITTERATURE

Literary Appraisal of Superstitious Beliefs in Amma Darko's *Faceless*

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Abstract

This study aims at making explicit the devastating nature of superstitious beliefs through Amma Darko's *Faceless*. Superstitious beliefs, based on mere assumptions, constitute a serious problem in the African society since they generally cause great havoc to innocent people that are falsely accused. The methodological approach used is documentary research which includes internet sources and library sources, books, theses and doctoral dissertations. The study has found that superstitious beliefs cripple African communities insofar as they are usually false beliefs. The literary theory used in this research work is the archetypal critical approach through examining narrative devices, character types, myths, dreams, and even ritualised modes of social behaviour to generate potential meanings.

Keywords: Superstitious beliefs, assumptions, great havoc, false beliefs.

Résumé

La présente étude vise à montrer la nature dévastatrice des superstitions dans *Faceless* d'Amma Darko. Les croyances, basées sur de simples suppositions, constituent un sérieux problème dans la société africaine étant donné qu'elles causent généralement de dommages aux victimes innocentes. L'approche méthodologique utilisée dans cette étude est la recherche documentaire qui englobe les sources d'internet, et les sources de bibliothèque, les livres, mémoires et thèses de doctorat. L'étude a découvert que les superstitions déstabilisent les communautés africaines dans la mesure où elles sont habituellement de fausses croyances. La théorie littéraire utilisée est l'approche critique archétypique axée sur l'analyse narrative des types de personnages, des mythes, des rêves, et même des modes ritualisés de comportement sociaux pour en dégager de potentielles significations.

Mots-clés : Croyances superstitieuses, suppositions, grands dégâts, fausses croyances.

Introduction

This research discusses superstitious beliefs and shows how superstitious believers tailor their actions based on the different supernatural phenomena that occur in their lives. They are unable to find an explanation to those supernatural phenomena and indulge in dangerous actions. Although there is no culture without impending superstitious beliefs, they constitute a serious problem which hinders the African society, hence the necessity to examine them through the novel under study so as to unveil their ins and outs. The purpose of this study is to explore, identify and reveal some aspects of superstitious beliefs as they occur in the novel under study. It is also to examine critically and to expose the factors responsible for superstitious beliefs reaching out to sensitising Africans on the necessity to avoid indulging in superstitious beliefs which are harmful.

The theoretical framework of this work is the archetypical critical approach. In this perspective, the study examines narrative devices, character types, myths, dreams, and even ritualised modes of social behaviour to generate potential meanings. The methodology used falls on documentary research which includes internet sources and books, theses and doctoral dissertations. The pertinence of the theory and methods that I have chosen to use lies in the fact that they will induce an understanding of the theme under study and a literary appraisal of superstitious beliefs through a study of the chosen novel. The paper is divided into three aspects, namely superstitious beliefs and religion, causes and manifestations of superstitious beliefs, and the effects of these superstitious beliefs on individuals and on society.

1. Superstitious Beliefs and Religion

Superstitious beliefs point to to acceptance to abide by supernatural forces, at times beyond understanding, given thatt believers mostly cannot explain their claims. They automatically ascribe such events to supernatural forces although they can be natural in fact. Hernandez et al.

as quoted by Chinchanchockchai et al. (2008: 4-5) suggests a framework that identifies two types of superstitious beliefs – proactive and passive. Proactive superstitious beliefs allow individuals to seek control over the situations around them. In contrast, passive superstitious beliefs involve circumstances in which the outcomes lie beyond their control. According to Umoh (2013: 32), “Superstition can [...] be conceived as the belief that particular events happen in a way that cannot be explained by reason or science.” “Basically, superstitions are the beliefs which are not at all backed up by science, and far from rationality” (Naik, 2010, quoted by Umoh, 2013: 32). In the same vein, Rahner and Vorgrimler (1970: 458) opine that: a “Superstitious belief is an irrational cult of God appearing in a pattern unworthy of God, expressing confidence in formulae and rites which attempt to force God’s assistance in order to predict the future. As such, it is a semi-religious veneration of real or imaginary powers in the place of God.” Most often, superstition constitutes a form of degeneration of religion. It involves practices of dubious value and dubious authenticity, by means of which practitioners may make their living.

