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# **Revue Internationale de Langue, Littérature, Culture et Civilisation**

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**« Justice créatrice, droits humains et responsabilité au service  
de la paix »**

*“Creative Justice, Human Rights and Responsibility as Passes to Peace”*

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## ***Revue Internationale de Langue, Littérature, Culture et Civilisation***

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**Contacts** : (+228) 90284891/91643242/92411793

Email : [larellicca2017@gmail.com](mailto:larellicca2017@gmail.com)

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## Editorial

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

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

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

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

Lomé, le 20 octobre 2020.

Le directeur de publication,

Professeur Ataféï PEWISSI,

Directeur du Laboratoire de Recherche en Langues, Littérature, Culture et Civilisation Anglophones (LaReLLiCCA), Faculté des Lettres, Langues et Arts, Université de Lomé.  
Tél : (+228) 90284891, e-mail : sapewissi@yahoo.com

### ***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 alphanumériques 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.

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### **Tableaux, schémas et illustrations**

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

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

### **Instruction et acceptation d’article**

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

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## **LITTERATURE**

# **Implementing Mechanisms for Homogeneity in Post Crisis Society: The Case of Nigeria in Chinua Achebe's *There Was a Country***

**Fougnigué Madou YEO**  
Université Alassane Ouattara Bouaké  
ymadou@ymail.com

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## **Abstract:**

This work suggests mechanisms for creating and maintaining sustainable peace in Nigeria where there is evidence that conflicts have seriously disrupted African societies and impeded Africa's development. From a postcolonial approach, the analysis shows that there exist ways to settle conflicts so as to live in a multicultural society. The study highlights the undertaken and implemented attempts to secure peace during and after the conflict in Africa.

**Keywords:** sustainable peace-crisis-mechanisms-multicultural-justice

## **Résumé :**

Ce travail évoque les mécanismes pour créer et maintenir une paix durable au Nigéria où il y a la preuve que les conflits ont sérieusement désorganisé les sociétés africaines et empêché le développement de l'Afrique. A partir de l'approche postcoloniale, l'analyse montre qu'il existe des moyens de règlement des conflits pour vivre dans une société multiculturelle. L'étude fait la lumière sur les tentatives entreprises et mises en œuvre pour obtenir la paix pendant et après les conflits en Afrique.

**Mots clés :** paix durable-crise-mécanismes-multiculturel-justice

## **Introduction**

“Many Biafrans, especially the Igbo, were displaced. They had to adjust to the realities of war, which included scarcities of food and medical services, transportation facilities and other necessities of life” (Moses and Heerten, 2018: 333) exemplifies a little bit the horrendous nature of the war which took place in Nigeria. The quotation bespeaks clearly that conflicts in the world have always wreaked havoc on all the social, political and economic spheres entailing great frustration and poverty. To

settle them in a definite way and appease warring parties, initiatives have to be undertaken for a true reconciliation. Among these initiatives, there is justice which opens up to several possibilities is unfortunately at stake as can be deciphered through the selected corpus text of Achebe. The endeavour to restore peace through justice gives an insight into the will to build a harmonious society. It becomes clear that the desire to (re)create such an environment is meant to foster development. Many writers such as Soyinka (2006) and Abrahams (2000) fight for this kind of society through their literary works. For example, one can quote Soyinka who addresses his struggle for more justice in *You Must Set Forth at Dawn* (2006) and Abrahams' *The Black Experience in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* which makes suggestions regarding justice in relation to slave trade and colonization. They sometimes make pertinent criticism so that justice could be done in favour of oppressed individuals living within systems promoting citizens' categorization. In *There Was a Country*, Achebe enlightens on the efforts made by Nigerians and the international community to bring back peace when the Nigeria/Biafra conflict broke out. What can be done to weld the torn apart social tissue? Are Nigerians really concerned with addressing the issue? The many undertaken actions inside and outside Nigeria aim at creating appropriate conditions for everybody to live in a peaceful context, irrespective of their cultural origins.

This study intends to show the possible different ways sought to put definitely an end to the conflict that antagonises Nigerians to Igbos. If sustainable peace is acquired, thus people can live together and implement their cherished dreams in terms social life improvement. The postcolonial approach of Edward Said predicated upon Orientalism seems to be appropriate to drive our reflection. In the particular Nigerian context, binary opposition engenders a conflict between Achebe's people and the other components of society. The Igbo community has been stigmatized and later on they become victim of incomprehensible oppression. The prejudices and violence have compelled Achebe's community members to live in isolation.

