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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abdramane Soumaré, L'OPERATIONNALISATION DES NOUVELLES REGIONS : DEFIS, ENJEUX ET PERSPECTIVES POUR UN VERITABLE MAILLAGE DE L'AMENAGEMENT DU TERRITOIRE NATIONAL pp. 01 – 11	
TOGNIA SABA Victor Aimé, APROXIMACIÓN AL CONECTOR CAUSAL PUES EN NADIE TIENE BUENA FAMA EN ESTE PAÍS DE JUAN TOMÁS ÁVILA LAURELpp. 12– 24	
Gérard Kouakou Kouamé, IN SPITE OF AND DESPITE: HOW TO TELL THEM APART FROM METAOPERATIONAL GRAMMAR PERSPECTIVE?pp. 25 – 37	
MOHAMED ALI MOUSSA BAMBA, SINCLAIR LEWIS'S BABBITT : A TOTAL SATIREpp. 38 – 53	
Maméry TRAORE, LA MIGRATION DES JEUNES SUBSAHARIENS VERS L'EUROPE : AVANTAGES ET INCONVENIENTpp. 54 – 68	
M'Baha Moussa SISSOKO, HISTOIRE COMBINEE DE CRISES POLITIQUES ET DE MISE EN ŒUVRE DE LA REFORME DE DECENTRALISATION AU MALI : ENTRE ESSOUFFLEMENT ET RESURGENCE DE LA DECENTRALISATION DANS LE SILLAGE DES CRISES POLITIQUES 69 – 84	
Antoinette AKPLOGAN, Mariam COULIBALY, Fatoumata Traoré, MODES D'ACCES ET DE GESTION DES TERRES DES BAS-FONDS DE KAMBILA (KATI- MALI)pp. 85 – 98	
Adama COULIBALY, Sory Ibrahima KEITA, EXPLORING SCIENCE TEACHING SUPERVISION IN THE MADRASAS OF RIVE DROITE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF BAMAKO pp. 99 – 108	
Loukou Bernard KOFFI, Kouakou YAO, Gnopoh Julien PREGNON, LES SOCIÉTÉS COOPÉRATIVES, ACTEURS DE DÉVELOPPEMENT DU SECTEUR HÉVÉICOLE EN CÔTE D'IVOIRE (1999-2012) pp. 109 – 120	
ANDE KOUAKOU ANTONY, THE SYMBOLISMS OF SONGS IN CHINUA ACHEBE'S NO LONGER AT EASE pp. 121 – 132	
Yogblo Armand GROGUHÉ, CONFLICTUALITÉ ENTRE COÉPOUSES ET SES EFFETS SUR LE VÉCU DE LA COÉPOUSE EN SITUATION DE HANDICAP MOTEUR EN CÔTE D'IVOIRE pp. 133 – 147	
Khardiata Ba, NEGOTIATING MOTHERHOOD AND PERSONAL ASPIRATIONS IN SINDIWE MAGONA'S TO MY CHILDREN'S CHILDREN AND FORCED TO GROW pp. 148 – 163	
Moulaye KONE, UNE ANALYSE PRAGMATIQUE DES ANTIPHRASES EN BAMANANKAN DANS LA COMMUNICATION DE LA POPULATION DE SIKASSO (MALI) pp. 164 – 176	
Alassane SIDIBE, GENDER AND RELIGION IN MALIAN LITERATURE: A READING OF SEYDOU BADIAN'S SOUS L'ORAGE AND NOCES SACRÉES pp. 177 – 189	

THE SYMBOLISMS OF SONGS IN CHINUA ACHEBE'S *NO LONGER AT EASE*¹

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Résumé

La musique est un élément très important pour l'Africain. Elle fait partie de la nature même de celui-ci (C. Chukwuemeka, p.180). Il en existe de plusieurs types avec pour chacun un objectif bien défini. L'œuvre de Chinua Achebe, *No longer at Ease*, contient un bon nombre de chants avec, pour chacun, un rôle bien précis. Cette diversité nous donne une idée des nombreux rôles que peuvent jouer ceux-ci dans la société. En effet, alors que certains permettent à l'auteur de montrer l'impact de la colonisation sur la culture africaine par l'introduction de nouvelles pratiques, d'autres font la promotion des valeurs chères à l'Afrique comme l'amour et la fraternité. D'une manière générale, les chants dans cette œuvre, tendent à mettre en lumière deux cultures qui s'opposent. Mais, en réalité, cette apparente opposition est utilisée par l'auteur pour montrer la complémentarité des deux cultures.