Ancient Romans identified superstitious beliefs with all forms of exaggerated or extravagant religion. Christian theology recognises in it the fact of attaching a religious significance to what should not or in fact does not merit such a regard. Most events, even those with possible ordinary rational explanations with no mysterious nuances, are attributed to spiritual malevolent forces. That is exactly the issue that Umoh (2012: 5) raises when he says: “According to the Africans’ viewpoint, people do not die; they are killed. [...] Superstitious belief is an archaic manner of viewing the universe and of interpreting its occurrences. It is prescientific, unscientific and anti-scientific in character.” Umoh’s stand is a clear indication that people may die a natural death, contrary to the Africans’ viewpoint on death.

Superstitious believers would obviously prefer mysterious or semi magical explanations to scientific ones, even in cases where the latter are the most obvious and the most plausible. The superstitious person fulfills this attitude sometimes assigned to deism: ‘Credo quia absurdum’ meaning ‘I believe because it

is absurd' (Umoh, 2009: 71).

Umoh contends that "one's entire personal identity and destiny are contained in one's name. Anyone who knows my name has me at his beck; he can do anything he wants with my person, for my name is my personhood" (71). Umoh's stance is questionable insofar as it lacks evidence.

2. Causes and Manifestations of Superstitious Beliefs

The myth theory as described by Malinowski (1969, cited in Cohen, 1969: 337) is very significant for this study:

Now myths are not really errors; they are certainly *not* like the errors in which science abounds: for they always contain reference to some objects and events which could not possibly exist and occur. This being so, there are no statements of observations which could test them scientifically. They are not errors, for their truth, for those who accept them, is preserved for eternity.

The above quotation can be applied to superstitious beliefs accepted by people who think that they are not errors. For such people, they are not absurd; on the contrary, they are as true as the gospel. They see nothing wrong in indulging in them and consequently become addicted to them. Superstitious beliefs occur in *Faceless* through a number of characters, particularly the unfortunate ones. This occurs in the way they react to the unnatural or abnormal things that happen in their lives. However, the contextual functions associated with the way the superstitious phenomenon occurs are related to the fact that they are generally mere coincidences. In other words, they have to do with a remarkable concurrence of events or circumstances without apparent causal connection. For instance, Essie's mother, Kabria, sometimes wonders if Essie's strange ways are a result of her failure to perform some traditional rites following the girl's birth at midnight. The narrator tells us about it as follows:

Essie was born at midnight. Kabria ignored the age-old superstition that alleged midnight births grew up with their feet everywhere else but firmly on the ground. She should otherwise

have performed a rite like touching Essie's tiny feet three times on hot sand, three days following her birth, to nullify the dreamer jinx. Nine years on, and she couldn't help but wonder at times if maybe, just maybe, she had not underestimated that notion after all, especially when it came to some of the methods of timings of Essie's financial and material demands. These normally followed a certain peculiar pattern (p. 11).

The foregoing quotation reveals that Kabria sinks into superstitious beliefs related to the fact that midnight born babies should go through a rite three days after their birth. As it is an old age superstition, she thinks that her failure to perform that rite has something to do with the awkwardness of some of the the girl's timings of financial and material demands. The archetypical critical approach that is the theory used in this study is proved at this level insofar as the ritualised mode of social behaviour which prevails in the community causes Kabria to indulge in superstition. Its relevance lies in the fact that the ritual performed for midnight born babies is related to myth which is also part and parcel of the theory. Through this, the novelist intends to show that some superstitious beliefs exist in African communities from times immemorial and cannot be easily uprooted. According to Umoh (2013: 32):

Superstitious believers obviously would prefer mysterious or semi magical explanations to scientific ones, even in cases where the latter are the most obvious and the most plausible. The superstitious belief fulfills this attitude sometimes assigned to deism: 'Credo quia absurdum' – 'I believe because it is absurd.' This means that the only reason persuading one to embrace a particular creed is because the said creed is far from being clear and meaningful.

Umoh's stand in the above excerpt shows that superstitious beliefs are absurd insofar as people cannot explain them. In the novel context, the absurdity remains with circumstances whereby superstitious people believe in superstition because they have no alternative. As such, they become victims of ignorance. As an archetypal character, Maa Tsuru appears as the first victim of superstitious beliefs in the novel. This is

justified by the fact that she is considered as a cursed woman in her community. Naa Yomo recounts the scene which has led to the curse Maa Tsuru is crying about as follows:

You see, when Tsuru's mother picked seed with her, the young man responsible, that is Tsuru's father, denied the pregnancy. Worse still, he insisted he had never ever seen Tsuru's mother ever in his life. [...]. So for each single day that she carried Tsuru in her womb, she levelled a vicious insult at the young man. As the pregnancy progressed, so too the viciousness of her insults. [...]. (p. 92).

