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Editorial

Malgré les difficultés structurelles et de financement qui font encore obstacle à sa dynamique créatrice et à son expansion, on ne peut plus dire de la recherche africaine en sciences littéraires, humaines et sociales qu'elle n'est qu'un « tigre de papier ».

Depuis le 19^e siècle, les « études africaines » mobilisaient des africanistes occidentaux, des instituts coloniaux et des intellectuels africains de la diaspora. Ceux-là avaient fait un travail important de pionniers dans le domaine de « la connaissance du monde noir ». La vérité est que les thématiques, les approches et les résultats qui sont les leurs ont été au centre des querelles d'approches qui ont lancé et entretenu, en Afrique postcoloniale, des travaux de littérature, de philosophie, d'anthropologie, de sociologie, d'histoire, de géographie, de linguistique.

Depuis la période postcoloniale où elle s'opérait à l'intérieur des grandes écoles, des universités et des centres, la recherche africaine a certainement évolué et peut s'honorer de résultats certains. Les indicateurs de cette évolution sont au moins la quantité des travaux publiés, la progression exponentielle de la courbe des inscriptions des enseignant-chercheurs et des chercheurs sur les listes de reconnaissance scientifique, la prolifération des revues scientifiques.

Ces indicateurs de vitalité de la recherche ne doivent pas nous distraire sur la réalité d'une présence scientifique africaine peu affirmée dans les espaces de débats scientifiques dominants. Il est normal que la recherche africaine, acculée de fournir les preuves de ses enjeux dans le développement national, fasse de son environnement immédiat et ouvert, son terrain empirique de prédilection. Mais l'impératif de sa présence/reconnaissance dans un monde, résolument ouvert et hostile à la faiblesse et à l'amateurisme, l'interpelle à parier davantage sur la qualité de ses résultats. L'histoire des sciences montre bien que l'appréciation de la qualité des résultats repose toujours sur un discours de circonstance ; les travaux de qualité sont ceux qui deviennent dominants à des moments donnés.

Depuis quelques années, le Comité technique spécialisé Lettres et sciences humaines du Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES) a de la peine à suivre l'obligation pour elle d'accorder plus de crédit aux résultats publiés dans des revues indexés. Nous pensons modestement qu'une des issues c'est la reconsidération de l'orientation éditoriale des organes de publication scientifique de l'espace CAMES et des autres espaces africains de reconnaissance scientifique.

Nous devons nous rendre compte que l'orientation éditoriale des *Annales* de faculté, reprise systématiquement par les revues de laboratoire, orientation qui consiste à réunir des textes disparates, parfois sans enjeux épistémologiques attestés, dans des publications périodiques, a fait, peut-être déjà, son temps. L'option éditoriale dont le CAMES a besoin pour les organes de publication de son espace doit être, nous semble-t-il, celle qui inscrit les résultats africains dans tout espace intellectuel ouvert de négociation de la preuve.

Cette réorientation éditoriale peut être portée par des revues spécialisées qui se donnent d'organiser leurs numéros et volumes autour de thématiques et problématiques réelles, novatrices et ouvertes. Une telle réorientation de ligne éditoriale doit revenir à installer nos publications périodiques, et les autres ouvrages, dans la suite continue et/ou discontinue de réelles controverses scientifiques (thématiques, problématiques, approches, thèses) d'où se justifient et se reconnaissent, leurs portées épistémologiques.

Cette option de réorientation éditoriale des publications périodiques et des ouvrages de l'espace CAMES est celle que cherche à porter notre faculté en fondant les deux revues :

- *Littératures et Civilisations*
- *Notes scientifiques. Homme et société.*

Lomé, le 20 novembre 2014

Yaovi AKAKPO,
Doyen de la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines

Normes éditoriales de La *Revue Littératures et civilisations*

Volume : La taille du manuscrit est comprise entre 6000 et 11000 mots. Son format papier A4, écrit en Times New Roman, taille 12, interligne 1,5. Pour une présentation d'un livre, le volume peut être compris entre 1500 et 2000 mots.

Ordre logique du texte :

Un article ou une présentation d'ouvrages devront 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 14 mots ;
- un résumé en français et un résumé en anglais. Aucun de ces résumés ne doit dépasser 150 mots ;
- des mots clés en français et en anglais : entre 5 et 7 mots clés ;
- une introduction (historique du thème ou revue de la littérature, problématique, méthodologie, structure du travail) en une page 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 ; les titres alphabétiques et alphanumériques ne sont pas acceptés ;
- une conclusion : rappel de la problématique, résumé très bref du travail réalisé, résultats obtenus, recommandations ;
- des références bibliographiques. Par ordre alphabétique des noms de familles des auteurs cités.

Références bibliographiques

Il n'est fait mention dans la bibliographie que des sources effectivement utilisées (citées, paraphrasées, résumées) dans le texte de l'auteur. Pour leur présentation, la norme Modern Language Association MLA est exigée de tous les auteurs qui veulent faire publier leur texte dans la *Revue Littératures et Civilisations*. 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

Le comité de rédaction exige MLA avec l'utilisation systématique des notes de bas de pages pour toutes références aux sources utilisées dans le texte de l'auteur. En d'autres termes, la mention des auteurs – année – page dans le texte ainsi que les notes de fin de texte sont interdites.

