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# **Les Cahiers de l'ENSup**

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# Revue Semestrielle de l' Ecole Normale Supérieure de Bamako-Mali

## 1. Contexte et justification :

La recherche est un pilier indispensable de l'évolution du secteur universitaire dans un monde où des phénomènes et réalités nécessitant l'attention du chercheur accroissent régulièrement dans tous les domaines. Evidemment, l'intérêt accordé à ces objets d'expérience et leur examen objectif et pertinent conditionnent la validité de même que la valeur scientifique du chercheur. Il en est de même pour sa promotion dans son milieu d'opération puisque la publication des résultats des investigations du chercheur importe pour l'acquisition des grades. Pour le cas précis du Mali, les deux organismes chargés d'évaluer les capacités scientifiques du chercheur, la Commission Nationale d'Etablissement des Listes d'Aptitude (CNELA, organisme national) et le Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES, organisme international), tiennent essentiellement compte de la régularité et de la convenance de ce que le chercheur publie pour son épanouissement.

Outre l'obtention de grades, la publication des travaux de recherche met en exergue la spécificité du domaine de compétence de l'enseignant et/ou du chercheur. Cet aspect concerne et intéresse particulièrement l'Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENSUp.) de Bamako compte tenu de ses missions parmi lesquelles la formation des formateurs. Ce dessein assigné à cette institution exige plus d'application et de pratique que de théorie et/ou de recherche sur le terrain.

C'est convaincu de cette nécessité que l'Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENSUp.) de Bamako a décidé d'actualiser et de relancer sa revue, *Les Cahiers de l'ENSUp.*, dont la parution a cessé depuis les années 1990. A cette époque, elle ne répondait pas à tous les critères d'une revue scientifique et était uniquement locale. Cette entreprise a pour visée de contribuer à la mise en valeur de la recherche scientifique et à la promotion des chercheurs à travers le monde, d'une part. D'autre part, elle permettra l'accès aux réflexions et à l'expérimentation régulière des enseignants de notre école et d'ailleurs.

## 2. Description et critères généraux

*Les Cahiers de l'ENSUp* est une revue scientifique pluridisciplinaire de l'Ecole Normale Supérieure de Bamako dont la parution est semestrielle. Les deux numéros paraissent en juin et en décembre de chaque année.

En effet, les numéros sont ouverts aux articles de tous les domaines universitaires

en général et particulièrement aux disciplines prises en charge à l'Ecole Normale Supérieure de Bamako. Cependant, seuls les articles inédits, originaux et de qualité scientifique avérée, après appréciation du comité scientifique et celui de rédaction, sont sélectionnés pour chaque numéro. Conséquemment, les textes consacrés à la pédagogie et à la didactique incluant aussi des cas d'expérimentation et des études critiques sont mis au premier plan. Toutefois, il n'est pas exclu que des numéros spéciaux traitant des thèmes d'actualité spécifiques en relation avec l'enseignement-apprentissage soient quelques fois envisagés. Effectivement, un appel à contribution est lancé pour chaque numéro après concertation, appréciation et consensus des comités susmentionnés. Par la suite, les auteurs envoient les manuscrits aux adresses électroniques consignées sur l'appel. Ils sont informés par la même voie pour leur signifier l'acceptation ou le rejet des manuscrits proposés.

La publication de tout article reçu est conditionnée à son acceptation par le comité scientifique / de lecture. Ce comité évalue le manuscrit afin de déterminer sa pertinence et son adéquation avec les exigences du protocole. Outre les frais de publication fixés à cinquante mille (50.000) francs CFA / soixante-dix-sept (77) euros dont l'auteur doit s'acquitter au dépôt du manuscrit, un texte est accepté et publié si :

- il présente une problématique / étude pertinente(s) ;
- son développement est en adéquation avec la problématique présentée ;
- l'argumentation et la rédaction sont de qualité soignée et engendrent la fluidité pour la lecture ;
- la richesse, le bien-fondé des références bibliographiques et leur cohérence avec le sujet et le domaine d'investigation sont pris en compte.

### **3. Paratexte et structure des articles**

Pour la conformité avec les principes des organes d'évaluation internationaux d'une revue, *Les Cahiers de l'ENSup* se soumet en partie aux normes paratextuelles et structurelles du Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES) pour la présentation des articles.

#### **3.1. Présentation générale et éléments paratextuels :**

- pour un article qui est une contribution théorique et fondamentale : titre, prénom et nom de l'auteur, institution d'attache, adresse électronique, résumé en Français, mots clés, abstract, key words, introduction (justification du thème, problématique, hypothèses/objectifs scientifiques, approche), développement articulé, conclusion, bibliographie.

- pour un article qui résulte d'une recherche de terrain : titre, prénom et nom de

l'auteur, institution d'attache, adresse électronique, résumé en Français, mots clés, abstract, key words, introduction, méthodologie, résultats et discussion, conclusion, bibliographie.

Le même principe de présentation peut être adopté pour les cas d'expérimentation.

### **3.2. Structuration et présentation formelle d'un article :**

La police de saisi du texte est Times New Roman 12, interligne 1,5, justifié. Le format de page est A4, portrait et les marges doivent être 2,5 cm (en haut, en bas, à gauche et à droite).

- les articulations d'un article, à l'exception de l'introduction, de la conclusion, de la bibliographie, doivent être titrées, et numérotées par des chiffres (exemples : 1. ; 1.1. ; 1.2 ; 2. ; 2.2. ; 2.2.1 ; 2.2.2. ; 3. ; etc.).
- les passages cités sont présentés en romain et entre guillemets. Lorsque la phrase citant et la citation dépassent trois lignes, il faut aller à la ligne, pour présenter la citation (interligne 1) en romain et en retrait, en diminuant la taille de police d'un point.
- Les références de citation sont intégrées au texte citant, selon les cas, de la façon suivante:

+ (initiale (s) du prénom ou des prénoms de l'auteur. Nom de l'auteur, année de publication, pages citées) ;

+ initiale (s) du prénom ou des prénoms de l'auteur. nom de l'auteur (année de publication, pages citées).