The foregoing quotation unveils the root cause of the curse which haunts Ma Tsuru. The curse originates from her own mother (Tsuru's mother) who seeks to punish the irresponsible young man that impregnates her and viciously turns to deny the pregnancy. Superstition stands here as a regulator of misconducts. It is fueled by the fact that the boy pretends not to have ever seen the very woman whom he has impregnated. Through this incident which has led to the curse of the young man and his descendants, the writer intends to show that men should face their responsibilities once they impregnate their female partners. The fear for the supernatural beings and their intervention to punish the defaulters are enough conditions to set moral upright in the created community. Thus, the novelist reveals the punishment awaiting irresponsible men like the boy in the novel as a call for justice to function well. Strictly speaking, though Maa Tsuru is innocent in that matter, the curse is on her and on her descendants as well.

Referring to the hatred that Tsuru's mother feels, Naa Yomo adds:

'All this pain,' [...], 'and all Tsuru's mother could think of was her hatred for the young man who has dishonoured her before she could be purified and properly initiated into womanhood. [...]. It was like she was being eaten alive by something. If you ask me, I think that in a way, she was. By the hatred (p. 93).

In this excerpt, Tsuru's mother feels dishonoured because of the irresponsible young man's behaviour. As a result, she hates him because by denying the pregnancy, he denies her purification and proper initiation

into womanhood. This initiation is a key element in any girl's life in the *Ga* community depicted in the novel. Since she has become pregnant before initiation, her potential participation in it is solely dependent on the young man's recognition of the pregnancy. While denying it, he has ruined her life, which is an unforgiveable act of offence. So, there is no wonder why she hates him so much and ends up cursing him, together with his descendants. Darko thus shows the importance of girls' initiation into womanhood in the *Ga* community and the consequences inherent in any man's obstruction to its fulfilment. Maa Tsuru's predicament is the consequence inherent in his father's obstruction to her mother's initiation into womanhood. Naa Yomo expatiates further on the reason why Ma Tsuru thinks that she is a cursed woman as follows:

When the baby's shoulder burst through her and tore to shreds the lining of her womanhood, the curse was on her lips. She was fading away, but wasn't going to go without a legacy. The cord was still uncut when she yelled lasting curses on her lover and his descendants after him, to suffer in more ways and in more forms than he had made her suffer. Someone shouted that she was dying. I cried that she should be made to undo the curse first. But it was too late. She lay there dead, while they took the child away. The child with no mother and whose father and his lineage had just been cursed. A child cursed by her own mother (pp. 93-94).

The above quotation unveils the fact that Tsuru's mother sticks to her hatred despite her impending death. She wants to die with a legacy by making sure that the young man and his descendants pay for what he has done to her. So, the lasting curses she has yelled on her lover and his descendants while the umbilical cord is still uncut meaning that the curses have surely affected Maa Tsuru. Because the cord is uncut at the right moment when Tsuru's mother has yelled the lasting curses before dying, the child is bound to carry the curses which are meant for her father and his lineage.

Rather than persevering in order to get a job, Kwei ascribes his inability to the fact that he lives with Maa Tsuru who is carrying his fourth child. He thinks that he is affected by the curse, which is a pure superstitious

belief. This belief affects the narrative by disguising Kwei's inability to get a job. His mother plays ball and pleads with him to stay away from the cursed woman in these terms:

Twice in the past, I woke up in the morning and you were gone. This time, it is I asking you to go. Go! Kwei, go! Go far away from here. The number 'five' has always been in conflict with the spirit of this family. She is carrying your fourth child. Have you noticed? I shall not sit down idly and watch you go on to make fifth child with her. I shall not allow you to bring such calamity to bear on this family. So go away. It is the only way to keep you [away] from her. Go away. And this time, please, stay away for good. For the sake of us all (p. 126).

Through this quotation, the writer shows how mother-son relationship deteriorates because of superstitious beliefs. Kwei's mother's plea to him to go away once more is a token that she is really fed up with the situation she has endured for so long. She sees no other alternative but order him to go away so that the family can live in peace. So, the mother-son relationship has deteriorated and tends to give way to an unusual hatred between mother and son. Kwei's mother even equates his son's behaviour to a calamity which is befalling the family. The ritualised modes of social behaviour that generate potential meanings are one aspect of the theory that can be proved here. In her intuition, it is better to prevent Kwei from living maritally with Maa Tsuru than wait till the situation gets worse, since prevention is better than cure. Naa Yomo unveils:

Two superstitious swords crossed paths. A cursed woman and the number five? It was time to escape. He had done enough harm to himself already. He had bedevilled his family enough through mixing blood four whole times with Maa Tsuru. Five times would be provoking the spirits of his family. It would be throwing a challenge to them to prove their potency. Doom would befall them all (p. 126).