Mots clés : *Chant, Colonisation, Décolonisation, Modernisation, Valeurs Africaines.*

Abstract

Music is a very important element for the African. It is part of the very nature of this one (C. Chukwuemeka, p.180). There are several types of music, each with a specific purpose. Chinua Achebe's *No Longer at Ease* contains a number of songs, each with a specific role. This diversity gives us an idea of the many roles they can play in society. Indeed, while some allow the author to show the impact of colonization on African culture by introducing new practices, others promote values dear to Africa such as love and brotherhood. Generally speaking, the songs in this work tend to highlight two opposing cultures. But, in reality, this apparent opposition is used by the author to show the complementarity of the two cultures.

Keywords: African values, Colonisation, Decolonisation, Modernisation, Song.

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INTRODUCTION

Songs play several roles in the society today. Some use them to strengthen themselves and forget the difficult situation they are undergoing. Others resort to them to denounce an oppression they are victim of and thereby urge the people to resistance. R. Finnegan (2012) is in favour of this polysemy of songs when she bears out this: "songs can be used to report and comment on current affairs, for political pressure, for propaganda, and to reflect and mould

¹ Chinua Achebe, *No Longer at Ease*, (London: Heinemann, 1960).

public opinion.” (p.265). According to this reference, a song is sung for a specific purpose. In other words, as F. Zeitoun puts it; all the songs have a story.² In short, they say something about a particular situation. We have thus, according to R. Finnegan, abusive songs, action songs and subversive ones” (p.270). In Chinua Achebe’s *No Longer at Ease*, songs are also used for specific purposes. Some depict “urban decadence and volatility” others promote “the idea of rural piety and stability.” (A. Campu, 2013, p.2). This multidimensional form of songs in the novel prompts us to wonder: What is the objective of the different songs in Chinua Achebe’s novel? In other words, why does the author use them in his novel? What is his goal? To bring this work to fruition, we will resort to postcolonial studies defined by Lame MaatlaKenalemang (2013) in these words: “Postcolonial criticism, for instance, is mainly concerned with literature critiques from countries that are colonies of other countries (Tyson p.417). Because Achebe originates from Nigeria, a colony of Britain, some of the writing elements he uses in his novels such as language and style are influenced by that.” (p. 6). In short, as a postcolonial writer, the author’s language and writings are influenced by this idea. This chapter is made of three main parts: the first one is entitled song and the negative impacts of colonisation on African, the second one is song and the promotion of African values, the last part is entitled *No Longer at Ease* or the process of decolonising mind.

1- Songs and the negative impacts of colonisation

A number of songs in *No Longer at Ease* denounce the bad effects of colonisation on Africans habits and values. They depict the drawbacks of colonisation on the lives of Igbo people of Nigeria. In fact, through their structure, they expose the changes that occurred when white men set foot on the continent. They show how African ways and habits have negatively changed, giving way to violence in the society. This sad situation is seen through the following song which says:

'An in-law went to see his in-law
 Oyiemu---o
 His in-law seized him and killed him
 Oyiemu---o
 Bring a canoe, bring a paddle
 Oyiemu---o
 The paddle speaks English
 Oyiemu---o.' (p.42)