La gestion des citations :

Longues citations : Les citations de quatre lignes et plus sont considérées comme longues ; elles doivent être mises en retrait dans le texte en interligne simple.

Les citations courtes : les citations d'un mot à trois lignes sont courtes ; elles sont mises entre guillemets et intégrées au texte de l'auteur.

A propos du corpus et des sources citées :

La première référence au corpus est totalement déclinée en note de bas de pages avec indication de l'abréviation (acronyme) attribuée au titre de l'œuvre suivi de la référence de la page citée. (¹ Valentin-Yves Mudimbe, *Le Bel immonde* (Paris : Présence Africaine, 1979), p.6. Toute référence à ce roman est de cette édition. Dans les références qui suivent, le titre est abrégé comme LBI et suivi de la référence de la page pour les citations prises du roman.)

Exemple :

Très chère amie, tendre et charmeuse, je pense à la grâce. Elle a ton visage, s'incarne dans ton regard. Prisonnier de mes limites, j'aimerais tant croire que par toi je peux découvrir régulièrement, comme par hasard, un sens à ta joie. La joie la plus quotidienne, la plus simple, celle qu'irradie ta présence et qui me distrait si agréablement. Je te sais exceptionnelle pour penser que tu comprendras ma peur de te perdre... (LBI, 40).

Par contre toutes les autres citations non tirées du corpus ont leurs références en note de bas de page.

Exemple de note de bas de page pour un livre

Richard Vernon, *Political Morality: A Theory of Liberal Democracy* (New York: Continuum, 2001), p.1.

Exemple de note de bas de page pour un article tiré d'un ouvrage collectif

Womene Gill, "Writing and Language: Making the Silence Speak" pp. 151- 176 in Sheila Ruth, *Issues in Feminism: An Introduction to Women's Studies*. London: Mayfield Publishing Company, Fourth Edition, 1998/1990), p. 152.

Exemple de Bibliographie

✓ pour un livre

Vernon, Richard (2001). *Political Morality: A Theory of Liberal Democracy*. New York: Continuum.

✓ pour un article tiré d'un ouvrage collectif

Okara, Gabriel (1963). "African Speech... English Words." In G.D. Killam Ed. *African Writers on African Writing*. London: Heinemann Educational Books. Pp. 137-139.

Gill, Womene (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

Chaque auteur devra maîtriser et bien utiliser les outils de rédaction notamment ; *ibidem* (Ibid.), *opere citato* (*op. cit*), et *sic* ; entre autres.

Typographie française

- La revue *Littératures et Civilisations* interdit tout soulignement et toute mise en gras des caractères ou des portions de textes.
- Les auteurs doivent respecter la typographie française concernant la ponctuation, les abréviations... Mais pour l'écriture des noms suivre prénom nom dans le texte et dans les notes de bas de page.

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.

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AESTHETICS OF POWER AND SPIRITUAL DIMENSION IN CHINUA ACHEBE'S THINGS FALL APART

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to point out the uselessness of power when it lacks spiritual dimension. The study shows that Okonkwo, the unquestionable leader of Umuofian community in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, has lost the compass and missed his mission of leadership simply because, he ignores the spiritual dimension in his way of managing the cultural and socio-political affairs of the Umuofian community. This lack of spiritual vision has been the root-cause of his destruction at the end of the novel. As a matter of fact, the study has revealed that Okonkwo's precocious entry into the arena of the *ndichie* (the council of the elders) of his community constitutes the fundamental origin of his downfall as seen through the novel. To carry out this current research work, I have used psychoanalytic literary approach which adopts the methods of "reading" employed by Freud and argues that literary texts, like dreams, express the secret unconscious desires and anxieties of the author, that a literary work is a manifestation of the author's own neuroses.

Key words: Absence; Spiritual Dimension; Uselessness; Power; Psychoanalysis; Precocious, Downfall.

Résumé :

L'objectif de cet article est de montrer l'inutilité du pouvoir lorsqu'il manque de dimensions spirituelles. Cette étude portée sur *Things Fall Apart (Le monde s'effondre)* d'Achebe tente de montrer que le protagoniste, Okonkwo, le dirigeant incontestable d'Umuofia, a complètement perdu la boussole et a manqué sa mission de leadership simplement parce qu'il a occulté la dimension spirituelle dans sa manière de gérer les affaires sociopolitiques et culturelles de sa communauté. En réalité, l'étude a révélé que l'entrée précoce de Okonkwo dans le sérail du *ndichie* (le conseil des sages) de sa communauté constitue la cause fondamentale de sa chute à la fin de l'œuvre. Pour effectuer le présent travail de recherche, j'ai utilisé la psychanalyse littéraire, une approche littéraire qui adopte la méthode de lecture employée par Freud et qui argumente que les textes littéraires, comme des rêves, expriment le secret des désirs inconscients et des anxiétés de l'écrivain. Cette approche stipule qu'un travail littéraire est la manifestation des névroses de l'auteur.