In the above-mentioned excerpt, Naa Yomo reveals that Kwei's mother considers his relation with Maa Tsuru as an act of deviance which may provoke the wrath of ancestral spirits. Because of the curse, people look

down upon her and her children as ‘pariahs or outcasts’ and are keen on ostracising them. For instance, when Onko goes to the jujuman to know the causes of the recent problems undermining his welding business, the jujuman attributes them to his sleeping with Baby T, the daughter of the cursed woman. In the created world of superstition, nothing bad happens unless it is caused by an enemy. The narrator tells us about the way the jujuman has diagnosed Onko’s predicament in these terms:

The jujuman did not, even if for the sake of sheer politeness, attempt to hide that he knew clip and clear the reasons for Onko’s business woes. So wouldn’t it have been better and more prudent for him to have advised Onko to go and appease Baby T’s soul inside her violated body and to seek the forgiveness of the gods? Couldn’t he have advised Onko to right the wrong he had done, in the physical too? Shouldn’t he have asked Onko to seek Baby T’s forgiveness and help somehow his own self to deal with the root of his unhealthy desire? [...]. Money can go on changing hands to silence the young, often poor victims and their families. What cannot be silenced and hushed and controlled, are people’s attitudes and reactions to the defiler (p. 184).

The foregoing quotation unveils the reasons why the jujuman has opted to help Onko overcome his business woes. The narrator is therefore right when he says: “In seeking the jujuman’s intervention to revamp his business, Onko sought an impracticable solution to a practicable problem. The crafty jujuman knew and understood that line of the game” (p. 184). The narrator relates what the jujuman has found out as the root cause of Onko’s business woes:

He gave Onko what Onko rather unreasonably, but sadly, truly wanted, after listening carefully to Onko’s narration to what Onko claimed he suspected to be the cause of his business woes which was that the girl he defiled, was the daughter of a cursed woman. The jujuman, the moment he became privy to this information, wasted no time at all in prescribing the requirements to diffuse what he immediately diagnosed to be a mix up of Onko’s good blood with that of Baby T’s polluted and cursed blood (p. 185).

Just as a medical doctor diagnoses his patients' illnesses, jujumen also diagnose their customers' problems. That is why the jujuman, as revealed in the above excerpt, has immediately and systematically diagnosed Onko's problem in order to settle it. However, not all the items jujumen demand are prices paid for the resolution of their customers' problems. So, superstitious beliefs lead people to jujumen who often deceive them. He orders Onko to get the victim's pubic hair for expelling a supposed curse he has attracted by having sexual relations with a cursed girl. The novel reveals that apart from Baby T's pubic hair, the jujuman:

[...] gave Onko his list. It includes four bottles of schnapps, two of which had to be Heinekens schnapps, made in Holland. Two of the deities to be consulted, he explained, had developed the singular taste for that particular brand of foreign schnapps. The other items on the list were six yards of pure white calico, an amount of cash, a strand of Baby T's pubic hair and a pure white home bred fowl fathered by a pure black home bred cock. After all, who had ever seen a half-caste fowl? (p. 185)

This quotation clearly reveals that the jujuman is too demanding, probably because he thinks his long list of complicated items will make Onko give up the sacrifice. Through this, the novelist intends to show that jujumen are generally too demanding towards superstitious people who need their services. The simple fact of including four bottles of schnapps, two of the four bottles being typically Heinekens schnapps, made in Holland, to the required list clearly shows that the jujuman is materialistic beyond doubt.

[...]. But jujumen being men after all, were also prone to making mistakes. The jujuman underestimated Onko's determination and miscalculated. He thought that Onko's biggest headache would be Baby T's pubic hair. It wasn't. It was the fowl that should be half-caste that, however, must not be half-caste according to the demands of the gods (p. 185).

The above quotation uncovers the jujuman's miscalculation when he thinks that Onko will tell him that he cannot get Baby T's pubic hair. However, Onko's determination to overcome his business woes leads him to take a great risk by trying to get Baby T's pubic hair at all costs.