#### **Exemples :**

\* M. Diagne (2005, p.97) caractérise la devinette « en première approximation [...] comme un échange de propos consistant [...] à formuler une question sous une forme imagée et métaphorique, laquelle appelle de la part du questionné une réponse en terme propre ».

\* I. Prevost et L. De Courtilles (2005) reconnaissent et attestent (de) la place et le rôle prépondérants de l'homme de la tradition orale lorsqu'elles énoncent :

la valeur de l'homme-témoin est primordiale, car seule est reconnue pour valable la tradition orale fondée sur un témoignage oculaire, et pour (faire) respecter la solidité de sa parole, le traditionnaliste ne dévoile son savoir que sous contrôle, œuvrant pour la préservation de l'identité et des valeurs morales de chaque peuple. ( Prevost et De Courtilles, 2005 :7)

\* Le regain d'intérêt pour les genres de la littérature traditionnelle de jeunesse assurera

sans aucun doute aux générations futures de réaliser le double vœu actuel des peuples modernes : renouer avec le passé culturel de l'Afrique traditionnelle et pratiquer sans cesse, comme un impérieux exercice de l'âme, une nécessaire ouverture aux cultures des autres peuples de la planète. (E. Belinga, 1978, p.8).

- Les sources historiques, les références d'informations orales et les notes explicatives sont numérotées en série continue et présentées en bas de page.
- Les mots et expressions en langue étrangère doivent être saisis en italiques.
- Les mots et expressions mis en relief doivent être en italiques (jamais en gras ou soulignés).
- Les divers éléments d'une référence bibliographique sont présentés comme suit :

\* NOM et Prénom (s) de l'auteur, Année de publication, Zone titre, Lieu de publication, Zone Editeur, pages (p.) occupées par l'article dans la revue ou l'ouvrage collectif.

\* Dans la zone titre, le titre d'un article est présenté en romain et entre guillemets, celui d'un ouvrage, d'un mémoire ou d'une thèse, d'un rapport, d'une revue ou d'un journal est présenté en italique. Dans la zone Editeur, on indique la maison d'édition (pour un ouvrage), le nom et le numéro/volume de la revue (pour un article). Au cas où un ouvrage est une traduction et/ou une réédition, il faut préciser après le titre le nom du traducteur et/ou l'édition (ex : 2<sup>de</sup> éd.).

\* Ne sont présentées dans les références bibliographiques que les références des documents cités. Les références bibliographiques sont présentées par ordre alphabétique des noms d'auteur. Par exemple :

### Références bibliographiques

CAUVIN Jean, (1980), *Comprendre les contes*, Luxembourg, Editions Saint-Paul.

DIAGNE Mamoussé, (2005), *Critique de la raison orale : les pratiques discursives en Afrique noire*, Paris, Editions Karthala.

DIALLO Mor Talla, (2015), *La didactique du conte : Contribution à l'étude du conte dans l'espace sénégalais*, Paris, l'Harmattan.

DIAGNE Souleymane Bachir, 2003, « Islam et philosophie. Leçons d'une rencontre », *Diogenes*, 202, p. 145-151.

# ETHNO-CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS FRAGMENTATION AS THREAT TO PEACE AND UNITY IN TUNJI OGUNDIMU'S *PARADISE AT NIGHT*

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## Abstract

The arbitrary and venturous partition of Africa has given birth to an ethno-cultural and religious partition of Africa and has jeopardized peace and unity in the continent. This partition has blended people from different cultures, ethnic groups and religious beliefs compelled to live together according to the will and interests of the former colonizers. The present article aims to show how cultural, ethnic and religious coexistence provokes instability to peace and unity and creates the conditions which lead to difficult and hostile coexistence in the African community of Tunji Ogundimu's created world. The qualitative approach consisting in exploring the existing research works on the topic has been used. To carry out successfully this research work, I have applied cultural studies as literary theory that focuses on dissensions and conflicts in the society. The study has revealed that the partition of Africa has generated an everlasting cultural misunderstandings among the people. It has found that cultural pluralism is a menace to peace and unity. It has concluded that love and education of the younger generations are the solution to cultural, ethnic and religious violence.

**Key words:** Cultural melting pot; peace and unity; violence, religion; poverty.

## Résumé

La partition arbitraire et hasardeuse de l'Afrique a donné naissance à un creuset culturel qui a mis en péril la paix et l'unité du continent. Cette partition a mélangé des peuples de différentes cultures, différents groupes ethniques et différentes croyances religieuses contraints à vivre ensemble selon la volonté et les intérêts des anciens colonisateurs. Le présent article vise à montrer comment la coexistence culturelle, ethnique et religieuse provoque l'instabilité à la paix et à l'unité et crée les conditions difficiles et hostiles de coexistence dans la communauté africaine de l'univers littéraire créé par Tunji Ogundimu et qui favorisent le retardement de l'Afrique. L'approche qualitative consistant à explorer certains travaux de recherche sur le sujet a été exploitée. Pour réaliser ce travail de recherche, j'ai appliqué la théorie culturelle, qui se focalise sur les dissensions et les conflits dans la société. L'étude a révélé que la partition de l'Afrique a généré une éternelle mécontente ethnoculturelle et religieuse entre les peuples. L'étude a également trouvé que le pluralisme culturel constitue une menace à la paix et à l'unité. Enfin, elle a

conclu que l'amour et l'enseignement des valeurs humaines aux générations à venir sont des solutions à la violence culturelle, ethnique et religieuse.