Mots-clés: Absence; Dimension spirituelle; Inutilité Pouvoir; Psychanalyse; Précoce; Chute

Introduction

Power constitutes the most conflicting issue that hinders social peace and affects unity within human society. As a matter of fact, every human being runs after it in order to use it as a domineering weapon. It determines the behavior of the leaders on decision making in their community or society, their capacity or ability to make or unmake decisions and use power as a means to rule others. From this perspective, to side with Steven Lukes, one can agree that the three dimensional views of power, that is to say behavior in decision making, or unmaking and power as domination are manifest through Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. Then, what is power? According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* 5th edition, power is "the ability or opportunity to do something or to act"⁴⁶⁷ Furthermore, for Steven Lukes, power is "agents' abilities to bring about significant effects, specifically by furthering their own interests or affecting the interests of others, whether positively or negatively anoted in David L. Swartz, "Recasting Power in its Third Dimension" in this regard, Okonkwo, the protagonist of the novel under study has influenced at the same time positively and negatively his community, Umuofia. On the one hand, he has used *power to* lay the foundation of his reputation and celebrity and that of the Umuofian community. Achebe has admirably unveiled the importance of Okonkwo for Umuofian community in the following lines: "And so when Okonkwo of Umuofia arrived at Mbaino as the proud and imperious emissary of war, he was treated with great honour and respect, and two days later he returned home with a lad of fifteen and a young virgin."⁴⁶⁸ The aforementioned extract corroborates the idea that Okonkwo has served the interests of his community and his own interests have amounted. In this vein, he appears as a leader of reference for the community.

On the other hand, because of hard line policy, the chief character has bartered his *power* for power, a behavior that leads him to a thorough deviation from the aspirations of the community of Umuofia. The questions a well-informed reader can put are:

- 1- What behavior must a good leader have to maintain the equilibrium between the power he or she exerts on his or her community and the real aspirations of this community?
- 2- Or wouldn't it be wiser for any leader to be tolerant and listen to his or her community when the latter expresses the need for great change in his/her way of life and towards the authority of the gods?

⁴⁶⁷ Jonathan Crowther, Kathryn Kavanagh and Michael Ashby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 5th ed 1995), p 904

⁴⁶⁸ Achebe Chinua, *Things Fall Apart* (Ibadan: Heinemann, 1958), p. 9.

3- Can a power exerted by a leader on his or her people ever last when it lacks spiritual dimension?

The current paper has been divided into three great axes such as Motives of Hard Line Policy, Precocity of cultural and Socio-political Achievement, and Absence of Spiritual Dimension in the Leader's Ruling Manner. These divisions (seen in the headings), will take care of the questions asked in this paper.

1. Aesthetics and Motives of Hard Line

Aesthetics reads in this study as a sum total of narrative strategies, Chinua Achebe has used to convey his literary message in connection to power and spiritual dimensions. Throughout the novel *Okonkwo* has inherited nothing from his parents. So, he does not have any start like most of the children of the same generation. The writer informs the reader about this cruel and pitiful life condition in the following lines: "Okonkwo did not have the start in life which many young men usually had. He did not inherit a barn from his father. There was no barn to inherit."⁴⁶⁹ For this reason he has to work hard in order to learn his livelihood/build his life. As a consequence, he has to lay the foundation of his wealth, ownership and his reputation through courage and intrepidity, values and norms which are praised in Umuofia community. In this article titled *Yeats and Achebe*, A.G. Stock highlights the same values and norms that govern Umuofia community: "Within this general set-up, with its provision for everything and its fairly exacting discipline, the qualities commanding respect are toughness, courage, self-reliance. Without them, whatever else you may have, you will not will a place of honour, for the accepted values are hard on weakness"⁴⁷⁰. Indeed, from the above citation, it is understandable that if one wants to become the leader of such a community, one must work hard for the acquisition of these social values and norms. In this perspective, Okonkwo the main character of the novel appears as a vivid role model for the whole community, despite his congenital povert. So, through this communal dynamics, Okonkwo becomes the best answer to the life policy traced by Umuofian community. In this environment of great poverty, and particularly vicious regarding life hardships as I have already demonstrated above, the brave and intrepid protagonist has to resort to African communal value such as solidarity. As a matter of fact, in order to overcome his birth life obstacles, for a start in matter of yam farming the character Okonkwo has required the assistance of the old wealthy Nwakibie to lend him some yams which he will pay back after the

⁴⁶⁹Ibid , p. 12

⁴⁷⁰ A.G. Stock, *Yeats and Achebe*, in *Critical Perspective on Achebe* by C.L. Innes & Bernth Lindfors (Ibadan: Heinemann, p. 88), 1979.

harvest. As the saying goes 'where there is a will there is a way' so, he has successfully got his first yams. This is how Achebe highlights the protagonist's domination of the situation:

'I have come to you for help,' he said. 'Perhaps you can already guess what it is. I have cleared a farm but I have no yams to sow. I know what it is to ask a man to trust another with his yams, especially these days when young men are afraid of hard work. I am not afraid of hard work. The lizard that jumped from the high iroko tree to ground said he would praise himself if no one else did. I began to fend for myself at an age when most people still suck their mothers' breasts. If you give me some seed I shall not fail you.' Nwakibie cleared his throat. 'It pleased me to see a young man like you these days when our youth have gone so soft. Many young men have come to me to ask for yams but I have refused because they would just dump them in the earth and leave them choked by weeds. [...] But I can trust you. I know it as I look at you. As our fathers said, you can tell a ripe corn by its look. I shall give twice four hundred yams. Go ahead and prepare your farm.'⁴⁷¹ (T.F.A. pp. 15-16)