Ironically, the novelist makes the jujuman deceive Onko, the superstitious believer, by making him believe that he has the solution to his fowl item. He devises this stratagem as soon as he realises that Onko is unable to find the white fowl he demands. He capitalises on the fact that he has a nephew who breeds such fowls so as to take money from him. The quotation below illustrates this sad fact:

See? That is where you and I differ. You saw food on the table, I saw sacrifice. I saw the gods. Spiritually. If you were a fowl and I was looking at you, I would say to myself: Is this fowl fit for a sacrifice onto the gods? That was why I encouraged my nephew to go into the business of rearing special fowls for sacrificial purposes. He rears all kinds. Black fowls fathered by white cocks. Fowls hatched from eggs laid at exactly 12 o'clock midnight. And of course, pure white fowls fathered by pure black cocks (p. 186).

The writer thus shows how superstition can cause people to indulge in sacrifice. Superstition can also lead people to fail to assume their obligations. In the novel, for instance, Kwei's family members are obsessed with Maa Tsuru's curse so much that they refuse to honour Baby T with their family name. This situation is probably due to the fact that they consider both the mother and her daughter as cursed. As a result, they do not consider the child as a member of their family. This can be seen in this quotation: "Kwei's and Maa Tsuru's first daughter but third child, who was born during Kwei's unceremonious absence, was never honoured with a Kwei family name at birth" (p. 25).

3. Effects of Superstitious Beliefs on Individuals and Society

The effects of superstitious beliefs on individuals in *Faceless* are too glaring to ignore. Individuals generally fall victims to them because they lack self-control. In the novel, Naa Yomo and her late husband exemplify self-control from superstitious beliefs, as it appears in the following quotation: "Naa Yomo makes it clear to us that the only reason she and her husband were able to raise their children to become responsible adults is that, at a point, her husband chose not to be controlled by superstition and prejudice" (p. 52). The quotation implies that an individual can avoid

being controlled by superstition. That is why when Naa Yomo herself loses five of her eleven children, her husband wisely avoids giving way to superstition and endeavours to face his responsibilities till his death. This is a commendable behaviour insofar as it has permitted her husband to die a good person. However, Maa Tsuru is thoroughly controlled by it insofar as she believes that the curse pronounced by her late mother on her father and his descendants also affects her children although she has no proof. She capitalises on her deduction to say so without any evidence to sustain his thought. She just deduces this superstitious belief because people around her say that she is a cursed woman. This is illustrated in the quotation below:

Vickie frowned and moved and placed an ear to the door.
'She is crying in there', she told Kabria and knocked again.
'It is a curse!' Maa Tsuru wailed from inside. 'It is a curse!'

Vickie and Kabria exchanged looks, and knocked louder on the door. A boy cried. But Ma Tsuru went quiet. They knocked again. No response (p. 91).

The above quotation clearly reveals the manifestations of superstitious beliefs on Maa Tsuru. Through her wailing, the novelist shows that the supposed curse that has been pronounced on the character by her late mother haunts her so much so that it has become a burden for her. In other words, it has become a cross that she carries everywhere. Of course, this situation unveils the havoc that superstitious beliefs cause in most African societies where they are deeply rooted. When Vickie tells Naa Yomo that Maa Tsuru is crying about a curse, she is so scandalised that she laments her own situation as a mother who has buried five children out of eleven in these terms:

[...] 'when the seed of a curse finds fertile ground in a human mind, it spreads with the destructive speed of a creeping plant. And while it does, it nurtures superstition, which in turn, eats into all reasoning abilities and the capability of facing responsibilities. The only reason why my six living children are all living in their bungalows, is because, after the death of our fifth child, my husband, God bless his soul, stopped nurturing

his superstitious mind and focussed more on facing up his responsibilities. And that was why he died a good man. Let me tell you about the curse you heard her cry about' (pp. 91-92).

Naa Yomo's comment in the foregoing excerpt reveals that if someone takes a curse seriously, it ends up being engraved in his/her mind and consequently destroys the person. "We observe that she compares superstition to a creeping plant which, when not destroyed, encircles the mind and eats away all reasoning capacities" (Bonku et al., 2016: 56). This quotation sheds lights on the implications of the archetypical criticism of superstition beliefs on individuals and society, a good reason why this theory is relevant to the study. The rejection of the superstition is not an act of self-denial but a response to so much harm people do to themselves out of ignorance. As the seed of curse 'spreads with the destructive speed of a creeping plant', it nurtures superstition which in turn makes the superstitious person fail to face his/her responsibilities, not only within his/her family, but also in society at large. In Maa Tsuru's case, she fails to carry out her duties as a mother because she is haunted by the curse. Her failure lies in the fact that she is unable to play her role as the first person responsible for her children's basic education which is fundamental to their lives quality. As a result, she is unable to take care of her children who in turn find no alternative left but live on the streets. Bonku et al. (2016: 57) corroborate the idea when they say:

The fact that the belief in a curse could override Ma Tsuru's innate instinct – that of a mother's duty to ensure that her children are nourished and protected – stresses the negative outcome of leaning unto superstition. By volunteering this informative explication, Naa Yomo is indirectly liberating the minds of those who lean on superstitious beliefs. Naa Yomo, in this respect, [is] qualified as a prophet.