Accordingly, the analysis is a two-part development. The first part reveals the attempts undertaken beyond the Nigerian borders to bring

back peace during the conflict. The second part underlines the alleged efforts made by the authorities to comfort Igbos after the conflict.

### **1. The Attempts to Secure Peace in War Time**

Peace is a polysemic concept which means different things to different people. For Cortright (2008: 6), peace is more than the absence of war. The lack of food, security, shelter, material possession and even psychological stability can equate absence of peace. In Achebe's posthumous publication, the camera is geared towards the atrocities created by war, as the manifestation of social unrest or absence of peace. In *There Was a Country*, Achebe reveals ostensible attempts to solve the crisis which broke out in his country. Thus, characters from all sides strive as they can to find out ways so as to stop Igbos' blood shedding. In the literary work, the protagonist underscores good will individuals having made up their mind to find an agreement between warring parties during the Nigeria/Biafra conflict. In this connection, meetings are organized outside the antagonists' natural spatial indication. They purport to gather all antagonistic forces involved in the crisis to better settle it. In addition to talks taking place beyond national borders, the writer unfolds the prominent role played by intellectuals in the conflict resolution. They try to bring back peace in the country by making use of their experience and knowledge. Faced with the unsuccessful negotiations, authorities also resort to weapons to submit Igbos who stand as the 'other' with the expectation to bring back peace this way.

#### **1.1. Contributions of Organizations in Solving Crises in Achebe's Contextualized Society**

In the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (1974: 204), crisis is viewed as turning point in illness, life, history, or time of difficulty, danger and anxiety about the future. Some of the manifestations of the crises are manifest in Achebe's *There Was a Country* with an insight into the significance of international organizations like the Organization of African Unity. It purports to bring contribution so that Achebe's people indiscriminately achieve individual and collective goals. In this connection, the African organisation often explores many possibilities in its quest for social harmony among opposed communities. To fulfil objective, it sometimes refrains from resorting to justice, strength, finding out causes to a conflict, and then

sentencing an alleged party for committing crimes. First and foremost, the organization implicitly gets involved by coming up with an agreement so as to put an end to the confrontation as Draper points it out in his work. He reports: “Not content to watch one of its leading member countries destroy itself, the elders Statemen of Africa began moves towards getting both sides of the Nigerian Civil War to attend peace talks” (1999: 120). As the the conflict breaks out, other individuals automatically express concern and attempt to bring contribution. Africans resort to African method – the elders - of solving crisis to attempt to bring back peace.

From that African way of solving crisis, the African Organization<sup>10</sup> calls on the antagonistic forces of the Biafra/Nigeria conflict to start discussions on the issues that divide them. With regard to the conflict portrayed in *There Was a Country*, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) actually attempts to get closer opposed individuals. Its involvement in finding a solution to the crisis is exemplified in Achebe’s statement when he says: “The Organization of African Unity (OAU) attempted to facilitate a number of ‘peace meetings’ throughout the conflict” (*TWC*, 96). Indisputably, the African organization seems to be determined to find a way out to the particular context. The many attempts undertaken by its leaders substantiate willingness and reveal one of its missions which remains to to look for peace.

One can contend that solving crisis seems not to be an easy task at all, for all parties should feel satisfaction at the end of the whole process. It demands much endeavour from the part of warring parties and good will individuals who have to come up with sustainable solutions through negotiations. This commitment purports to help in order to prevent the oppressed individuals’ victimization. In this regard, Mandela puts emphasis on the inception of the African gathering and its intent to give a hand to discriminated blacks in their fight against racism. In his

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<sup>10</sup> The African Union (AU) is the successor of the former Organisation of African Unity (OAU). The OAU was established in 1963 with the official purpose of promoting unity and solidarity among states, eradicating all forms of colonialism, and furthering cooperation on several fields such as economy, education and security. See Mari Hushagen Langerud, *From the Organisation of African Unity to the African Union: From a policy of non-interference to a policy of non-indifference?* University of Oslo, 2016, p. 4.

autobiography, he argues: “PAFMECSA [Pan African Freedom Movement for East, Central, and Southern Africa]<sup>11</sup>, which later became the Organization of African Unity, aimed to draw together the independent states of Africa and promote the liberation movement on the continent. The conference would furnish important connections for the ANC and be the first and the best chance for us to enlist support, money, and training for MK” (1994: 250). In the fight against discrimination in South African, the oppressed community takes advantage of the support of other Africans through an extended help. Though the organization sometimes points out partiality in the conflict resolution, it wants to shorten people’s suffering.