Because of this poor life status, Okonkwo rejects for life all the flaws that his father ---- embodies: laziness, debt, emotion, luxury, improvidence, poverty etc. Achebe stresses the dejection of these negative qualities in the quotation below, unveiling Unoka's useless life and -- his son's shame: "When Unoka died he had taken no title at all and he was heavily indebted. Any wonder then that his son Okonkwo was ashamed of him?"⁴⁷² At any rate, he does not want to corroborate the ongoing saying 'like father like son'. For that, he has chosen to be the opposite of Unoka, his father. Here, the narrator shows Okonkwo's radical opposition to his father's poor social achievements: "And so Okonkwo was ruled by one passion to hate everything that his father Unoka has loved. One of those things was gentleness, and another was idleness."⁴⁷³ This antithesis of qualities between father and son is also demonstrated by the literary critic A.G. Stock through his analytical paper *Yeats and Achebe* in the following terms "Okonkwo, however, reacts over-violently against his father's incompetence, cultivating in himself all the qualities of success and suppressing everything that is like his father. He is hard to himself and merciless to his family, and has no forbearance for the soft strain in his eldest son Nwoye;"⁴⁷⁴ All said previously justifies the fact that Okonkwo lives permanently with psychosis which governs his whole life. "He was afraid of being thought of weak." (T.F.A.p.43). Here, the statement proves that the protagonist has a dearest and an innermost dream, 'fighting overt emotions and weakness.' In the light of the scientific demonstration in matter of treatment of pathologies by the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud, one can assert that the aforementioned quotation is upstream

⁴⁷¹ Achebe Chinua, *Things Fall Apart*, op.cit, pp. 15-16.

⁴⁷² Ibid, p. 6.

⁴⁷³ Ibid, p.10.

⁴⁷⁴ A.G. Stock, *Yeats and Achebe*, in *Critical Perspective on Achebe* by C.L. Innes and Bernth Lindfors (Ibadan: Heinemann, p. 88), 1979.

and downstream of the changes occurred in the main character's life. As a matter of fact, one has to explore the psyche of Okonkwo through Achebe's story telling before explaining and understanding the narrative mysteries of the novel. In this vein, it is imperative to go back to the round character's past before one understands his present behaviours and future plans. In this sense, through my reading of the second chapter of the novel, it is my view that, the writer reveals to the readers that Okonkwo does not benefit from a secured and happy childhood. It is the reason why he has to deploy additional efforts before reconstructing his own life style which leads him to praising intrinsic values and social norms such as hard work, intolerance, impatience, warmongering. This is how Achebe describes the Okonkwo's current life style and its consequence on his relatives:

During the planting season Okonkwo worked daily on his farm from cock-crow until the chickens went to roost. He was a very strong man and rarely felt fatigue. But his wives and young children were not as strong, and so they suffered. But they dared not complain openly. Okonkwo's first son, Nwoye, was then twelve years old but was already causing his father great anxiety for his incipient laziness. At any rate that is how it looked to his father, and he sought to correct him by constant nagging and beating.⁴⁷⁵

In the same vein, this drastic and draconian way of life by the round protagonist constitutes from all points of view his assets and disadvantages at the same time. But the immature attitude of the protagonist as the leader of Umuofia presages his downfall at the end of the novel. It is important to put some questions to see if the hard line policy adopted by Okonkwo can help him achieve a good leadership. So, what is a leadership? What is the role of a leader? Should these drastic and draconian conditions help the protagonist fulfill his role of leader? In fact, leadership according to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* is "the state or position of being a leader. It is the ability to be a leader or qualities a good leader should have. It is also a group of leaders of particular organization."⁴⁷⁶ Accordingly, it is worth saying that one can observe leadership within human societies even among in the animal kingdom. In this regard, every society must have a leader who will be in charge of ruling and managing the socio-political and economic affairs to the satisfaction of the society. What must then be the characteristics of a leader? In my point of view a leader is a person who champions a group of people, especially the head of a clan, tribe, community, country or an organization. In this vein, a leader appears as a role model, a guide, a torchbearer for the others.

⁴⁷⁵ Achebe Chinua, *Things Fall Apart*, op. cit., p. 10.

⁴⁷⁶ A. S. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995 5th ed, p. 669.