The aforementioned quotation draws people's attention to the dangers inherent in leaning onto superstitions. The novelist's use of superstition is impressive. She makes most of her characters indulge in it with devotion and without abnegation. As a result, Maa Tsuru is made to accept it as being part and parcel of her fate. Instead of taking it commonplace and

fighting for her and her children's wellbeing, she sinks into depression. Bonku et al. (2016: 56) corroborate this fact by positing that:

The novel in fact gives readers one of the most realistic analyses of the impact of superstition on human reasoning that has ever been made. According to Naa Yomo, people stand to desecrate their life-giving functions if they allow curses and superstitious beliefs to become arenas for blaming others for their irresponsible lifestyles rather than working hard to negate the efficacy of these curses and superstitious beliefs. Instead of locking herself up in the room with her children and crying about a curse, Maa Tsuru would do well to involve herself in some trade so that she can feed her children and herself. Using the curse as an explanation for her despicable lifestyle is just a calculated excuse for inaction.

This quotation shows that Maa Tsuru takes her 'so-called' curse as a scapegoat to stay idle instead of working to fend not only for herself, but also for her children. She strongly believes that her situation is a result of the curse. This shows the extent of the havoc that superstition can have on superstitious people.

In the novel, Fofu, one of Maa Tsuru's children, finds it difficult to open up and divulge any information during her first few days at MUTE, apparently because of the curse, although she knows nothing about it. She lives in a kind of trauma which leads her to live without faith and truth: "It seemed too much work for her to develop some faith and trust in two groups of people within the space of a day. After having lived without faith or trust for so long on the streets, learning to trust and have faith again was like a crawling child learning to walk" (p. 71). It takes Fofu some time to learn to love, to have faith and to be able to confide in Kabria and her colleagues. Naa Yomo therefore seems to be right when she says earlier, while talking about the curse, that "[...]. Fofu must know before others do. And Tsuru must tell Fofu herself. It's the only way she can salvage whatever is left of her soul" (p. 94).

Given the different examples taken from the novel, superstitious beliefs influence people's lives in so many ways. In the case of Maa Tsuru's family, we are made to believe that they are cursed and this has reflected

in their lives. As soon as Kwei confesses to his mother that he has impregnated Maa Tsuru, Kwei's mother believes in superstition based on her traditional beliefs and prohibits her son's engagement with a cursed woman. The reason for the prohibition is revealed by the novelist in a series of questions that Kwei's mother has asked as it can be seen here:

The reason for the woman's action became clear when she cried, 'Did it have to be her? Of all the young girls around here, did it have to be the cursed one? The one girl cursed by her own dying mother? Is she the one you should go and impregnate?' (p. 118)

This excerpt is an indication that Kwei's mother gives a great importance to the superstitious belief related to Maa Tsuru's curse. She bases on it to warn his son against impregnating 'the one girl cursed by her own dying mother' instead of choosing any other girl in the community. However, Naa Yomo makes it clear that it is a matter of superstition: "Naa Yomo cautioned everyone against laying out the red carpet for superstition in the mind" (p. 120).

Because of Kwei's mother's frequent insistence and persistence on the matter of the curse, he ends up playing ball by following his mother's advice. He soon starts hating Maa Tsuru because of the same superstitious belief, the curse, as it can be seen in the quotation below:

Kwei's response was prompt and cruel. He stopped Maa Tsuru from cooking for him with immediate effect, banned her from stepping anywhere near his doorstep, as he said to her, 'After all you are not my wife!' Then he accused Maa Tsuru of being a bad luck woman and of having a bad womb that had no sense of judgement or direction. Maa Tsuru and everyone else were dumbfounded. Since when did a fertile woman become a bad thing? (pp. 121-122)

The quotation shows that because Kwei is superstitious, he falsely accuses his wife of being responsible for his bad luck simply because she has a fertile womb. He ascribes the fact that she is very fertile to a bad womb, thus forgetting that sexual intercourses without the use of contraceptive methods forcibly lead to undesirable pregnancies. Even

Kwei's so-called new woman, Melon-bosom, openly insults Maa Tsuru. This quotation illustrates this fact:

‘Who are you?’ Maa Tsuru wailed, consumed with jealousy.