After listening to the song, the narrator says that even Obi, who had just come back from London, was degusted by its content. In fact, he cannot figure out what the cantor means in his song because the value promoted is totally opposed to what his Ibo traditions taught him. Obi cannot conceive that an in-law is able to kill his own in-law because, as mentioned just beneath the song, “a man’s in-law was his chi, his personal god” (p.42) and this is what he was taught all along his life. He has recorded that idea and cannot act differently. How can such a sacrilege be possible? For him, it is inhuman. The narrator says that Obi finds it difficult to accept such behaviour. But the last sentence of the song permits the reader to have an idea of the origin of this barbarism. Its line, “the paddle speaks English,” is pregnant with meaning. English being

² To quote the work by Zeitoun Frédéric entitled *Toutes les musiques ont une histoire : petite chronique des tubes de l'avant-guerre à nos jours*, (Paris : Ramsay, 2000).

the master's language or European property, one clearly understands what the cantor wants to hint at. Here, the singer is just saying that colonisation is the source of violence in Africa. Simply put, colonisers are the only responsible for the change and violence that erupts in Africa. Only *they* are to blame for the rampant violence noticed in colonial empires. F. Fanon (1963) evidences this theory when he writes "colonialism is not a thinking machine, nor a body endowed with reasoning faculties. It is violence in its natural state." (p.61).

In other words, violence is the characteristic trait of colonisation. It also means that colonisation cannot exist without violence. F. Fanon even gave explicit explanations when he says, "the argument the native chooses has been furnished by the settler." (F. Fanon, p.84). Bluntly speaking, violence is the cultural heritage that colonisers lent to Africans. Through the song above, we see that colonisation has perverted the African's ways and created new identities. This new generation is characterised by brutality and violence and is able to physically harm his or her relatives. Colonisation, in short, helped to introduce and reinforce "new offences and punishments" (D. Berselaar, S. Decke, 2011, p.744) in the continent. Even if violence was not the only means used by the colonial regime to reach his objective, as A. Rasheed (2010) says it, it played an important role (p.278). The singer is regarding colonisation as being the main cause of violence in the continent.

The author also refers to another element to show the bad effect of colonisation on African people: Christianity. Through this element, he shows how religion has numbed Africans' mind so that some lack self-esteem and self-confidence. They seem not to know what to do. The following song is a perfect illustration of depersonalisation.

Leave me not behind Jesus, wait for me
When I am going to the farm.
Leave me not behind Jesus, wait for me
When I am going to the market.
Leave me not behind Jesus, wait for me
When I am eating my food.
Leave me not behind Jesus, wait for me
When I am having my bath.
Leave me not behind Jesus, wait for me
When he is going to the White Man's Country.
Leave him not behind Jesus, wait for him.' (p.10).

We can see that the singer, Mary, does not belong to herself: she is not able to make a decision or do things by her own. She has to ask the Lord to help her, even when she is eating her food. Through this song, we notice a doubt that seizes Mary who is not sure of her salvation. She doubts about her salvation and is constantly asking Jesus to reassure her in her daily activities. Mary is not free; she is an alienated person who devotes all her times to serve the Lord. The description the narrator makes of her daily activities is pitiful: "Although Mary lived a long way from the church---three miles or more---she never missed the early morning prayer which the pastor conducted at cockcrow. In the heart of the wet season, or the cold harmattan, Mary was sure to be there" (p.7). She believes that her actions will permit her to have a place in heaven. That is why she is ready to do everything she can in order to secure her salvation. Mary

does not belong to herself. She is a victim of the white men Bible that paved the way for the sword. (Ngugi. W Th., 1964, p.57).

Concerning Okonkwo, in the beginning, one can see him behave as a good Christian rejecting anything going against his belief. But when the time comes for him to put into practice what he preaches, he bows down. In fact, he accepted to combine Christianity and African traditions when villagers came to his house to welcome his son. What took place that day was a mixture of Christianity and paganism, because the breaking of kola nut (p.47) is not a Christian activity but a traditional habit to which Christianity is opposed. At this level, we agree with A. Campu (2013) who recognises that “Isaac does not rigidly dismiss all aspects of the culture that he was born into as Nwoye, thus permitting the traditional presentation of the kola nut to guests, as long as it is not sacrificed to idols.” (p.5). Isaac, after this sacrifice cannot be considered a Christian or a non-Christian: he is just a human being without a clear identity. He is a person with a double identity. He adjusts according to the situation.