**Mots-clés:** Creuset culturel; paix et unité; violence, religion; pauvreté.

## Introduction

From the Berlin Conference of February 1884-1885 had resulted the balkanisation of Africa and a new map for the continent. That partition had compelled people from diverse origins with different cultural philosophies, religious and political backgrounds to live together. That forced cohabitation had created a cultural melting pot which greatly impacts the contemporary Africa and leads to the difficult co-existence of the people. This state of affair has provoked the rift and threatened peace and unity of the people. In effect, this blend of different ethnic groups, cultures and religious beliefs has brought about instability and insecurity which is conducive to the escalation of violence here and there on the entire continent. This deadlock and chaotic situation caused by the colonizers could not make insensitive and indifferent the writers of the continent whose responsibility is to draw the attention of public opinion on the plight of the people of the continent. It is in this regard that Tunji Ogundimu, the Benino-Nigerian writer in his novel *Paradise at Night* which constitutes the corpus of this research work, has raised the issue of misfortune of the cultural melting pot for the continent. It is important to clarify the meaning of melting pot. In effect, Merriam Webster defines melting pot as “a place where a variety of races, cultures, or individuals assimilate into a cohesive whole” ((M. Webster, 2011, p. 773). Furthermore, one can define cultural melting pot as a given environment or place where converge and co-exist many different and often conflicting cultures. The opposition amidst the cultures embedded in the preceding definition brings about the culture clash that destroys cohesion, unity and peace in *Paradise at Night*. So, this corpus epitomizes cultural violence emanating from religious faiths and beliefs among the Rabbenians. In the novel, the narrator has recounted the scene of slaughter in live of the protagonist's father like in a cinematographic action. This peak of violence proves the absence of peace and unity among the people of Rabbenia. In Rabbenia people are not free to express their mind, faith and their religious membership. This drastic and hard cohabitation condition cannot favour the emancipation of the different ethnic groups in presence because of the difference in tribes. In this perspective, Achebe, the late famous Nigerian writer in examining the trouble with his country through *An Image of Africa and the Trouble with Nigeria* has identified tribalism as the root-cause of the misfortune of Nigeria. He confirms his stand in defining tribalism as “discrimination against a citizen because of his place of birth” (C. Achebe, 1983, p.27). The preceding quotation

poses the issue of the tribal division in Nigeria after the colonisers had mapped the limits of the country. So, the fact that the partition of the continent did not take into account the cultural diversity gave rise to tribalism on the whole continent. All the same in his fictional work, Ogundimu has allegorically depicted the everlasting violence which is symptomatic to Nigeria since when the coloniser had hazardedly and arbitrarily forced the cohabitation of Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo in the federation of Nigeria. The three ethnic groups cannot live in the same environment without conflict since they do not have the same cultural backgrounds. Thus, the narrator corroborates this crucial reality in the following terms:

Keji looked at me with compassion and recounted his father's view on the national crisis and the Borri tragedy. According to Alhaji, it was difficult to bind three yams; because the binding would imply one of the tubers leaning on the others. Moreover, binding three yams was not as difficult as binding three eggs. In his opinion, Rabbenia was an amalgam of three different cultures, which as delicate as fresh eggs. If you tended to them properly they would survive and prosper. But if you bottled them up, they would choke or blow up in your face. He believed we'd bottled up our treasured eggs for too long. They were now choking and ready to explode. (T. Ogundimu, 2012, p.60)

The aforementioned quote bears the germs of the misfortune of the fictional republic of Rabbenia. This extract shows that the plight of the Rabbenians comes amalgamation of different cultural and ethnic groups. It is in fact, the true motive of the frequent social crisis in Rabbenia. The social crisis is perceptible through the riot of Muslims which leads to the massacre of the Christians of Borri as it is narrated in the corpus of the present study. For the research work the following hypotheses are elaborated to understand the reality that underlies the ongoing violence in the created Rabbenia and indirectly in the federal republic of Nigeria:

Europeans had balkanized the African continent in order to establish their hegemony over it. / The partition of the continent without taking into account ethnic, cultural and religious considerations is the main source of social crisis which leads to escalation of violence. / Social inequalities, poverty, egoistic interests etc. are the root-cause of the tribal, ethnic conflicts in Africa, in particular in Nigeria. / Advocacy of love, tolerance, patience, mutual acceptance of other and the sensitisation of the antagonistic entities, through education of the younger generations will help construct peaceful and unified African nations.

From the above assumptions result some interrogations which have possibly oriented the researcher in the course of his analysis: Why had the Europeans balkanised Africa? What are the consequences of the partition of the continent for its inhabitants? Are the social differences and inequalities of the tribal and ethnic entities compelled in cohabitation the root-cause of conflict in Africa, in particular in Nigeria? How can one improve the social relationships amidst the different ethnic groups in the contemporary Africa and in Nigeria in particular?

In order to successfully achieve the objectives of this study, qualitative research, which consists in exploring the existing literature, analysing and construing the chief ideas from data collection has been used. In addition, I have in the course of this study, applied the cultural studies as literary theory which focuses on the dissensions and conflicts in the society.

The current research has been decrypted into three parts. Part one deals with partition of Africa as a motive of permanent crises, the second one is about cultural pluralism: a menace to peace and unity and the last one speaks of love and education as key tools to peaceful cultural coexistence.