‘Kwei’s new woman,’ Melon-bosom retorted.

‘Who told you?’ Maa Tsuru cried foolishly.

Melon-bosom, in response, hurled with the flowing gusto of a volcano, every exciting *Ga* insult, many of it, unprintable, at Maa Tsuru. Then she crowned it with, ‘Foolish woman! Don’t you know it was the curse on your head that got him into bad company when he set off during your first pregnancy in search of good work and money?’ (p. 122)

The above-mentioned quotation shows that Kwei’s so-called new woman leans on the fact that Maa Tsuru is a cursed woman to defy her and insult her. As if this were not enough, she proceeds with her plans by pretending that Maa Tsuru has come to their house to threaten and eliminate the two of them from the surface of the earth through a powerful juju. The quotation below substantiate this subterfuge in these terms:

Maa Tsuru returned home in shock. Unknown to her, Melon-bosom was not though with her yet. Like the cunning child who pokes a finger in a mate’s eye only to run off thereafter crying to its own mother to lodge a complaint against the mate, Melon-bosom turned round and rushed to Kwei to complain that Maa Tsuru had been to the house and threatened to eliminate the two of them from the earth’s surface through powerful juju (p. 122).

The aforementioned excerpt unveils the fact that Melon-bosom has acted like a cunning woman by insulting Maa Tsuru and rushing to tell a lie to her so-called husband to lodge a complaint against Maa Tsuru.

The jujuman is right to ask Kwei’s mother to appease the gods that she has wronged in her fury because Kwei’s fourth move further proves that he has really played his part in the bargain. This is justified by the fact that as soon as Maa Tsuru comes for the supposed invitation ‘to talk things over’, Kwei locks the door, goes out of the house, drinks four tots of a local drink called ‘*akpeteshie*’ and comes back to beat her up. The following quotation justifies this sad fact:

Maa Tsuru had just opened her lips to ask what was amiss when she felt Kwei upon her. He pounded her like a cat on an unsuspecting mouse and began a viscious [sic] pounding spree. He pounded Maa Tsuru with his fists, landing the blows anywhere and everywhere and on every part of her pregnant body. The daylight went out of Maa Tsuru. She began to bleed. Kwei grinned. He pulled her up by one arm, held her by the back of her neck and pushed her out of the house. Then he returned to *Agboo Ayee* and told all there that, with immediate effect, they had better start calling him Dr. Kwei, because he had singlehandedly and very cost effectively terminated an unwanted pregnancy (p. 124).

The above quotation shows how cruel Kwei is and how he boasts for having terminated an unwanted pregnancy, calling himself Dr. Kwei. Great is his surprise when he soon notices that Maa Tsuru's pregnancy is growing very fast. The novelist makes him beat up the poor woman after drinking a local alcohol although she is pregnant to show not only the bad effect of alcohol on people but also the bad effects of superstitious beliefs on them. In the same vein, he reveals Kwei's weakness since he is unable to beat Maa Tsuru when he is sober. The local alcohol has made him feel inhumane and capable of beating her. Needless to say, the superstitious belief around Maa Tsuru's character has caused Kwei to beat her despite her pregnancy, hoping that his act would lead to an abortion of the pregnancy. Surprisingly, nothing bad happens to her as planned and Kwei soon sets placing this under the cover of her supposed curse.

Kwei still sticks to the curse matter so much so that he eventually leaves the town for fear of witnessing the kind of child Maa Tsuru would bring forth. The following quotation is an illustration: "He did not stay to find out. He bid his mother a nice 'Sleep well' one night. By morning, Kwei was gone. He stayed away for only one year [...]" (p. 125). This quotation shows the extent of the fear that Kwei feels for Maa Tsuru because of her supposed curse. Fortunately, he comes back a year later to beg for her forgiveness and seek to woo her back. Character types and ritualised modes of social behaviour to generate potential meanings are the aspects of the literary theory referred to here. This proves that it is very important to the study. Maa Tsuru suffers from social stigma as a

direct result of the belief among her people that she is a cursed woman. This, in turn, has far-reaching consequences for herself and for her children. She is largely treated as an outcast and rejected by society. Maa Tsuru cannot get a good man to marry because the men in her area believe that they are likely to attract the curse into their own lives and those of their relatives as well while getting married to her. So, the people around her indirectly reject her for fear of catching the curse. This quotation further illustrates it:

Superstition found fertile ground in another mind. Responsibility needed no longer to be faced up to. Everything could be blamed on the curse. Kwei was beyond being swayed, not by anyone, and not by himself. Maa Tsuru was too fertile, and it was curse. It was the curse that made her pick seed whenever he touched her. Over-fertility, even in a society where infertility was the curse of curses, could be as bad an omen as infertility. It was the most twisted of twisted fates (p. 126).