Secondly, when Obi informed his father Okonkwo about the girl he (Obi) wanted to take as wife, his father forgot the Holy Scriptures. Obi was then obliged to remind him of this: “[T]he Bible says there are no bond or free” (p.120). Disarmed, he replied saying: “My son, I understand what you say. But this thing is deeper than you think” (p.120). Okonkwo belongs to this group of Christians who speak much but act less. When time comes to implement what he preaches, he backs down. He rather puts forth his tradition saying and even recognising that Clara, Obi’s fiancée, is an *osu*, a people they should not have relation with. Despite his son’s explanations, he got stuck to his position. He is a hybrid person who does not know what to do and where to go. L. MaatlaKenalemang (2013) gives a clear definition of such people saying :

Most colonised individuals do not know whether to follow their own culture or the culture of the coloniser. Because of this they find themselves combining some of the elements of the two different cultures which make them move back and forth in between their present and past lives, hence their confused sense of belonging. This back and forth movement in most instances leads to a miscommunication that can be meaningful. (p.7).

Through this quotation, one clearly understands that some people do not radically reject their culture on behalf of another. They combine the two of them refusing to take side. Okonkwo, Obi’s father, is one of those who value the two elements without any big difference. He does not totally refuse his culture or that of the coloniser. On the contrary, as L. MaatlaKenalemang recognises it in the aforementioned quotation, Okonkwo moves back, certainly when an element from one culture does not fit his ideology and then moves forth to promote the good in them. He is an ambivalent individual belonging to this category of Africans having the “nomadic identities” (Chinh-Y. Ch., 2010, p. 36). He can also be considered as a “modern or postmodern New World nomad, continually moving between centre and periphery.” (H. Stuart, 1990, 234). His behaviour may be interpreted as the rejection of his origin but such a cultural tolerance needs to be promoted and valued in African societies to avoid judgement and resistance. It is what J. R. Gusfield (1967) calls “Mutual tolerance” and for him, such “syncretism of inconsistent elements has long been noted in the acceptance of religious usages and beliefs.” (p.355). This attitude can be used to mediate the complex relationship between the past and the present, tradition and modernity. F. Diop and D. Merunka (2013) are in favour of such an idea when they say: “On certain occasions, a traditional style

may reflect cultural integration rather than cultural resistance, such that old and new cultures and structures co-exist through mutual adaptations.” (p.13). It is very important to value the different cultures and consider the differences as a strength that can help develop harmony rather than division. We must, then, do our utmost to preserve and develop this cultural integration so that people in the world co-exist through this mutual adaptation. In fact, the rejection of others through their culture can lead to division, separation and resistance. F. Diop and D. Merunka (2013), once again warn us about this danger: “Therefore, the adoption of global fashion corresponds to the dominance of a global culture, whereas adoption of the local, traditional style corresponds to a cultural strategy of separation and resistance to global culture.” (p. 2).

Songs, as seen in this part, permit to show on the one hand, the influence of colonization on Africa through the change in Africans’ habits and their depersonalisation. But, on the other hand, it allows us to know that used positively, these elements can be a solution to some problems. In addition to this role, songs are also used to make the promotion of the cultural values of the continent.

2 – Songs and the promotion of African values

The songs that fall under this category are those aiming to promote African values and traditions. Indeed, in Africa, according to C. M. Chukwuemeka (2015), there are several types of music with a particular role assigned to each. As such, “African music is therefore a rich cultural value or heritage and through that Africans anywhere on the globe are easily identified.”(p.180). In other words, African music promotes the values of the continent and can be easily distinguished from the others. Unfortunately, with the advent of "European-oriented Modernity [which] is “forced on African tradition,” (M. Fouad, 2011, p.124). African music has been invaded and influenced (C. C. M. Chukwuemeka, p.182) compelling some writers to celebrate their own cultures. The strong desire to preserve and protect African values prompted the following song:

I went to Innocenti and asked him to read my letters.
 Innocenti said to me: 'I do not know how to read.'
 I asked Simonu to read for me. Simonu said:
 'This is what the letter has asked me to tell you:
He that has a brother must hold him to his heart,
For a kinsman cannot be bought in the market,
Neither is a brother bought with money.'
 Is everyone here?
 (*Heleee he ee he*)
 Are you all here?
 (*Heleee he ee he*)
 The letter said
 That money cannot buy a kinsman,
 (*Heleee he ee he*)
 That he who has brothers
 Has more than riches can buy.
 (*Heleee he ee he*) (p.117)

A careful reading of the song reveals the promotion of some African values such as brotherhood, solidarity and love or the preservation of good relationship with our relatives and surrounding. In this song, we can list some words like “brother”, “kinsman” which refer to fraternity, brotherhood and friendship. Conversely, words like “money”, “buy” and “riches” allude to material things that can ruin people’s relationship.

This song describes the world today where people are more attracted by money than real love, a world in which people can even sell their relatives for money. This song is the expression of the deep change and the decay in which this modern world “characterized by the attitude of individualism, liberalism, the method of science, and the rejection of authority” (B. Russel, 2001, p.247) has fallen. It is a strategy used by the author to correct the deviation in the society for, as C. M. Chukwuemeka (2015) says it once again:

The Africans see music as a weapon for correcting moral deviants and as a medium through which a lost society can be shocked back to life. Consequently, some classes of African music, namely traditional can therefore be regarded as a herald or vanguard of moral change because African folk musicians make conscious attempt to use their brand of music to influence behavior.(p.181).

This raw description of the society in this song aims at first shocking the society and then changing it. And, even if peace in pre-colonial Africa was often disrupted by violence (J. Kalama and Douperre. P. F., 2020, p.303), it must be acknowledged that life was sometimes good if one considers N. Sobania’s (N. Sobania, 2003, p.164) description of herdsmen’s lives in Kenya.

This song is topical and loaded with teaching. Indeed, today, the greed for money has stained until destroying people’s relation. Everything revolves around money. Ngugi waThiong’o (1977) is right to say that “money moves the world”. (p.233). In fact, nothing can be achieved without money. Today, parents can sell their children because of money and the children can do the same. The Holy Scriptures say that even Jesus Christ was sold for money, which means that nobody is spared. Through this song, one can see how colonialism has changed the good habits, the mentalities. In K. Gyekye’s (1988) words: “African societies in the past half century have been grappling with a variety of problems, most of which are the results of colonialism, imperialism and industrialism.”(p.13). In other words, Africans have espoused global culture and are thus dominated by it. In the same vein as K. Gyekye, M. Fouad (2011) argues that “in the present African context, globalization tendencies might induce the question of how one can attain and acquire modernity without being completely dominated by it” (p.114). Unfortunately, colonialism has impacted some domains of Africans lives such a way that some have, unwillingly, forgotten their values and traditions. This song is reminding them of these important things in order to urge them not to give up totally on their roots. As for C. Uwasomba (2006), he strongly believes that the “ravaging forces” (p.103) of modernisation also qualified by N. Nesbitt (2001) as a “barbarity masquerading” (p.180) can be blamed for these deviations. Simply put, this system (modernisation) is dangerous and harmful for African culture. Today, everyone wants to follow white men: dressing like white men and speaking their language. Joseph, Obi’s friend, is a good example. He strongly believes that “No decent restaurant served

Nigerian food” (p.31) which shows that he has abandoned his African roots. In fact, in his “Afro-European” (D. MeenaPydah, 2014, p.109) mind, all that comes from Africa is not as good as western product. P. B. Stevens (1983), says that in Tunisia, “Women recognize the prestige of French and may use the language in public to assert their modern status.” He continues saying that “Urgent requests and orders given in French are felt to receive quicker and better compliance than those given in Arabic.” (p.108). In other words, like these Tunisian women, Africans give importance to western culture. In their opinion, anything from the West is more valuable than local products. Just like them, Joseph in Chinua Achebe’s work wants to assert his modern status attending and eating in restaurants delivering only western food.