However, sometimes one comes across leaders who are capable of good and bad actions/deeds at the same time. Altogether, some leaders misuse their power and this, to some extent, impacts seriously the socio-political, cultural and economic affairs of their communities. They ignore that the transformation of a human entity depends necessary on the mission of the leaders. Myles Munroe, in *Becoming a Leader*, is right when he writes:

Whenever a nation has a lack of quality, legitimate and just leaders, national deterioration occurs. It is obvious that our nations are painfully in need of such leaders. The church is desperately in need of leaders. Our homes are crying for leadership. Our youth are begging for leaders. God's answer to all our social, moral and economic problems is qualified on having just and righteous leaders⁴⁷⁷

From the quotations above, I can say that leaders are essential to the evolution of human society. It also appears that a society without good leaders is doomed to destruction, to underdevelopment, because they make political and economic decisions and show the great orientations which lead to development. In fact, the real problem of humanity is leadership. Leaders can change either positively or negatively their people if leadership is really influenced. This means that leaders have preponderant role to play for the development of their nations. As a motto goes in Nigeria 'good people, great nation'. It seems logical that when a community or a nation has good and wise leaders, this can bring prosperity because, good leaders give priority to hard work and combat every social evil that clogs edification work. In contrary, if it does not obtain, though the leader may be good, it will not help the nation grow. In this respect, Okonkwo, the protagonist of the novel appears as a good leader for Umuofian community but he is not wise enough to adapt his community to the change which occurs within this community. It is only on this condition that he can truly understand the aspirations of his people and bring them prosperity. Though Okonkwo has unhappy start in life, this has not prevented him from achieving greatness, which propels him precociously into the socio-political, cultural and economic arena of the community.

2. Precocity of Okonkwo's Achievement of Greatness and Its Impact on the Community

The novel opens with Okonkwo's greatness. This greatness is unveiled to the reader in the first two paragraphs of the novel:

Okonkwo was well known throughout the nine villages and even beyond. His fame rested on solid personal achievements. As a young man of eighteen he had brought honour to his village by throwing Amanize the cat. Amalinze was the great wrestler

⁴⁷⁷ Stephen Adei, *Called to Lead*, Accra, Colorado Springs, 2005, p 12

who for seven years was unbeaten, from Umuofia to Mbaino. He was called the cat because his back would never touch the earth. It was this man that Okonkwo threw in a fight which the old man agreed was one of the fiercest since the founder of their town engaged a spirit of the wild for seven days and seven nights. The drums beat and the flutes sang and the spectators held their breath. Amalinze was a wily craftsman, but Okonkwo was as slippery as a fish in water. Every nerve and every muscle stood out on their arms, on their backs and their thighs, and one almost heard them stretching to breaking point. In this end Okonkwo threw the cat.⁴⁷⁸

From the aforementioned quotation, one can infer that Okonkwo is a round character as he has achieved a feat that will later influence his whole life. As a young and inexperienced wrestler, Okonkwo has beaten the crafty wrestler, 'Amalinze the Cat'. Though he becomes a great man of action, this immaturity is present in all his deeds. The fact that Achebe has introduced him to the readers as a bringer of honour, propels the protagonist into the seraglio of the *Ndichie*. Then, he becomes one of the most important eyes through which Umuofia can see the inside and outside worlds.

It is worth mentioning that the writer 'puts the cart before the horse.' The writer does not follow the right course of things with regards to the development of his character. He has extrapolated stages on purpose. The writer has done so because he wants first of all to entrust the protagonist with the management, of Umuofian community. And then, he intends to point out implicitly that in the African culture, it is necessary to follow the normal life steps since throughout the novel, Okonkwo, though a great man of action has proved incoherent and impatient in his undertakings. Altogether, Achebe wants to show the importance of initiation for African personality building, unfortunately, it is disappearing nowadays in the African communities. It is true in certain circumstances like that of Don Diègue in *Candid* that 'hearts quite born the value does not await the number of the years' but the number of the years contributes in all point of view to the psychological and spiritual preparation of the souls. If not, the soul is doomed to self-destruction that is what happens to the hero at the end of Achebe's masterwork. In effect, the most important observation one makes through reading the novel is that the protagonist has not experienced any ritual initiations at the beginning of the novel which prepare to face the ups and downs of life. In the African context, initiation like Western formal education offers young children the sense of real life and heroes of fiction thorny sense of responsibility. What is then initiation? From *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* 7th edition, initiation is "the act of introducing somebody to an activity or skill"⁴⁷⁹. In other words, to refer to the communal and social function of initiation I can say that it is a

⁴⁷⁸ Achebe Chinua, *Things Fall Apart*, op. cit., p.3.

⁴⁷⁹ A. S. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of current English*. 7th edition (Oxford: Oxford press 2005), p.767.

usually a secret or mysterious ceremony by which somebody is admitted to a group, organization and religion. From this point of view, I can infer that the future generation of mankind is educated through initiation. So, the typical training received by young men helps them face the real life conditions. It builds psychologically young people and sharpens their views about the real issues related to their community and group-age or corporation. In *Two Thousand Seasons*, the Ghanaian writer Ayi Kwei Armah has underscored the undeniable importance of initiation rites in matter of human development, self-defense and management of community affairs for the future generations. Here is the way he proves this importance of this traditional training:

Then we went into forests, our minds still filled with prohibitions, with fables of gods and spirits. The undetermined stayed bound within these prohibitions created only to measure growth. Those among us with the will to grow discarded each prohibition as readily as we found there was no more sense in it. The circle of our craft, the circle of our friendship grew closer, and our affection deeper. In the riddles we found strings not to tie the mind but to guide the seeker, provided the search was serious. So in the forests we found a carefully created way of growth where following our soul urge to reach the height of the fundi's art we came at length to a greater understanding our soul – our gift along the way.