Moreover, *There Was a Country* sheds light on the procedure of the African Organization for solving crisis. It sometimes creates a favourable context for addressing serious issues. Thus, antagonistic forces and good will individuals meet in a secured environment of their choice to reflect on the matter in question. Given the particular context and emergency like the Nigeria/Biafra one, peacer makers often organize an outstanding gathering in a systematic way. The gathering known as a summit is defined as ‘an important formal meeting between leaders of governments from two or more countries’ (*Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, 1302). During the Nigeria/Biafra conflict, such a special meeting has been initiated by both parties and good will individuals. In this connection, Achebe underlines:

A last-ditch summit was held from January 4 to January 5, 1967, to discuss the areas of conflict. Great optimism was expressed that this would be the instrument to bring lasting peace to Nigeria. Aburi, in Ghana, was chosen as the venue, as a concession to Ojukwu, who had asked for a neutral site outside Nigeria for this meeting, but also to impart a sense of impartiality and credibility to the summit (*TWC*: 85).

Summit organization is supposed to find an agreement between the antagonistic forces engaged in the conflict. One can argue the special

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<sup>11</sup> PAFMECSA gathering **was meant to** give birth to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) later on.

gathering for discussing serious issues appears to be a good undertaking in that it may contribute to weld the social tissue. It brings hope to warring parties because an agreement may come out from that particular meeting and comfort suffering people.

In addition to the Organization of the African Unity, *There Was a Country*'s protagonist also underlines the United Nations (UN) as another committed organization to solving the Nigerian crisis. Being to some extent the mother of all major organizations, it operates to better relationships among nations and countries in crisis. The organization also works to restore peace where it ceases to exist between people. Indeed, many countries resort to the organization expertise in that they recognize its alleged strength to establish peace in conflicting areas. However, in *There Was a Country*, the organization's attempt to reconcile the antagonistic parties in the Biafra/Nigeria conflict proves to be very insignificant. Its passivity is perceptible when Moses and Heerten (2018: 279) reveals: "Outside of the United Nations building, Paul Cornett, President of the committee, decried the world organization. 'That the U.N. has not acted diminishes it, diminishes all people, and diminishes the meaning of the declaration', he said to the crowd." It is conspicuous that the international gathering demonstrates inactivity during the conflict that antagonizes a community to the rest of society. The UN has not explicitly initiated talks or organized summits to address the issue. Yet, individuals have thought of it in the conflicting context. Faced with inactivity, some characters urge the international organization to find a definite solution to the crisis which tears apart their country. In *There Was a Country*, Achebe mentions Azikiwe's insisting on the UN involvement in Nigeria. The writer states:

In a speech at the Oxford University on February 16, 1969, the former president and a one-time emissary of Biafra outlined a fourteen-point peace plan to be implemented by a proposed 'UN peace keeping force made up of international and local peace keeping forces' that would stay on the ground for at least a year during the implementation of both a cease-fire and peaceful resolution of ethnic, economic and political tensions. Azikiwe's proposals also called on Nigeria

to sign a *modus Vivendi*'s 'to be enforced by the security council of the United Nations (*TWC*: 215).

It transpires from this statement that some characters long for peace for the fragmented country, and that, at all cost. They strongly believe in the international organization to put an end to the fragile individuals' suffering. The wished arbitration of the organization during the crisis bespeaks its capacity to restore peace where there is a need. Yet, the resort to the UN denotes the incapacity of Africans to settle their own matters.

In effect, faith in the UN results from the existence of its army to impose ceasefire upon the opposed parties, conferring to it the status of a very strong organization. Army enables the international organization to cope with conflicts wherever they break out even though countries in conflict sometimes question its approaches to solving certain crises. Basically, it comes as an interposition force characterized by impartiality and prevents soldiers from both sides to commit crimes on civilians. In so doing, the organization grants more chance to talks among political leaders.

In sum, one notices that the first objective of the UN is, in fact, to restore peace in time of conflict. Azikiwe's action proves to be inscribed in the UN's vision of settling crisis. The political character's main concern is explicit enough for understanding. First of all, he just wishes the organization to help shorten the suffering of defenceless people. Then, justice may intervene after the conflict for sentencing individuals recognized as responsible for crimes of all kinds.