The old man recognises in the novel that “he who has people is richer than he who has money” (p.72). In other words, money cannot replace the love for the others and this thought is reinforced by the following sentence that says “He who has brothers has more than money can buy.” It means that without the others particularly our relatives and neighbours we are nothing. In short, “To move further therefore, Africans must constantly be reminded that it is good to be good; that we must shun all acts that promote nepotism and clannishness and most importantly, that we must become our brother’s keeper. (C. M. Chukwuemeka, p.181) This saying means that we have to consider our relations before everything. The context in which the aforementioned proverb was given draws our attention. In fact, people were trying to find a solution to Udo Joshua’s case: he was sacked for sleeping while on duty. So, he was “asking his countrymen to ‘borrow’ him ten pounds to look for another job” (p.71). The narrator said that they agreed to help him and the proverb came to strengthen their decision. Here, the countrymen are giving a good example of brotherhood and love, an attitude that seems to be difficult to experience nowadays.

The song highlights another element which is very important: the language. The cantor, not knowing how to read, went to his neighbours to help him. This raises the problem of language. European language and African one are always opposed. One has to analyse Obi’s reactions in England to notice the clash between the cultures. The narrator says:

He spoke Ibo whenever he had the least opportunity of doing so. Nothing gave him greater pleasure than to find another Ibo-speaking student in a London bus. But when he had to speak in English with a Nigerian student from another tribe he lowered his voice. It was humiliating to have to speak to one's countryman in a foreign language, especially in the presence of the proud owners of that language. (p.4-50)

Through this quotation we know that Obi went to England not only to learn white men’s knowledge but to value his own culture. The narrator says that it was a pleasure for him to speak his Ibo wherever he was and whenever he had the opportunity to do so. But he felt miserable when it comes to turn into English to address a countryman. He could not bear it. It was humiliating for him. Just like “Tunisians for whom the dialect is the form of language that one must know in order to be fully integrated into Tunisian society, at whatever level”, the Igbo is “in a very real sense the language of [Obi’s] ethnicity. The language of Obi’s authenticity” (P. B. Stevens, 1983, p.106). It is the language through which he is recognized and at ease. It reflects his identity. Speaking his Igbo permits him to be himself and give him the feeling of being in contact with his origin. Moreover, we can see that Obi refuses “to bow to the would-

be superiority of English as the referential language” (K. Djiman, 2013, p.101). He, indeed, notices that the fact of speaking European language and not his is a way of promoting western values and traditions. He knows that the fact of speaking their language is “a means of enforcing European control” (N. Sieben, 2012, p.1) on Africans. F. Fanon (2008) says “ speaking means to be in a position to use certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization” (pp.17-18). That is why he refuses the idea of subjection and struggles to promote his own culture and tradition through the defence of his language.

In this promotion of African values, the narrator refers to a song which reveals his attachment to African values. He uses this form of African song that K. A. Oghiator terms as “recreational songs” that are used for leisure. In his words: These songs are songs for both personal and group entertainment and are so interesting and fascinating that the songs induce people to perform excellently well without fear or shame. These songs, as he says it, are used for leisure or entertain. The following one is a good example of recreational songs:

I was playing moi guitar *jeje*,
A lady gave me a kiss.
Her husband didn't like it,
He had to drag him wife away.
Gentlemen, please hold your wife.
Father and mum, please hold your girls.
The calypso is so nice,
If they follow, don't blame Bobby. (pp.102-103)