## **1. Partition of Africa as a Motive for permanent crises.**

Africa endowed with numerous natural resources, has been victim of the partition of her territory during the Berlin International Conference organised by Europeans (towards the end of 1884 to February 1885). Importantly, it is pivotal to briefly recall the history of the venture that gave birth to the partition of Africa or scramble for Africa. According to the research of T. Pre-eminence et al.,

The scramble for Africa which is also known as the partition or conquest of Africa is a term used to connote the invasion, occupation and subsequent colonization of the African territory and people by European imperial powers between 1876 and 1914. History has it that the scramble for Africa started with the interest of King Leopold II of Belgium to gain absolute pre-eminence over Congo and eventually other countries in Africa following a report he read in 1879 about the rich mineral resources in the Congo Basin which is presently known as Democratic Republic of Congo (Bourne, 1903). As an entrepreneur, he envisaged great business opportunity with substantial profits big enough to foster future economic development for Belgium. The King over some years secretly sent one of his officials called Henry Morton Stanley to go and explore the Congo basin and sign treaties with their Chiefs in the Congo River to gain sufficient grounds and form the Congo Free State in 1882. Following Stanley's feedback, King Leopold II formed an association under his jurisdiction known as International African Association to assume control over Congo basin in 1885 confiscating resources such as ivory and rubber. (T. Pre-eminence et al., 2015, p.7)

The quotation above has fathered the conference which empowered colonialism in Africa. What does colonialism stand for? According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* colonialism is "the policy of acquiring colonies and keeping them dependent" (J. Crowther, et al 1996, p. 221). In the same respect, according to Okon "Colonialism is the imposition of foreign rule by an external power, which culminates in the control and exploitation of the conquered people" (E. Okon, 2014, p.2). From this preceding definition it follows that foreign rule and domination can be imposed through political deception and propaganda. In addition to cultural and political subjugation and cruel and sadistic domination of African people, economic

reasons are at the core of colonial occupation. Thus, colonialism becomes the historic period when Europeans conquered and openly exploited the human and natural resources of the continent through the use of unprecedented military force. For, the rationale of colonialism was always the need for tutelage, given that Africans were said to lack the capacity to build stable states and a durable law and order. This imbalanced force relation had permitted to Europe to impose to Africans from diverse origins a compelled cohabitation. Consequently, at the end of that conference, many cultural and ethnic groups were amalgamated to form heterogeneous entities which are prone to crises on the continent. The author of the corpus of my reflection substantiates this deadlock reality as follows:

Keji looked at me with compassion and recounted his father's view on the national crisis and the Borri tragedy. According to Alhaji, it was difficult to bind three yams; because the binding would imply one of the tubers leaning on the others. Moreover, binding three yams was not as difficult as binding three eggs. In his opinion, Rabbenia was an amalgam of three different cultures, which as delicate as fresh eggs. If you tended to them properly the y would survive and prosper. But if you bottled them up, they would choke or blow up in your face. He believed we'd bottled up our treasured eggs for too long. They were now choking and ready to explode. (T. Ogundimu, 2012, p.60)

From the above excerpt emerges the curse of the African nation state. The ideology behind the partition of Africa was to blend up purposely peoples of different ethnic, cultural political and economic backgrounds so as to create everlasting misunderstandings and dissensions among Africans. This conflicting relation on the African continent is conducive to an open exploitation of Africa's riches. Thus, the scramble for Africa has engendered the plight of the inhabitants of the continent. In his paper "Beyond Settler and Native as Political Identities: Overcoming the Political Legacy of Colonialism" M. Mamdani agrees with the above stand and observes what follows:

The real problem (...) is the assumption that cultural and political boundaries should coincide, and that the state should be a nation- state—that the natural boundaries of a state are those of a common cultural community. Basil Davidson called this "the curse of the nation state," but he was never able to define the institutional nature of that curse.<sup>5</sup> After arguing— rightly, I think—that the curse led to the politics of ethnic cleansing in the Balkans, he argued—wrongly, and illogically—that the problem in Africa was that Europe ignored the ethnic map of Africa. Thereby, Davidson thought, Europe ignored Africa's real traditions in drawing state boundaries.(M. Mamdani, 2001, p.3).

From this extract, the argument according to which cultural and political boundaries should coincide and create a nation state is utopic, illogic and unrealistic adventure that jeopardizes life in the majority of the African countries. Moreover, the quote stipulates that the nation state could signify "the curse of the nation state which means nothing else than the politics of ethnic cleansing." (M. Mamdani, 2001, p.3).

The ideology of ethnic cleansing appears perceptible in *Paradise at Night* on the eve of the riots that leads to the death of the protagonist's sister and father. Here is a fragment of this slight inclination:

We are from different regions. And we always feel very strongly about our regions. Is that not true? If outsiders want to direct our affairs we shall stop them; we shall force them back to their states. And if they persist, we shall fight or kill them (T. Ogundimu, 2012, p.32)

It is absurd that one is called stranger in his or her country, unfortunately that is the reality in created Rabbenian Republic. The quote also addresses the issue of ethnic leadership after for the scramble for Africa. Each cultural group wants to rule the others. This avoidably brings ethnic clash because there is no place for tolerance. The narrator reports the case in the passage below:

Pastor Eze explained that a Muslim neighbour of a local Iman had overheard father's comments. On getting home, he made an exaggerated account of it to his Iman who grew furious. "Why should a *Kafir* refer to a Chief Iman in a Christian sermon? Why should he insult the State Governor? That is an anti-Islamic posture. The man must pay for his indiscretion.

The marginal reaction of the local Iman was enough to start the mobilization of idle youths led by unscrupulous leaders (T. Ogundimu, 2012, p.53)

On the account of leadership, Achebe in *An Image of Africa and The Trouble with Nigeria*, contends that the federal republic of Nigeria has a problem of leadership like Rabbenia in the above quote. The following passage reveals the inefficiency and incapability of some scrupulous leaders who happened to be the avant-gardist politicians of the Nigerian nation:

In spite of conventional opinion Nigeria has been less than fortunate in its leadership. A basic element of this misfortune is the seminal absence of intellectual rigour in the political thought of our founding fathers-a tendency to pious materialistic woolliness' and self-centred pedestrianism. A perceptive student of Nigerian politics, James Booth, has drawn attention to the poverty of thought exhibited in the biographies of Dr Azikiwe and Chief Awolowo in contrast to the expressions of ideology to be found even in the more informal works of Mboya, Nyerere and Nkrumah. (...) Thoughts such as these are more likely to produce aggressive millionaires than selfless leaders of their people. An absence of objectivity and intellectual rigour at the critical moment of a nation's formation is more than an academic matter. It inclines the fledgling state to disorderly growth and mental deficiency. (C. Achebe, 1983, pp.31-32).