For Abrahams (2000), justice stands as a very useful tool in definitely settling conflict. In this connection, his autobiography underlines the will of international community to solve crisis through justice enforcement. Some individuals caring for fairness set up of the International Court. Its creation intervenes in an international context made of crimes which sometimes remain unpunished. Abrahams underscores the role that that institution may play in the reparation process of the 'other'. With regard to colonization, he demands justice for oppressed communities. He argues: "So let the International Court of Justice convene a special sitting to determine how the matter should be finally resolved. There are those in

the Third World who argue that the resolution of this matter should include, the cancellation of the Third World debt” (Abrahams, 2000: 403). Justice symbolized by the court is very helpful in solving definitely conflicts and restoring a peaceful context. Not only does it sentence criminals and impose fines on them, but it also comforts the oppressed individual. Therefore, the court comes to demonstrate the will of society to deter wrong doers so that everybody lives in a peaceful environment.

The conflict portrayed in *There Was a Country* has required the commitment of international organizations. Their commitment seems to be meaningful in the particular context in the sense that they intend to favour exchanges between antagonistic communities and settle the conflict. Despite international involvement in seeking sustainable solutions to peace, the conflict Nigeria/Biafra continues raging. The unsuccessful commitment of the international organizations compels the participants to resort to their own potentials.

## **1.2. The Role of Intellectuals in Chaos**

The commitment of intellectuals is unquestionably perceptible in *There Was a Country*. Intellectuals contribute to finding a solution to the crisis that prevails in their spatial indication. Achebe explores their role even though it can be diversely appreciated. These intellectuals play the same role as the elders in the writer’s fictional works. Intellectuals endowed with western education remain very prominent in African societies. They have the task to attract individuals’ attention on facts occurring in their society. They are sometimes very active in terms of seeking peace for their communities. Whatever their cultural origins, the Nigerian society expects intellectuals to get involved in solving the crisis that opposes them. In this regard, *There Was a Country* also mentions intellectuals in their social role. Society perceives them as ‘warriors of peace.’ They have to apply the ‘Nri philosophy’ which is typically African. The protagonist enlightens on the concept when he says: “Nri philosophy implores intellectuals to transform themselves into ‘warriors of peace’ during period of crisis, with a proclivity for action over rhetoric. Many of our finest writers and thinkers were armed with this ancient wisdom and worked toward a peaceful resolution to the hostilities” (*TWC*, 109). It is noticeable that the involvement of intellectuals in conflict resolution has

not started with the Biafra/Nigeria conflict. It has always existed and remains a tradition perpetuated by intellectuals of all sides. Therefore, the narrator and society expect much from them because they have to find out a sustainable solution to the particular context.

*There Was a Country* underlines some intellectuals who actually work for the restoration of peace. They actively take part in denouncing abuses. Faced with the increase in oppressed individuals' predicament, intellectuals unveil stance in favour of them. Among intellectuals having fought for the oppressed community and the return of peace in Nigeria, one can unquestionably quote Wole Soyinka and Cyprian Ekwensi. As far as the former is concerned, Chinua Achebe states:

The story I was told about that incident was that Wole, fed up with the federal government's unsuccessful treatment of the Biafra issue, had travelled to secessionist Biafra in an attempt to appeal for a cease fire to the hostilities. He planned to set up an anti-war delegation made up of intellectuals, artists, and writers from both sides of the conflict-and from around the world-to achieve his aim. When he returned to Nigeria the authorities arrested him and accused him of assisting Biafra in the purchase of weapons of war. There was no evidence to corroborate their case, and Wole was imprisoned without bail (*TWC*: 109-110).

It is conspicuous that the commitment of the intellectual is impressive in his quest for peace. Individuals pertaining to the artistic world make up their mind to fight so that the lives of innocent and fragile human beings be preserved. Thus, the search for peace seems to be the concern of characters endowed with knowledge, irrespective of their cultural origins. Whenever the issue of peace is at stake, one's cultural identity ceases to prevail. Accordingly, society always relies on intellectuals to bring changes as Sartre underlines it when he quotes Benda. He contends: "Benda wants the writer-intellectual to intervene in temporal affairs in the name of mankind: "An intellectual seems to me to betray his function by decending into the public arena only if he does so...to secure the triumph of realist passion of class, race, or nation" (1949: 9).