Then began that initiation beyond initiations of which the fundi had spoken. We whose dedication had not yet been drawn to any particular arts, we were left to float to the knowledge of craftsmanship of the soul, the vocation of those who used to be the soulguide of our people, the rememberers of the way...⁴⁸⁰

The above extract takes into account the ordinary function of initiation which is the education of the youths and the most complex one, that of responsibility and leadership within the community. In the same vein, initiation prepares the future leaders of the community or society through traditional education so as to play their roles well as rulers of their community and society. In fact, through initiation, the young generations are taught fundamental intrinsic values such as solidarity and unity on which is based the whole political and socio-economic architecture of the African society or community. Even, in real life, political fighters in African context have received preparation through initiation within their political parties. In West Africa for instance, several political leaders among who Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Sekou Touré of Guinea and Houphouet Boigny of Côte-d'Ivoire; in the Great Lakes Patrice Louboumba who have been initiated respectively through their political formation and to close the list, in South Africa with the great Madiba, Nelson Mandela who has been initiated, trained for the re-formation of his personality in the arena of 'ANC' his political party and during his time spent in prison in order to fight Apartheid and regain the lost freedom. So, all

⁴⁸⁰ Ayi Kwei, Armah, *Two Thousand Seasons*, Ibadan: Heinemann, 1973, p. 88.

these different steps in preparation to hand over power to Black Community of South Africa are still vividly recorded in *No Easy Walk to Freedom*. Unfortunately, in the novel, Achebe, has brought his character from ex-nihilo to impose him to the whole community as unquestionable and unquestioned leader because of his outstanding prowess at the opening page of the novel. As a matter of fact, what are the repercussions of such haste on the populations of Umuofia?

As I have pointed it out, the protagonist of the novel has made use of two dimensions of power in his management of the affairs of the community. First, he has used the *power* in order to serve the interests of his community. In this respect, at eighteen, Okonkwo has honour, notoriety and celebrity to his community. With regard to honour and celebrity, one witnesses on the opening page the feat and prowess of the protagonist in the following extract:

Okonkwo was well known throughout the nine villages and even beyond. His fame rested on solid personal achievements. As a young man of eighteen he had brought honour to his village by throwing Amalinze the cat. Amalinze was the great wrestler who for seven years was unbeaten from Umuofia to Mbaino. He was called the cat because his back would never touch the earth. It was this man that Okonkwo threw in a fight which the old man agreed that was one of the fiercest since the founder of their town engaged a spirit of the wild for seven days and seven nights.⁴⁸¹

Concerning notoriety this is seen through Okonkwo's mission to Mbaino as emissary of Umuofia. There he has been treated with due respect on all grounds. Here appears clearly what the narrator has said about Okonkwo's warm welcome at Mbaino "And so when Okonkwo of Umuofia arrived at Mbaino as the proud and imperious emissary of war, he was treated with great honour and respect, and two days later he returned home with a lad of fifteen and a young virgin."⁴⁸² Above all, the aforementioned extract shows that the leader of Umuofia has used the power in his possession to serve perfectly the interests of his community whose protection he has to secure. On the other hand, concerning the stability of the community, he has exerted power on his people. In fact, the hero has crushed everybody in his way of ruling his community. He has ruled his community with heavy hand. So, everything which does not respond to the norms of demonstration does not have its place within this community of his. Everything worth being demonstrated is action. The passive men of the community are marginalized and automatically called effeminate men. Indeed, Okonkwo very often refers to the unsuccessful men of the community as women which means in the African context that they do not have their place among the men of the community.

⁴⁸¹ Achebe Chinua, *Things Fall Apart*, Op. cit, p. 3.

⁴⁸² Ibid, p.9.

Truly speaking, Okonkwo knows how to destroy a man's psychology and his spirit. He is such a leader who does not accept contradiction. In the following lines the narrator has displayed his disaffection against a man who has objected publicly to his decision.

Only a week ago a man had contradicted in mankind meeting which they held to discuss the next ancestral feast. Without looking at the man Okonkwo had said: 'This meeting is for men.' The man who has contradicted him had no titles. That was why he called him a woman. Okonkwo knew how to kill a man's spirit.⁴⁸³

From the foregoing quotation it appears that the protagonist of the novel is a brutal dictator. In fact, in order to show that something is wrong with the protagonist's absolute power, the narrator makes use of a proverb which is a powerful means of communication in the African traditional context. In this vein the old man says "Looking at a king's mouth," said an old man, 'one would think he has never sucked at his mother's breasts.' He was talking about Okonkwo, who had risen so suddenly from great poverty and misfortunes to the one of the lords of the clan."⁴⁸⁴ From this extract one can obviously agree that the writer masters his African culture especially the Igbo one through his use of proverbs to convey crucial message to his community. But the paradox in this novel appears with his main character, Okonkwo, who ignores princely the existence of this important weapon in African system of communication. I can foreground/opine that Achebe wants to scarify his protagonist on the ground of culture.

Furthermore, not only does Okonkwo terrorize his household with heavy hands but he also rules his community in dictatorship. So, his wives and children suffer a lot from dictatorship. He used to beat his former like beasts. For instance, Ojiugo has been victim of her husband's anger through flagellations. One witnesses this bestial behavior in the following lines "And when she returned he beat her heavily."⁴⁸⁵ It is a fact that the excessive force used by Okonkwo on his family and community occults the spiritual dimension in his way of managing his people. This aspect of spirituality with the protagonist's personality will be at the core of my reflection in the aftermath of this paper.