When we listen to this song, at first sight, one might be tempted to say that it promotes infidelity or immorality. On this basis, one can agree with A. Câmpu who maintains that: “Among the attractions of the city depicted in *No Longer at Ease* are cultural sophistication and variety, sexual freedom, and the availability of glamorous consumer items. The musical and erotic allure of the Lagos nightclub scene is vividly evoked in the novel.” (A. Campu, p.1). In fact, it is not the case but just an illusion. The song aims at entertaining and not at valuing sexual deviation. Indeed, “A critical look at the forms or arrangement of parts of African Traditional music will reveal instantly that they are deliberately arranged to enhance the teaching of morals.” (C. M. Chukwuemeka, p.181). This song was performed in a nightclub which is a western invention. In short, it is the fruit of modernisation. But it can also be viewed as a modernised form of the “recreational song” which, according to K. A. Oghiator (2013), was performed just like the above song at “moon light play” (p.3). For A. Câmpu (2013), there is a strong opposition between modernity and tradition in the novel and the title he gave to his article “Tradition Versus Modernity in Chinua Achebe’s *No Longer at Ease* speaks louder. He contrasts urban life to rural one recognising “the city as the site of immorality and decadence while the rural countryside is regarded as the site of virtues.” (A. Campu, p.4). J. R. Gusfield (1967) opposes this idea and says that:

The capacity of old and new cultures and structures to exist without conflict and even with mutual adaptations is a frequent phenomenon of social change; the old is not necessarily replaced by the new. The acceptance of a new product, a new religion, a new mode of decision-making does not necessarily lead to the disappearance of the older form. New forms may only increase the

range of alternatives. Both magic and medicine can exist side by side, used alternatively by the same people. (p.355).

We can see that songs, here, permit the author to promote African values and put them at the same level as western culture. The following part will permit to see the way the author uses song to change people's mentality

3- *No Longer at Ease* and the process of decolonisation

This part focuses on the strategy Obi uses to counterattack the eurocentrism of European culture, to reject the so-called pre-eminence of European culture on African values in his village. To reach his goal, he makes use of several elements among which is the dressing. The narrator says that the day the village organised a feast to welcome Obi, "Everybody was properly dressed in agbada or European suit except the guest of honour, who appeared in his shirtsleeves because of the heat. That was Obi's mistake Number One. Everybody expected a young man from England to be impressively turned out" (P.28). Villagers wanted to see a person who looks like someone who has just come from London through his dressing. They didn't expect a young man simply dressed because in their mind, when a person comes from Europe, he has acquired western ways and has become a sort of white man. It is said that "The wearing of Western clothing by an African has often been maintained as a passport allowing a passage to a new world. It gave the illusion of a social ascension." (R. B. Gallimore, 1999, p.8). Through this quotation, one apprehends what these Africans meant: they want Obi to dress that way because it is a social ascension. Bluntly speaking, as a successful man in life, he has the obligation to dress so. Without doubt, the villagers do not know that "the way an individual adorns him/herself may not always be a reflection of his/her sense of self. Instead, his/her dressing can be a conduit that relays information about the society within which the individual finds him/herself" (P. T. Chingono, 2015, p.152). Obi's mentality is different from that of his fellow villagers. As a read person, his mind is open and he sees things differently. The simple way he got dressed that day demonstrates that he has not been drawn, immersed in white men's culture. He wanted to teach them a lesson: telling them that they have to remain natural and original. But they did not see things that way. For them, he had to behave likewise. This attitude is what Obi qualifies as "colonial mentality (p.37). The Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1987) refers to the expression "chaining of mind and of the soul" (p.46-47) to describe their attitude. They are slaves of western culture. All these realities compel us to agree with M. Gontard (1981) who recognises that "colonization has produced a strategy of depersonalization and alienation that has invested in the mental structures of the colonized (our translation)" (p.154). In other words, western culture has overwhelmed Africans.