The above extract shows that some African leaders instead of scheming strategies to close the cultural, ethnic, religious and political rifts created during the Berlin Conference, had vested into self-sufficiency, search for egoistic interests, honour, and cult of personality which have paved way for the manipulation of the idle and unemployed youths prone to violence. The second section of this study has

addressed and construed cultural pluralism as menace to peace and unity.

## **2. Cultural Pluralism: a menace to peace and unity.**

This part has demonstrated how the design of the new cultural, ethnic, geographic borders have been disastrous and chaotic for the contemporary Africa. In effect, the new African map has on purpose diametrically opposed in each country the north to south, origin of ethnic, tribal, cultural and religious ceaseless conflicts amidst the northerners and southerners living sometimes in the same geographical environments. It is very crucial to mention that the rivalry North-South has divided Africans forever and reinforced the European hegemony over the continent creating then conditions for them to exploit the raw materials and rob the wealth of Africa facing no resistance, for Africans are busy exterminating one another for the happiness of the Westerners. As it is the case in Mali, Niger, Nigeria and the Great Lakes etc. where the Westerners organised and armed the terrorists of Boko Haram, the Jihadists, and the liberation movements etc. creating favourable environments for open exploitation of gold, uranium and petrol, diamonds, copper, cobalt, pewter etc. It is in this imperialist perspective that Europeans at the Berlin Conference, instead of partitioning horizontally the territories of the continent so as to gather the closest ethnic and cultural in the same melting pot, had decided the vertical scramble which has brought about cultural diversity or cultural pluralism in Africa. Before moving further in this study, it is pivotal to elucidate the concept of pluralism. Siti Rohmah Soekarba in the article titled “The Idea of Pluralism in Indonesian Society: A Case Study of Cirebon City as a Cultural Melting Pot”, reports that he term of pluralism can be defined as “a state of society in which members of diverse ethnic, racial, religious, or social groups maintain an autonomous participation in and development of their traditional culture or special interest within the confines of a common civilization” (S. Soekarba, 2018, p.11 ).

Considering the aforementioned definition, pluralism points to the problem of ethnicity, economic development and local culture. For Onyekachukwu pluralism derives from the word “plural” meaning more than one. Hornby (2010) sees pluralism as the existence of many different groups of people one society, for example people different of races or of different political or religious belief. (E. Onyekachukwu et al, 2018, p.4). From these definitions of pluralism emerge other related concepts such as ethnic pluralism and cultural pluralism that it appears important to coin. According to E. Onyekachukwu et al, Ethnic pluralism, therefore, is the heterogeneous nature of a society, which is characterized by diverse cultures, multi-lingualism and varying socio-political affinity; embodying various larger and smaller groups. (E,

Onyekachukwu et al, 2018, p,4), and cultural pluralism or diversity is a term used to describe a situation when ethnic groups within a larger society maintain their distinct cultural identities, and their values and practices are only accepted by the wider culture provided they are consistent with the laws and values of the wider society (Science Encyclopaedia, 2007).

After this conceptual clarification, it becomes necessary to construe the issue in the context of my research corpus. In Rabbenia there exists three main different ethnic and cultural groups which are Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo. The cultural interaction sometimes leads these groups to ethnic and religious mistrust and rivalry. The writer speaks allusively of this hostile environment in the passage extracted from the foreword to the novel:

As it is, one is bound to ask whether ethnic differences, religious diversity and political opposition should lead to wanton destruction of lives in the modern world; and whether the very adoption of secular system of government is not enough ground to guarantee the freedom of worship. Why should we forget that a country is united and peaceful only to the extent that its citizens believe in peace and ensure the maintenance of that peace for the continued existence of the entity? And should we continue to *siddon look* while “Things Fall Apart” à la Achebe?

Of course, living in an environment may or may not be totally a matter of personal choice. But once we commit ourselves to living together, the very choice is an implicit form of social contract. And, if understanding, cooperation, tolerance, and workable agreements fail to subsist between guests and hosts, arguments are bound to rise. And the guests, like a visiting dog, may receive a dirty blow on swollen head. (...) And if revenge is taken, the vicious circle of frustration, wounds and vengeance stands complete and peace is gone, unity elusive. (T. Ogundimu, 2012, pp.-xi)

This quote from the preface of the novel raises the problem of menace to peace and unity. The author depicts an atmosphere of general mistrust and hypocrisy when Dara, the protagonist of the book seeks refuge to Malam Usman’s house, the best friend of his murdered father a native of north opposes to giving him hospitality. Usman behaves like this because he fears that somebody report him to the assailants and it might trouble his existence and that of his family. The dialogue below between the two spouses substantiates the reality:

“We can keep him here...”

“Keep him?” Her husband’s reply was sharp. “Certainly not. How can you propose a thing like that? If you keep him here our privacy is gone.”

“But we are very close to his family?”

“We *were*, my dear. And that was then. That was before they were killed. You cannot claim to be close to the dead. When your own life is in danger you must think of yourself first, okay?”

“I understand; but the boy is helpless,” the wife argued. “He’s a complete orphan now and he has nobody else to turn to in this town.”

“That is mere sentiment. What about the church? The church is there. His father spent all his life and energy for The Church. Why should I be the one to bell the cat? The reality is that rioters have become

desperate. We have to be very careful. Besides, we don't know his father offended those people."

(T. Ogundimu, 2012, pp.17-18).