Beside the individual contribution of intellectuals in seeking peace for the whole society, *There Was a Country* underlines their collective attempt. In his work, Achebe explores forums as a means certainly initiated by these committed characters to restore harmony in the country. As a matter of fact, African countries in crisis sometimes experience that means for seeking peace. When a deep disagreement threatens cohesion, they contrive some kinds of big meetings which intend to discuss national serious issues. In this perspective, Achebe enlightens on the setting up of such a gathering in his country. The characters initiate it at the heyday of the conflict, and it is named the National Reconciliation Commission. It intends to drive Nigerians to reconcile with one another. Concerning that structure, the narrator reveals: “The first part of May 1967 saw the visit of the National Reconciliation Commission (NRC) to Enugu, the capital of the Eastern Region. It was led by Chief Awolowo and billed as a last-minute effort at peace and as an attempt to encourage Ojukwu and Eastern leaders to attend peace talk at a venue suitable to the Easterners” (*TWC*: 88). This commission shares the same objectives as the Abrahams (2000) purports to gather all the antagonistic forces from diverse origins to settle the conflict. It is expected to address the crisis and put an end to it. Participants do their utmost to give a chance to talks so that the countries retrieve peace without resorting to the formal judiciary system.

Though the particular gathering aims at inviting all the citizens to overtly articulate frustration, it calls for individuals involved in crimes to ask for forgiveness so that confidence and peace be restored. At the end of the forum, participants may decide a compensation<sup>12</sup> system. In a nutshell, it stands as an informal court where society may judge and condemn to pay fines those who broke the social contract.

Unfortunately, the aforementioned attempts to restore peace prove to be a failure as Achebe’s community keeps on experiencing persecussions. The refusal to make these gatherings successful seems to be intentional and recall the concept of Orientalism (Bertens, 2001: 205) developed by Said.

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<sup>12</sup> *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (1982: 271) defines compensation as something given or received as equivalent or as a reparation for a loss, service, or debt; a recompense; an indemnity.

It demonstrates the superiority of Nigeria over Biafra. Thus, this refusal unfolds Achebe's people inferiority in the particular context.

The quest for peace entails social actors to attempt other means. In *There Was a Country*, the protagonist throws light on the use of violence as a means to bring back peace in the country. He reports: "Almost thirty years before Rwanda, before Darfur, over two million people – mothers, children, babies, civilians – lost their lives as a result of the blatantly callous and unnecessary policies enacted by the leaders of the federal government of Nigeria" (*TWC*: 228). The oppressor makes use of violence against the oppressed community of Igbos with the objective to submit them and then restore peace in that area. One can compare the Nigeria/Biafra context with the colonial era where Westerner uses violence to submit the non-Westerner to better continue dominating and exploiting the latter. During that period of Western domination, Fanon advocates violence to oppressed people in order to gain freedom. Alessandrini reveals that propension for violence: "Frantz Fanon insists that the terrorism of the colonized is only a weapon of last resort" (1999: 238). Violence proves to be very significant in a conflicting context. Individuals sometimes resort to it in order to settle matters aslike Achebe's *There Was a Country* illustrates it.

Indeed, the oppressor eventually resorts to what is called RSA<sup>13</sup> (Webster, 1990: 61) against the oppressed communities in order to have control over them. In *There Was a Country*, the opponents make use of dreadful weapons to wage war against the protagonist's people pretending that they constitute a threat to cohesion. The fact of taking advantage of state means entails the oppressor to be less inclined to talks. This accounts for characters in power's resilience to implement the agreements stemming from the different talks. Achebe gives an insight into President Gowon's refusal to go peacefully to a normal context. He unfolds:

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<sup>13</sup> According to Louis Althusser the RSA or Repressive State Apparatuses are ways in which the state controls people directly through established and institutionalized means such the police, the armed forces, the government administration, the penal system and so on.

In my opinion, Gowon's absence at these meetings was telling, because it clearly suggested that he had a different agenda. This suspicion would be confirmed by his announcement of a surge in the Nigerian offensive that would increase exponentially the number of dying and starving to death in the coming months (*TWC*: 97).

On account of a supposed advantage due to the Repressive State Apparatuses, the oppressor makes up his mind to increase Igbos' predicament so as to impose upon them his own requirements in terms of peace restoration. Peace acquired in these circumstances appears as a fake gaining because the subjects remain frustrated and revengeful. This way of restoring peace is totally inappropriate to settle a harmonious society. Victims of coercion can never feel confident in such an environment.