When Obi got back to Africa, he soon realized that the grain sown by Europeans in his people's mind has grown up. He then concluded that something had to be done quickly because his people had forgotten their origin, their source. They had abandoned their values. So, he decided to act. But a question blew his mind: where to start and with whom? He hesitated between the masses and the authorities: "What an Augean stable!" he muttered to himself. Where does one begin? With the masses? Educate the masses?' He shook his head. 'Not a chance there. It would take centuries. A handful of men at the top. Or even one man with vision – an enlightened dictator (p.40). He recognises that the work is very big and hard. To be effective

and achieve success, he decided to start the day of his welcoming. That day, he taught a lesson to them which was to urge them to dress simply the way Africans used to and not mime Europeans. As an intellectual, Obi knew that: “The phenomenon of dress, as a symbol of communication, is a pivotal element in the construction and management of an individual’s identity. It is also a non-verbal artefact that conveys information about an individual in the process of communication. (P. T. Chingono, p.152). He uses this technics of dressing to impart silent information: that of remaining who one is. Most of them were shocked at seeing him dressed that way and the narrator highlighted the hot sun that shone that day.

While Obi, who spent several years in a western country, is trying to reconcile with his origins or roots in order to protect his cultural identity, his countrymen are struggling to appropriate western culture. Ch.-Y. Chiang (2010) recognises that “Globalism, following its monopolized corporate culture, leads to a seemingly unified world culture.” (p.29). It means that through this new practise all the cultures become one. Simply put, as one, the different cultures borrow one from the other for their own survival. In analysing the two sides, we understand that each group is trying, on the one hand, to discover a new culture and on the other to come back to the origins. Obi is trying to return to his culture after discovering western ways of life. On the contrary, his countrymen want to experience western culture. One understands that the two sides want to “interpenetrate” (J. R. Gusfield, p.357) the different cultures.

Secondly, he continued his process of decolonisation with another element which enables a people to be recognised: food. Joseph went with him to an English restaurant where European food was served. Obi told him he would go to an African place rather than eating a European food. Joseph, the African who wanted at all cost to be a European or be like them, thought that eating western food would confer on him the status of a Whiteman. So, he sent Obi to a European restaurant in order to be in a European atmosphere. He didn’t know his idea would disgust his guest who wanted to feel more African. Indeed, Obi doesn’t totally appreciate all that comes from western countries.

He ended this process with religion and to be convincing and efficient in his mission, Obi no more goes to the church because, as the M.P said, African Christians are “all bloody hypocrites” (p.51). In short, they live a life that is not theirs: they have a double identity; they are liars and are not trustworthy. In short, they are sheer pagans. Obi, in the beginning, trusted his father. He did not include him into this clique of hypocrites. He said to himself: “his father believed fervently in God” (p.51) but realised at last that he was mistaken. The trust he had in his father disappeared totally when, as a Christian, he refused to allow the union of his son to Clara considered as an *osu* that is an outcast, by the tradition. Obi’s father has one foot in Christianity and another one in tradition. He seems to be tough as Christians but maintains his traditions as the basis for his religious life. In short, Okonkwo is suffering and as L. Maatla Kenalemang (2013) recognises it:

The decision to follow Christianity by some members of Igbo society is greatly influenced by the suffering they had incurred from their own culture. Because they are so eager to get out of the pain and misery that Igbo religion had put them through, they do not realise that by joining the white missionaries they are actually making things harder for themselves in the long run (p.16)

Okonkwo, certainly, ignored that the situation would be the way it is. He thought the adoption of western religion would reduce his sufferings but unfortunately, he is overwhelmed by problems.

Conclusion

At the end of our work, we can say that songs play several roles in Chinua Achebe's novel. He uses them for several purposes. On the one hand, they help him criticise the negative effects of colonisation on African cultural values, to highlight the way European culture has perverted Africans ways. They also permit him to establish the difference between urban life and modern one. On the other hand, songs allow the author to promote or praise African values and to show its uniqueness in the world. They give him the opportunity to celebrate some cultural values such as brotherhood and love, elements that make the basis for African traditions. Finally, the author also resorts to songs in his novel to contribute to the decolonisation of his people's mind. African, because of colonisation and modernisation, are rejecting their culture on behalf of western value. This way of acting is so serious that it alarmed the author who decided to act. Moreover, it is important to say that globalisation may be important for the world but in its implementation, it may be harmful to the Africa continent which losing his roots and values.

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