⁴⁸³ Ibid., p. 19.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid, p.21.

3. Psychological troubles and leadership Flaws in Okonkwo

It is important at this juncture of the study to shed light on the concepts of personality and spirituality in order to help to understand Okonkwo's lack of spiritual dimension in the novel. According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* personality is "the characteristics and qualities of a person seen as a whole"⁴⁸⁶ whereas spirituality is "the state or quality of being concerned with spiritual matters"⁴⁸⁷ In other words, according to American Psychological Association 'personality refers to individual differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling and behavior (reference).' For the purpose of this essay or paper, spirituality invites belief and obedience which lead to the re-formation of personality. In this vein, Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory of personality argues that human behavior is the result of the interactions among three component parts of mind such as *id*, *ego* and *superego*. It is important to briefly clarify these three concepts in order to see how they operate in the personality of Achebe's protagonist. So, *id* is the instance of the unconscious expression of the basic physical desires and wants whereas the *superego* is concerned with social rules and morals which constitute what many people term their 'conscience' It develops through culture and plays the role of censure.

The *ego* is the rational pragmatic part of our personality. Freud calls it the 'self' and it is important to balance the demands of *id* and *superego* in the practical context of reality. The overall influence of one of these parts of the mind on the others imbalances the personality of the individual. Can brutality and haste in acting help Achebe's protagonist give a place to spiritual dimension in decision making? In fact, if the protagonist has any respect for the existence of the spiritual being he will respect the moral and physical integrity of these children. Then, what is spiritual dimension? How does it function in an individual's life? In fact, brutality and haste in action cannot allow to paying attention to the presence or absence of spirituality in man's everyday's action. On the one hand, he/she lacks thinking which is an aspect of spiritual dimension and on the other hand he highly stresses his 'self,' the other aspect of spiritual dimension, that is to say, that aspect of human 'I' that cannot help him/her master the social mutations in his/her environment and leads to confusion. As Waldorf has put it, 'I,' 'is a more open, indeterminate and even, in a certain way, more confusing notion.'

⁴⁸⁶ A. S. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* 5th ed, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 863.

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p.1146.

In fact, the dysfunction among Okonkwo's component parts of the mind is a reality throughout the novel. And this proves his choleric and melancholic character. In the novel, he very often terrorizes his relatives. So, Nwoye and Ikemefuna respectively Okonkwo's son and stepchild undergo this terrorism on his behalf:

But he always found fault with their effort, and he said so with much threatening. 'Do you think you are cutting up yams for cooking?' he asked Nwoye. 'If you split another yam of this size, I will break your jaw. You think you are still a child. I began to own farm at your age. And you,' he said to Ikemefuna, 'do you not grow yam where you come from?' Inwardly Okonkwo knew that the boys were still too young to understand fully the difficult art of preparing seed-yams. [...] 'I will not have a son who cannot hold his head in the gathering of the clan. I would sooner strangle him with my own hands. And if you stand staring at me like that, 'he swore, 'Amadiora will break your head for you!'⁴⁸⁸

This extract shows that the personality of the protagonist cannot proportion the ages of the children to the assignments he gives them. He does not respect the cultural rule as regarding the education of the children which is the protection of the children. All this simply because the entire component parts of his mind does not well interact. Spiritually speaking, children are innocent and weak. They need the custody of the adults but Okonkwo is someone who ignores children's social security which is an essential element fact of the social rules. In the novel, Achebe has put underecorded the brusqueness, superficial mind and lack of thinking of Okonkwo when he is about to take the decision to sacrifice the lad Ikemefuna to gods of the hills and caves, notwithstanding the old man's warning "That boy calls you father. Do not bear a hand in his death."⁴⁸⁹ Okonkwo kills the boy himself because he does not want to expose his weakness. "Dazed with fear, Okonkwo drew his machet and cut him down. He was afraid of being thought weak."⁴⁹⁰ Here, it is clear that his *id* strongly dominates his *superego* and *ego*. If the protagonist has thought a bit about the decision of the community he will come to the conclusion that it is not good spiritually speaking, to put an end to the life of one's own son. Moreover, Okonkwo's lack thinking and maturity is raised by his friend Obierika who condemns the action of his friend in the following extract "If I were you I would have stayed at home. What you have done will not please the Earth. It is the kind of action for which the goddess wipes out whole family."⁴⁹¹ To my mind, spiritual dimension is the place that one spares for supreme or spiritual being in one's daily deeds or actions. In

⁴⁸⁸ Achebe Chinua, *Things Fall Apart*, pp.23-24.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid, p.40.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid, p.43.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid, p.46.

other words, it is about how one respects and applies spirituality in his or her living environment.