Despite efforts made by both opposed sides and good will individuals to cease the conflict, they do not meet the expectation of Igbos and peace seekers. As far as the organizations and characters' interests are concerned, they converge and drive to the exacerbation of the conflict. They aim at submitting and imposing peace on Achebe's people. As peace is acquired at the end of a dreadful war, the oppressor takes some initiatives to comfort the victims in order to restore a sustainable peaceful context.

## **2. The Post-War Local Endeavour for Creating Sustainable Peace**

After the horrendous war, *There Was a Country* unfolds the need of opposed forces to get reconciled with each other. Given the trauma caused by the crisis, the oppressor keeps on taking steps to comfort and help the social insertion of Igbos. All these initiatives stand as home-made attempts so that this kind of conflict never happens in the country. They vary from financial aid to the organization of a national gathering for reconciliation.

### **2.1. The Issue of Igbos' Compensation**

In exploring the post war period in *There Was a Country*, Achebe gives an insight into the Igbos' compensation issue. At the end of the dreadful conflict that has taken place in Nigeria, warring parties decide once more

again to get together and definitely settle disagreements. To come up with sustainable peace, the oppressor implements the system of compensation which intends to come to the rescue of those having lost many of their private properties. In the context portrayed by the narrator, the compensation system fails to work and establishing responsibilities has not occurred yet. However, there is an attempt to solace the discriminate individuals. The characters exerting power undertake an alleged reparation after the war certainly to come to the rescue of the marginalized community. In this regard, the author reveals: “A flat sum of twenty pounds was approved for each Igbo depositor of the Nigerian currency, regardless of the amount of deposit” (*TWC*, 234). It is obvious that the initiated reparation does not concern Achebe’s whole community. Only a well restricted number of Igbos are concerned with the issue. The reparation may be perceived as another injustice given that it grants a laughable amount of money to the very few privileged Igbos. A treatment of this kind bespeaks the lack of concern to go to true reconciliation. It is the winner imposing his requirement upon the loser.

Beside the failure in implementing compensation in the post war context, peace seekers do not relinquish their endeavour to explore other ways. The quest for peace requires much efforts. In Achebe’s literary work, the characters reflect on mechanisms that fit in with that quest. That is why, they find out another way that seems to give equal chance to the oppressor and oppressed as well. In *There Was a Country*, the characters try the indigenization decree some years after the war which ostensibly appears to be another form of compensation. It is said to give the same opportunities to all individuals to improve social life. Regarding the decree, Achebe mentions:

The Enterprises Promotion Decree of 1974, also known as the Indigenization Decree, was ostensibly pushed through by the leaders of the federal government in order to force foreign holders of majority shares of companies operating in Nigeria to hand over the preponderance of stocks, bonds, and shares to local Nigerian business interests. The move was sold to the public as some sort of ‘pro-african strategy’ to empower Nigerian businesses and shareholders (*TWC*: 234).

The collapse of the economy in the post-war period requires actors in power to be creative in terms of providing employment opportunities. In Achebe's work, they seem to have found in the decree a means to increase social and economic conditions of everybody. It intends to open up equal chances to all citizens. However, members of society cannot take advantage of this form of compensation. Obviously, the proposed compensation discard the oppressed individuals from the collective project in the sense that they come out of a conflict that has impoverished them.

In actual fact, the compensation system proves not to be new. It has already been experienced after serious crisis in the world. This is accounted for in Fanon's work. He argues: "Not long ago, Nazism transformed the whole Europe into a genuine colony. The governments of various European nations demanded reparations and restitution in money and kind for their stolen treasures" (2004: 57). The aim of reparation is to help financially the victims of war. In this connection, Abrahams sheds light on the Jews' compensation after World War II. In *The Black Experience in the 20th Century*, the writer contends:

In our time the post-war German has paid reparation to the Jews for the horrors of the holocaust in which millions of Jews were systematically destroyed by the Nazis. Money does not cancel such horrible crimes, but it can be an expression of remorse: I am sorry my people did this to your people, take this as a token of our collective guilt and regret at what was done to you in our name (2000: 393-394).

People regard compensation as a fair fact toward the victims of the war. It is noticeable that victimized individuals perceive reparation as a symbolic act after accountabilities are established. However, one can not pretend to exchange experienced trauma of a crisis for money. It comes as a way of recognizing past wrong deeds and asking for forgiveness. As a consequence of the efforts made by the defendant in terms of paying compensation, the narrator argues: "It opens the possibility of reconciliation, without which peace and harmony are not possible. It makes possible the coming together of Jew and German in mutual recognition of each other's common humanity" (2000: 394). Beyond the

symbol that money represents lie the conditions for living together. Thus, it is significant that justice prevails and demands reparation so that society retrieves stability.