Furthermore, the aforesaid quotation clearly shows on the one hand the true nature of friends in our life. A friend still be your friend because he or she has his or her interests at stake. The popular adage 'a friend in need is a friend indeed' is no more valid in these circumstances of total helplessness and social insecurity. Here the orphan is abandoned by the Unsmans face to destiny though Malam Usman and Dara's father were best friends. On the other hand, it raises the issue of insecurity that threatens peace and unity of Rabbenians. At this stage, it is also useful to clarify the concept of peace and unity. *Merriam-Webster's collegiate Dictionary* defines peace as "a state of security or order within a community provided for by law or custom" (M. Webster, 2011, p. 911) and unity as "the quality or state of not being multiple, the quality or state of being made one" (M. Webster, 2011, p.1369). From these two definitions one can remark that state, region, community, locality needs peace and unity for the common welfare and the stability of the nation. It is only at this cost that the transformation and emancipation of each state is possible. Unfortunately, in Rabbenia, peace and unity have deserted and spaced for insecurity, violence and, social rift and disunion. This chaotic atmosphere translates the escalation of violence in the following quotation:

They were still furious when they got to our door. They did not take the trouble to knock; neither did they ask us to open. They simply threw a heavy mortar against the door and it cave in with a loud clash. It almost crushed sister Joke's feet, since she had moved closer to the door trying to perceive the source of the noise outside. (...) "Where's your father?" One of them roared pushing sister Joke aside. My sister staggered back and almost fell. The rioters were mostly kids armed with cudgels, knives and stones. (T. Ogundimu, 2012, pp.1-2).

The aforementioned quote shows that there is no more understanding, concord and harmony among the people of Rabbenia. The rioters destroy everything on their way and kill everyone who is not Muslim. Apart from ethnic conflict which breaks the unity of the nation, one can notice here the manifestation of religious conflict. Indeed, what is the profound cause of this religious upheaval? As a matter of fact, during his speech as guest speaker at the revival organised by the church that the Muslim neighbour has overheard Dara's father's speech and went to make an exaggerated report to his local Imam. Here is the General Overseer's speech which constitutes the last straw that breaks the camel's back:

Father was guest speaker at a revival organised by the church on the Saturday preceding the attack. In his speech, he had said that our leaders were not doing enough to champion the unity of the country. He equally stated that most of our political leaders were opportunistic and could not be entirely trusted. "It does not even matter if the Governor of the state is a Muslim or a Christian; a leader should live

above board. Also, religious leaders should always promote peace and not violence. They should slam all forms of malpractice.” Pastor Eze explained that a Muslim neighbour of a local Imam had overheard father’s comments. On getting home, he made an exaggerated account of it to his Imam who grew furious. “Why should a *Kafir* refer to a Chief Imam in Christian sermon? Why should he insult the State Governor? That is an anti-Islamic posture. The man must pay for this indiscretion. (T. Ogundimu, 2012, pp.52-53).

It emerges from this excerpt that there is absence of dialogue, communication; tolerance, and empathy no longer prevails in that community. If not what could the General Overseer better say at this revival speech than give pieces of advice and draw the attention of the political authorities to plight of the masses. As a good religious leader he is preoccupied with peace and unity in his country all thing that is conducive to harmonious cohabitation of the populations. Curiously enough, this good intentions have cost him his life. In order to avoid violence religious activism, and advocate peace and unity, ethnic religious and political leaders should not only stick to what their members report them. They should place themselves beyond the ordinary common sense because their communal duty is to ensure peace and unity amidst the masses. Unfortunately, some leaders ignore this role which will in fact promote the respect of the culture of the other, patience and tolerance, and vest into violence which affect peace and unity destroy daily the life of their people. Wani et al, observes and condemns these irresponsible behaviours from the leaders of communities through their research work on “An Islamic Perspective in Managing Religious Diversity”:

Hence, the culture of respect needs to be practiced by followers of every faith. The duty of religious leaders in this regard is tremendous in that they have to preach religion in a way that will create peace and not violence. Religious leaders have to use religion as a tool for creating a sustainable environment and peaceful coexistence. What we see today is a totally different picture worldwide. There is much animosity and incompatibilities going on between different religions; between two religions or between the same religious communities, (...) (H.Wani et al., 2015, p.5)

Once again peace and unity are the key issues at the core of the debate of peaceful coexistence.

Indeed, throughout the research corpus, violence has attained its paroxysm. And this is proven by the sadistic and ignominious killing of Dara’s father. The narrator accounts for this situation in these terms:

Two of the attackers went for my father’s legs. Father fell flat on his face and struggle in vain against the two men. A third aggressor grabbed his hands and pinned him down. He continued to struggle but his captors were too strong for him. A fourth man brandished a long knife, bowed and went for father’s throat. I trembled with fear and closed my eyes. My father howled loudly with pain and then there was silence. I imagined some horrible things happening to him; I almost fainted. With my eyes still closed, I prayed for his safety. But, when I opened my eyes, I saw that my father’s throat had been slashed. His

blood was gushing out; it was like a ram being slaughtered on *Ileya* day. (T. Ogundimu, 2012, pp.3-4).

From the preceding passage, it crystal clearly appears that in Rabbenia it is the law of 'eye for eye, tooth for tooth' which prevails among the ethnic and religious communities. In this extract one witnesses the desanctification of mankind. A human being has no more divine value. He or she is less than bush animal devoid of the faculty of thinking. Is it what religion teaches to its members? Happily, it is jointly admitted in the Bible and the Qur'an what follows:

(...) the Holy Bible says, *Thou shalt not kill* (...) The Noble Qur'an is equally clear about it. It says: *Kill not anyone... If anyone killed a person... it would be as if he killed all mankind, and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind. The Qur'an even asks; do you believe in a part of the Scripture and reject the rest? Well, our people behave as if they select what to believe in the Scripture, and that is dangerous.* (T. Ogundimu, 2012, p.70).