This quotation clearly shows that superstition has an impact on some of the characters in the novel. Some individuals – characters – have suffered a lot in the novel because of the effects of superstitious beliefs in the created environment where evidence cannot be provided. Because of the curse on Maa Tsuru which she carries as a heavy weight, people do not welcome her wherever she goes. On the contrary, they flee from her, thus making her feel alone. The effects of superstitious beliefs are therefore apparent in the fate that her society has carved for her as an individual. Furthermore, Baby T's untimely death has occurred due to the effect of superstitious beliefs on Onko who is looking for her pubic hair for cleansing simply because he has had sex with her. "Baby T was lying with a split head on the concrete floor. A bizarre image came to Maami Broni's mind. It was the image of shattered stone oozing blood. A stone struck against steel. Baby T was dead" (p. 196). This shows the extent to which superstitious beliefs can lead people to commit atrocities in their quest for solutions to their woes which have nothing to do with what they believe. In the same vein, Baby T's spirit seems to haunt Maami Broni, one of the female characters in *Faceless*. For example, she thinks that she feels the weight of Baby T's spirit. In her confession to Sylv Po, she says:

[...]. The image has never left me. Not once since it happened have I known peace or sleep. When I am bathing, I am afraid to close my eyes. I see her everywhere. I hear sounds. I feel her unseen presence. [...]. I could have prayed to God for help but how would I have dared? How could I dare pray for help and forgiveness for a deed like this? I sacrificed the fowls, one in my room and the other at where her body was dumped. I mixed the two bloods. Her blood and that of the sacrifices. It should have stopped the sounds and lifted her unseen weight, but it did not work. I continued to see images of the shattered stone oozing blood. Her spirit is seated inside my head like a chief in state. She is with me wherever I go (p. 198).

Through the foregoing quotation, it is clear that Maami Broni feels to some extent responsible for Baby T's death. She is haunted by her spirit because of the guilt that she feels although she is not the one who has killed her. So, the superstitious belief deriving from Baby T's death has an impact on her and seems to ruin her life.

Oduyoye (1995: 59) denounces the African people's propensity to use superstition as a yardstick to label old women as witches as follows:

As witches, women have become known and hunted, women (and especially old women) have fallen victims to this sporadic appearance of anti-witchcraft cults. [...] witches are women who work against the unity and coherence of the community, and who do not seek the good of others or actively care for others.

The above-mentioned excerpt reveals that women generally fall victims to superstition or superstitious beliefs in African communities. As noted by Agazue and Gavin (2015: 34), "A distinct category of women has been identified in different parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, those who commit extreme forms of violence and murder against their children in order to fulfil their religious obligations or to protect themselves from perceived magico-spiritual harms from their children" (p. 34). These unfounded beliefs are being used as a tool to incite people to hate and cause division and conflicts in families and communities in Africa. Peace which is a *sine qua nun* of development is thus threatened, and this will

affect not only the personal development of Africans, but also the development of the African communities at large.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study has been to explore, identify and reveal some aspects of superstitious beliefs as they occur in the novel under study and to examine and expose the factors responsible for superstitious beliefs in order to sensitise Africans on the necessity to avoid indulging in superstitious beliefs which are harmful. The paper has unveiled the reasons that sustain superstitious beliefs and how they have been articulated in the novel for readers to take notice. It has also disclosed the ill effects of superstitious beliefs not only on individuals, but also on society at large. The study has found that superstitious beliefs, in the way they are articulated in the novel, cause havoc in African communities insofar as they are usually false beliefs. Darko has used literary techniques such as flashbacks and similes to convey her message in the unfolding of the story. The novelist has succeeded in impacting her readership through the use of impressive instances of superstitious beliefs in her novel. In addition, she has succeeded in conveying a powerful message that superstitious beliefs seriously affect African communities. The answers to the myriad moral predicaments that the African societies find themselves due to the influence of superstitious beliefs need to be found so as to reduce its scope.

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