The first two points discussed are essential to the understanding of the origin of lack of spiritual dimension in the protagonist's way of life and system of exercising power over his population. As I have already demonstrated in the preceding parts of the paper, poor birth heritage and hard life conditions have hardened Okonkwo's vision of ruling Umuofia. For him nothing is worth demonstrating but strength and action. In this respect, he rejects all things that are related to forgiveness and gentleness, etc. By behaving so, the leader of Umuofia has no pity for anybody. He publicly shows that he is not weak by beheading Ikemefuna, a son who calls him 'father' in the name of tradition. As a proof, the narrator displays this scene in which Okonkwo is thoroughly devoid of humanity:

As the man who had cleared his throat drew up and raised his machete, Okonkwo looked away. He heard the blow. The pot fell and broke in the sand. He heard Ikemefuna cry, 'My father, they have killed me! As he ran towards him, dazed with fear, Okonkwo drew his matchet and cut him down.⁴⁹²

From this quotation I have come to the evidence that Okonkwo has bartered the humanity in him to animality. It is hard to believe that a 'father' kills cruelly his son as Okonkwo has done even though Ezeudu Ogbuefi has warned him:

'That boy calls you father. Do not bear hand in his death.' Okonkwo was surprised, and was about to say something when the old man continued:

'Yes, Umuofia has decided to kill him. The oracle of the Hills and the Caves has pronounced it. They will take him outside Umuofia as it is the custom, and kill him there. But I want you to have nothing to do with it. He calls you his father.'⁴⁹³

Despite this warning on the behalf of the old man, Okonkwo has a hand in the death of the lad Ikemefuna. The protagonist's pigheadedness proves that he has no fear of God in his whole life. As the saying goes 'God never comes down to talk to human beings. He always gives someone the responsibility to deliver the encoded message to the right receiver.' Unfortunately, brutality, haste in action and brusqueness never allows the protagonist of *Things Fall Apart* to analyze and appreciate the situation before taking any decision which engages the whole community. Even in his day to day life, Okonkwo regularly violates the divine prohibitions of the community, occulting the spiritual dimension in his actions. For instance, during the week of peace, a spiritual moment when nobody can say harsh words to his neighbour, the protagonist has beaten seriously his wife Ojiugo debasing the importance

⁴⁹² Ibid, p.43.

⁴⁹³ Ibid, p.40.

of the communal beliefs. In fact, beliefs constitute the bedrock on which spirituality stands. Here is how the narrator accounts for the violation scene “And when she returned he beat her heavily. In his anger he had forgotten that it was the Week of Peace. His first two wives ran out in a great alarm pleading with him that it was the sacred week. But Okonkwo was not the man to stop beating somebody half-away through, even if for fear of a goddess.”⁴⁹⁴ From this extract, the argument stands here that the protagonist has no respect for the spiritual norms on which is constructed the community. ““Take away your kola nut. I shall not eat in the house of a man who has no respect for our gods and ancestors””. In his repentance, he desperately wants to close the gap “Before it was dusk Ezeani, who was the priest of the earth goddess, Ani called on Okonkwo in his Obi. Okonkwo brought out kola nut and placed it before the priest.”⁴⁹⁵ Doctor after death! After this analysis I have come to the result that the protagonist of the novel bears no spiritual dimension in himself. It is worth noting that such a ruler will never be a good one to conduct the destiny of his community.

Whatever a power may be, it is always God’s gift. So, one cannot rule without God’s blessings. It is clear to say that a leader who ignores God and scoffs at his authority and presence in whatever he wants to do is doomed to downfall and finally destruction. This awkward in Okonkwo’s way of managing his people is the root-cause of his downfall and his destruction at the end of the novel. In real life, in whatever field it may be, a leader must fear the presence of God in his day to day deeds. It is heartfelt cry for those leaders who stick to power privileging selfish interests to the detriment of the interests of everybody. As one can remark, Nelson Mandela is a model of African leadership the world has known. Though he is in position to rule his country for long period, he withdraws from the political arena. As the saying goes, ‘leave things before they leave you.’ Mandela has left things at ripe and the right time. It is clear that unlike the hero of *Things Fall Apart* Mandela understands the importance of the spiritual dimension and experiences it every day in his way of living. As a matter of fact, a leader who does not give the first place to God in his life time is in total contradiction with his or her own Creator. A power without a spiritual dimension is useless.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper has been to show the limitation of a power that has no spiritual foundation. The study reveals that power without consciousness becomes a great problem to

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid, p.21.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid.

the person who is exercising it and thereby, for the community or society. It also shows that the birth and living conditions determine the charisma of a given leader. In this perspective, Okonkwo's birth conditions influence his leadership in Umuofia. Altogether, birth and life conditions and childhood experiences determine the personality of a leader. In the framework of my paper the protagonist has a strong personality but he is spiritually weak. The paper has proved that a choleric and melancholic character cannot be a perfect leader. It also appears in this research work that a leader must be wise, clever, and reflective. So, in order to acquire this quality a leader must manage well his *id ego* and *superego* (the chief component parts of human personality). In the same vein, a leader must adjust his ruling policy to the changes that occur during his reign. At this level, Okonkwo, the protagonist in the novel under study has not done better since he has been over passed and overwhelmed by the new challenge of transformation brought by the arrival of the white man. Finally, a leader has to place God at the core of his ruling system, for, absence of spiritual foundation in the way of managing his community or society unavoidably leads to drift, perdition, downfall, and destruction.

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