Unanimously, the two religions (*Christianity and Islam*) condemn killing human being and stipulate that it is not good to set discrimination among people. According to them, it is a divine abomination and blaspheme to kill a mankind. Killing would not favour the promotion of peaceful coexistence. The narrator substantiates this here:

Otherwise, selecting individuals and killing them, just like that, would appear as if either of the two religions does not promote peaceful coexistence. Anyway, why should we kill on God's behalf? Why should we judge on the behalf of the Judge of all judges without recourse to the court of law? Should we ever forget that we came from him and shall return to Him? (T. Ogundimu, 2012, p.71).

Does mankind still respect and follow the cardinal precepts of religions? Do human beings still fear and worship God? Are human beings still the creation of God? If not, how can a creation of God desanctify the humanity in such a cruel manner? Human being is completely at loss since they no more have the compass which is mutual love among human beings. People hide themselves behind faith and religion to commit crime against their fellow creatures. In fact, religious leaders instead of promoting love and peace amidst mankind through the teaching of the religious precepts, stick to their egoistic interests hidden in their daily comportments. Religious leaders are hypocrites, searching always for their individual welfare to the detriment of the religious communities they are ruling.

In real life this odious deeds are very frequent and common in human communities. It is the case everywhere in Africa especially in Nigeria which is allegorically referred to as Rabbenia in the novel under study. Look at the terror established in Nigeria by the Boko Haram to destroy peace and unity amidst common people. This

fact must lead us to question ourselves of our use for humanity today? Fortunately, there is still a glimpse of hope for humanity, love and education which constitute the key solutions to the deadlock in Rabbenia (Nigeria) and in Africa in general. The last part of this study has dealt with love and education as key tools to peaceful cohabitation.

### **3. Love and Education as Key Tools to Peaceful Coexistence.**

In Rabbenia, the true answers to conflict, violence and disunion in order to establish sustainable peace and unity might be love and education. In fact, the love and education referred to in this study have really nothing to do with sensual love and formal education. First of all, as it is narrated in the context of the corpus, love concerns something that vehicles the idea of togetherness of people different in religion, people from different ethnic groups; the idea of unity that might reinforce cohesion and coexistence of the people of the federation of Rabbenia . It is in this perspective that Dara the round and dynamic character of the novel pronounces the following statement:

I don't know what big adults call love yet. But, if doing our things together means love; if being truthful means love, if believing and trusting each other means love; then I will love when I grow up. And when Rachel and I graduate, we shall work together, pray together and do all things together. Some day we shall live together. (T. Ogundimu, 2012, pp.82-83).

From the foregoing excerpt, the writer creates the ideology of unity through the repeated use of the expressions 'together'. When people live together they develop mutual love which ensures the respect of the human integrity. They are confident in each other and establish environmental cooperation conducive to peace. Through love people build tolerance and conflicting issues are discussed at the level of ethnic groups, communities before they become a national preoccupation. This condition of peaceful coexistence is addressed by Bodewes in his work on Mauritian melting-pot: act or fact? The social-cultural effects of tourism development

Mauritius is a peaceful society. People respect each other. Every group is represented in the government. Nobody is left out. When there are issues it will not lead to national riots. It will be stopped by a member from within the group before it can lead to national riots.(M. Bodewes, 2009,p.45)

The foregoing extract emphasises on the one hand the consideration of other which is the cardinal social attitude that values people within the community or society, all thing that shuns ethno- politico- religious violence and on the other hand, it implicitly stresses the importance of dialogue in diversity. The creation of an en-

vironment of dialogue leads to tolerance which is moral virtue that is an asset for peace. Despite ethnic, religious and political differences, peace must be kept for sustainable coexistence. The ideology of togetherness reinforces unity amidst the people. ‘With love everything is possible’ stipulated the adage. It is in this perspective that the writer has applied love as remedy to save an agonising young girl who has plunged into a deadlock. This force of love is obvious in

“Rachel’, Maryam prompted again, “Dara is here” Gently, she tapped her friends three times and called out ‘Dara, Dara, Dara.’ She was calling my name as she tapped, as if the poor girl had effected a change of name. My name seemed to have performed magic on Rachel. Her right hand stirred. We all saw the little movement and became more attentive. Maryam repeated the name. Slowly, Rachel opened her eyes and mumbled, “Da...Dar...Dara? (...) I stepped forward and felt Rachel’s forehead. She re-opened her eyes and saw mine. I was relieved...” (T. Ogundimu, 2012, pp.87-88).

In fact, in the novel, Rachel, the dying young girl was brought back to life when she heard someone pronounced her lover’s name, Dara. It means that love appears to be the solution when misunderstandings, difficult situations and deadlock occur. This explains the fact that love is the core precept of the two greatest world revealed religions, Christianity and Islam. Indeed, the prescription of love in the religious teaching is to reinforce brotherhood which is favourable to peaceful coexistence. In this perspective, Bible and Qur’an preach consecutively agree upon the following “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy thyself” (Plaut, 1981, p.892.) and “Never will you attain the good [reward] until you spend [in the way of Allah] from that which you love. And whatever you spend – indeed, Allah is Knowing of it” [Qur’an 3:92]. From these two quotes it clearly appears that human beings must love one another and this mutual love brings the respect of human integrity. When there is love, this avoids violence and conflicts. It reinforces and ensures a sustainable peaceful coexistence. Love makes respect the sanctity in the other and creates a possibility to live in an environment with others. It is in this regard that the narrator say

I don’t know what the big adults call love yet. But, if doing things together means love; if being truthful means love; if believing and trusting each other means love, then I will love when I grow up. And when Rachel and I graduate, we shall work together, pray together and do all things together. Some we shall live together. (T. Ogundimu, 2012, pp.82-83).