In a great deal of post-conflict contexts, there is, unfortunately, no justice to punish wrong doers and rehabilitate victims. It is the case in *There Was a Country*. The oppressor continues to lead a normal life without being worried by justice. Worse, he sometimes takes advantage of post war's opportunities, giving birth to a new class of well-off. This is what Achebe stigmatizes in his literary work when he mentions the decree. He underpins:

Having stripped a third of the Nigerian population of the means to acquire capital, the leaders of the government of Nigeria knew that the former Biafrans, by and large, would not have the financial muscle to participate in this plot...Consequently, very few Igbos participated, and many of the jobs and positions in most of the sectors of the economy previously occupied by Easterners went to those from other parts of the country (*TWC*: 235).

It is perceptible that the measure undertaken by the dominant subject does not take into account the need of those living in the margin of the society. It becomes a discriminatory measure that aims at more fragilizing the loser who stands as Igbos. In a nutshell, it is the justice of the oppressor which is obviously partial and prevailing.

Though characters have difficulty in enforcing justice in *There Was a Country*, the quest for peace remains a major concern for society. It is a perpetual quest until they fully acquire and enjoy it. Alongside with individual steps taken to bring comfort to victims, there are collective ones that intend to be profitable to the whole community. In this connection, one can quote the Marshall Plan in the post war context. Indeed, it intends to help to reconstruct the country after a dreadful conflict. It is thus a reparation that concerns the whole society. The allotted money to the targeted community is devoted to repair damaged facilities. This sort of reparation has already been experimented in Europe. Westerners have taken advantage of that aid just after World

War II. Likewise, Nigerians attempt to implement the American program for reconstruction. With regard to the plan, the writer explicitly underlines the will of his fellow men to make it come true in their particular context. For that Achebe states:

Borrowing a large leaf from the American Marshall Plan that followed World War II and resulted in the reconstruction of Europe, the federal government of Nigeria launched an elaborate scheme highlighted by three Rs-for Reconstruction, Rehabilitation, and Reconciliation. The only difference is that, unlike the Americans who actually carried out all three prongs of the strategy, Nigeria's federal government did not (*TWC*: 236).

The American idea proves to be very efficient in that it enables the economic and social revival. This explains why Westerners have not strongly felt the aftermaths of the world wars. Unfortunately, in the context depicted by the narrator, the alleged dominant force fails to implement the similar idea on account of egoistic and tribal interests. Certainly, the implementation of the plan could have brought back a little bit understanding among opposed communities.

Apart from these above-mentioned financial steps which result in a total failure, Achebe has explored in *There Was a Country* another way to consolidate homogeneity. In the work, the character intends to experiment once more the idea of national gathering to settle definitely the disagreement.

## **2.2. The African Solution to Solving Social Crises**

In *There Was a Country*, all social members purport to strengthen cohesion by resorting to an African solution. To achieve goal, they experience the big meeting idea once more to settle serious national issues in the post war period. The meeting operates like some sort of court that listen to people's concerns and then decide on what to do in order to comfort and recover social harmony. It is perceived as a panacea to solving crisis in Achebe's literary work, given its resort during and after the war. That is why Achebe and his people have put much faith in it in view of the many serious issues that pervade post-crisis society. One

can perceive the protagonist's eagerness regarding the gathering when he reports: 'The Sovereign National Conference that was held a couple of years ago was a good idea. I believe the concept was right-a platform to discuss Nigeria's problems and challenges and pave a path forward-.....' (*TWC*: 252). The national meeting proves to be of great importance to all communities, mainly to Igbos, for it engenders great hope. Unfortunately, it does not meet again people's expectation because for Achebe "Debate about a nation's future should not turn into an excuse for politicians to drink or feast on meals in Abuja" (*TWC*, 252). The idea of getting together to discuss seems to be insignificant to some characters, given their ostensible lack of interest in addressing the serious issues of the country. The alleged winner certainly wants to point out superiority over the 'other' who stands as Igbos like in Said's Orientalism. "West and East form a binary opposition" (Bertens, 2001: 205) which cannot reconcile. The general atmosphere portrayed in *There Was a Country* brings about Achebe's people to lack confidence in the gathering. Naturally, it can not help the marginalized community to articulate their concerns and find a solution to them.