This excerpt stresses the importance of togetherness which must prevail amidst people to create harmony, conviviality and peaceful cohabitation. Though Rachel and Dara come from different religious backgrounds, they accept each other, cooperation in doing school assignments and project to live together in the future. This mutual acceptance will certainly close the ethnic; cultural and religious gap, avoid xenophobia and reinforce the unity of Rabbenians. If there is an environment of

confidence, security, harmony, and mutual respect, this will reduce the rate of the escalation of violence and conflict in Rabbenia. It is the reason why Dara the protagonist of the novel has decided to go back to Rabbenia despite the affliction and the mishap that he has undergone there. He has projected to preach the true love to the Rabbenia and installs it in their hearts and minds in order to heal people from the plague of cultural, ethnic and religious discrimination and conjure the evil. Here is what the narrator has said about the protagonist's project during the dialogue between Keji and Dara:

(...) I'd like to go there and hold counter-rallies. "Counter-rallies what is that supposed to be?" "I want to teach people to live in peace and eschew violence." "I see. What level of success do you think you will achieve? Do you know more experience people than have tried and failed?" "That is not impossible. They might have failed because the approach was wrong; because they did not pray or plan enough. In any case, there are no reasons why the citizens of the same nation should be fighting each other. And there is no reasons they should be killing their brothers and sisters. No reasons whatsoever". (...) "I think I should go back, Keji." I maintained. (Maybe, God spared my life so he could use me to tell our people to shun violence; ... (T. Ogundimu, 2012, pp.69-70).

In the real life the preceding ideas must be promoted in Nigeria to break down the rate of escalation of violence and conflicts. If Nigerian different ethnic cultural and religious groups could cultivate and promote love among themselves, they would have overcome the fatality of violence and armed conflicts perpetrated by Boko Haram and the Jihadists. Therefore, the practice of kidnappings and suicidal attacks on the populations as it is the case of the school girls kidnapped in Chibok, will have no more place in the hearts and minds of the terrorists.

Furthermore, education constitutes the second factor that could indicate the principles of harmonious and cohesive life in society or community. It is the weapon that socialises human beings through education and that socialisation starts from family that constitutes the basic social institution that shapes and constructs human beings in accordance with the cultural norms and rules that offer a peaceful cohabitation in the society. In this respect, Isaac Nguema eloquently observes that "The prevention of violent acts can actually be done through education which must start within the family and continue at all levels of education; pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary – in all technical and professional directions" (I. Nguema, 1995, p.5) From this quotation, it follows that the family the ideal structure where the education for peace should begin. This infers that family stands for the solid pillars of peace and social integration is shaped and paves the way sustainable coexistence and unity. Diversity in the research work titled 'Identity and Cultural Diversity in Conflict Resolution and Democratisation for the African Renaissance: The Case of Burundi' stresses the importance of the family education for the resolution of conflict and indicates that it is an asset for peaceful coexistence and establishment of unity.

The prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts are closely linked to education in a culture of peace and human rights. Among these institutions the family, structures of social relations and institutions of social harmony and conflict resolution should be mentioned, and most importantly, the *bashingantahe* institution. (C. Diversity, 2006, p.24)

Therefore, in education process, young generations must be taught the ethical and moral values that underlie communal and social life. The same cultural teaching is to inculcate in the mind of the young people the importance of harmony, conciliation, negotiation, arbitration, peaceful settlement of disputes, mediation, and dialogue. All these cultural values are to create and emphasize the atmosphere of internal cohesion, stability and unity. In the same regard, Nyerere (Nyerere, 1967, p. 6) during the concept of lifelong learning in the country's post-Independence Arusha Declaration of 1967 stated that education:

[H]as to foster the social goals of living together and working together for the common good. It has to prepare our young people to play a dynamic role and constructive part in the development of a society in which all members share fairly in the good or bad fortune of the group, and in which progress is measured in terms of human well-being. (J. Preece, 2013, p.7)

Through this excerpt is addressed the pivotal role that education should play to build peace and unity.

On the religious level, the Holy Bible and the Holy Qur'an teach the essential precept in their commandments that advocate nonviolence with mankind. It in this perspective that the author restate the non-violence precepts from these two religious books. Here is what the Holy Bible and the Holy Quran jointly say "Thou shalt not kill" and "Kill not anyone. ...If anyone killed a person...it would be as if he killed all mankind, if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind" (T. Ogundimu, 2012, p.70). These religious teachings are to guarantee and protect the sacredness of human beings and promote pacific life among all mankind.

In a nutshell, one can say that love and education are the fundamental assets that permit to combat the propagation of violence in the community, create the favourable conditions for peaceful coexistence and sustainable unity in Rabbenia.

## Conclusion

This article has aimed to show how cultural, ethnic and religious coexistence threates peace and unity, creating in the process, difficult and hostile coexistence in the African community of Tunji Ogundimu's creation . The study has covered three key parts of analysis, partition of Africa as a motive for permanent crises,

ethno-cultural and religious pluralism as a menace to peace and unity and love and education as key tools to peaceful coexistence. These points have gained critical insight through some questions that have guided the reflection. Socio-criticism with an emphasis on cultural studies has been used to point out the threat that ethno-cultural and religious melting constitutes to peace and unity and consequently its related jeopardy to peaceful coexistence in African imaginary community.

The research has found that Europeans had balkanized the African continent in order to establish their hegemony over it and perpetrate the open exploitation of the African God given resource. It has revealed that the partition of the continent, without taking into account ethnic, cultural and religious considerations, is the main source of social crises which leads to escalation of violence. It has concluded that Social inequalities, poverty, egoistic interests etc. are the root-cause of the tribal, ethnic conflicts in Africa, in particular in Nigeria. The study has made it possible to show that the partition of Africa has generated an everlasting cultural misunderstandings among the people in the hostile partitioned African environment. Moreover, it has found that cultural pluralism is a menace to peace and unity. It has also proven that love and education of the younger generations are the pivotal solution to cultural, ethnic and religious violence.

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