The obstacles encountered in peace seeking never deter peace seekers' determination as Achebe indicates it in *There Was a Country*. They always meditate on other possibilities to experiment in order to achieve the goal. The literary context exemplifies that unlimited quest for sustainable peace post war time. Though the particular meetings have not reached objectives which are to gather individuals from heterogeneous cultures and set a homogeneous society, some writers demonstrate commitment in order to set a new order. They are very active in society in that they denounce facts that hinder development. In their literary works, they raise people's awareness by portraying society in a faithful way. In fact, African literary works are permeated with evils that impede social and economic development. This negative depiction of African modern society is exemplified in Achebe's *There Was a Country* when the underscores:

The denial of merit is a form of social injustice that can hurt not only the individuals directly concerned but ultimately the entire society. The motive for the original denial may be the

tribal discrimination, but it may also come from sexism, from political, religious, or some other partisan considerations, or from corruption and bribery. It is unnecessary to examine these various motives separately; it is sufficient to state that whenever merit is set aside by prejudice of whatever origin, individual citizens as well as the nation itself are victimized. (*TWC*: 78).

Faced with so much evils that pervade society and which remain unpunished, writers like Achebe advocate that justice be enforced so that people be frightened when they indulge in facts that contribute to disrupt social stability. Thus, Sartre (1954: 37) contending that “The ‘committed writer’ knows that words are action. He knows that to reveal is to change and that one can reveal only by planning to change” fits in with the intent of these African writers. They work so as to make things change positively in society. To reach this objective, Achebe suggests justice enforcement to dissuade those of his country caught red-handed. Indisputably, enforcing justice allows to have an insight into accountabilities of individuals involved in crimes of all natures. Once that step is fulfilled, acknowledged guilty may be sentenced depending on crimes’ seriousness.

One can argue that the lack of justice urges individuals to commit more crimes which destabilize society at the same time. That is why Achebe complains about the legendary inactivity of justice in *There Was a Country*. In the spatial indication portrayed by the writer, it has never existed to insure security and peace to people. For instance, there is no justice regarding Igbos’ murder and crimes committed by armed Islamists. He opines: “But in this particular case a detailed plan for mass killing was implemented by the government-the army, the police-the very people who were there to protect life and property. Not a single person has been punished for these crimes” (*TWC*: 82). It is noticeable that individuals recognized and involved in their fellow men’s murders continue wandering freely in society. Of course, the liberty of criminals frustrates victims as they have the impression of being abused by their oppressors. Therefore, the enforcement of justice turns out to be very significant in any society, for it contributes to channels people’s behaviour and bring peace. It compels individuals to comply with social

codes so that peace prevails for favouring individual and collective development. Thus, punishing and imposing fines upon criminals is helpful to restore an environment that favours development.

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this study has been to offshoots of the Nigerian war in connection to Achebe's *There Was a Country*. Antagonistic forces explore attempts which can help them to put an end to the conflict so that they live in a peaceful environment. They experiment a wide range of methods that can drive social cohesion. Indisputably, the quest for peace has been a very long way for the protagonist's people in general during and after the conflict that opposes Biafra to Nigeria. During the horrendous conflict, opposed communities take advantage of solutions initiated by external individuals. International organizations and good will individuals intervene to reconcile antagonistic forces through the organization of summits. Faced with unsuccessful results, the characters in the literary work explore other possibilities to restore peace in their country. Thus, intellectuals take the lead so as to bring their contribution to the whole peace process. Their involvement also turns out to be a failure, certainly on account of social and political stakes compelling members of society to attempt the national big gatherings. Ultimately, violence helps the oppressor to acquire cease fire and restore peace without resorting to justice to establish accountability.

In the post war period, the ruling class attempts to consolidate the fragile peaceful context thanks to local initiatives. They have experienced a compensation system and repairing damaged facilities which fail to reach objective as well. Eventually, they have resorted to a national gathering again to definitely settle all issues that impede cohesion and development. All these initiatives prove to be inefficient on account of some individuals strongly embedded in cultural and tribal considerations. However, Achebe has his own idea to come up with stability in his society. He still believes in the power of justice to bring sustainable peace in his country. The predicament of Igbos in modern times is linked to the inexistence of justice. If society resorts to justice, it may succeed in settling all the issues that impede individual and collective development.

In fact, the lack of justice to reveal responsibilities and punish mischief makers has entailed social disruption. Justice enforcement may indisputably foster social and economic development.

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