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MOVING THE CENTER: EMPOWERING MINORITY DISCOURSE IN OKOT P'BITEK'S POEM "SONG OF MALAYA" FROM TWO SONGS

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Abstract: Nowadays, the world is facing tremendously violence, discrimination and even crimes **in matters related to sexuality and gender** in most countries. Consequently, this creates two conflictual groups, the minority and the majority, whose **cooperation is hindered by misunderstanding**. While they all claim legal recognition and defense, the world's traditional values and virtues are undergoing redefinition imposing a new world order in the near future. This work discusses the OKot p'Bitek's poetic aesthetics and how this empowers marginal discourses towards reversing the world's traditional norms and values. This problematic is achieved using Psychoanalytical concepts of "Defense", unconscious" and Queer Critical approaches to read the portions of poems. Through a qualitative research method this article analyses the ways in which gender is experienced by characters. In this work, it is discovered that the frailty of human nature, the society's hypocrisy and complicity have been empowering the so-called minority to the detriment of the majority who is losing power giving hence ground for the minority to impose a new world order.

Key Words: minority, majority, prostitution, sexuality, values.

Résumé : De nos jours le monde fait face à de gravement violence, discrimination, et même à des crimes liés aux questions de la sexualité et du genre dans la plupart des pays. En conséquence, ceci a donné naissance à deux groupes antagonistes, la minorité et la majorité, dont la cohabitation souffre de l'incompréhension. Alors qu'ils clament tous deux une existence légale et légitime et se défendent, les valeurs et vertus traditionnels sont en train de subir une redéfinition imposant ainsi un nouvel ordre mondial dans un futur proche. Ce travail discute l'esthétique poétique d'Okot p'Bitek et comment celle-ci renforce les discours de la minorité renversant ainsi les normes et valeurs traditionnelles du monde. Cette problématique est atteinte à travers le concept « defense », « unconscious » de la Psychoanalytique et « Queer Critical approach ». Comme méthodologie qualitative, cet article met l'accent sur les différentes manières dont les personnages ont expérimenté les réalités liées au genre. Dans ce travail, il a été découvert que la faiblesse de la nature humaine, l'hypocrisie et la complicité de la société encouragent et renforcent la soi-disant minorité au dépens de la majorité qui perd quotidiennement du terrain au profit de la minorité qui impose un nouvel ordre mondial.

Mots clés : minorité, majorité, prostitution, sexualité, valeur.

INTRODUCTION

Questions related to sex and gender all began in remote past with prostitution which succeeded stubbornly in being legalized in some countries while others severely penalize it to be a crime

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and deviancy. These two unfruitful approaches to prostitution have given birth to what is known today as LGBTQ+ – the lesbians, the gays, the bisexuals, the transgender (transsexuals and transverities), and the queers – who challenge the world in terms of traditional understanding of some values, virtues and laws. As a result, some of the world's common laws, virtues and values become powerless nowadays in the name of human freedom and rights. The world comes to a point where there is a confusion between “What is our nature?” and “What can we make of ourselves?” (R. Rorty, 1993, p.115). This poses one fundamental question: where does one's freedom really start and end? One of the human's freedoms that challenges aspects of traditional and common understanding of some values, virtues and laws is the freedom people have over their physical body, both privately and publicly. If a person is free to decorate his or her body, is he or she then free as well to use his or her sex as he or she wants? Is she or he free to decide over his or her sex? Is he or she free to choose his or her gender group? These questions, though, simple and banal, are shaking the foundation of the world when one considers the values and virtues they defend. In this vein, Carol A. B. Warren, Jennifer Kay Hackney, in *Gender Issues in Ethnography*, confirm that “issue related to gender or sex can be motivating and productive of strong research interest (2000, p.57).

In front of the birth of these groups, some critics consider them as just a question of moral panic, “a false or exaggerated perception that some cultural behaviour or group of people is dangerously deviant and poses a threat to society's values and interests” (G. Merrick, 2024, p.3) while others believe it is the birth of hegemon, “is a state that is so powerful that it dominates all other states in the system” (J. Mearsheimer, 2001, p. 4). Paola Paoloni and Rosa Lombardi in *Gender Studies, Entrepreneurship and Human Entrepreneurship and Human* “have decided to emphasize in our study the word entrepreneurship” (2020, p. v) so as to warn the world about the financial power of these groups. On their part, V. Spike Peterson and Anne Sisson Runyan decide to “explore how world politics looks when viewed through a gender-sensitive lens. This lens enables us to “see” how the world is shaped by gendered concepts, practices, and institutions (1999, p. 1). Their intention is to reveal as well the political influence of these minority groups in the modern society as they later highlight it in *Global Gender Issues in the New Millennium*. They conclude that

we retain the notion of gender as a lens on world politics, but we emphasize that the power of gender acts as a meta-lens that fosters dichotomization, stratification, and depoliticization in thought and action, sustaining global power structures and crises that prevent or mitigate against meaningful advances in social equality and justice” (2010, pp.1-2)

Today, many countries face difficulties and troubles related to sex and gender. The minority groups' expressions of sexuality and gender shock religious and moral understandings of some common traditional values and virtues. Today these groups are referred to as minorities but in the near future the reversal situation may occur as they are becoming more and more powerful. Even though the world is, for the meantime, in "some semblance of equilibrium" (C. Ian, 2005, p.12) this does not prevent the world from the potential conflicts between the majority and these minorities. The majority threatens and condemns these minorities who fervently disagree reasoning that they are expressing their personal freedom. In fact, these groups even refuse to be labelled minority, for it is discriminatory and degrading exposing them to social contempt. The clear example is the disagreements that occur between these minorities and the majority during political elections, economic crises, and educational programs in some developed countries. In America, for instance, policing of library books is set to ban books about these minorities so as to preserve "children who are actually endangered" (S. LaPierre, 2023, p.32). As a result, the world's center is being moved or shifted slowly towards these minorities. The influence of these minorities during various political elections in Europe, America and other countries are proofs of this unavoidable change. The world is undergoing passively and powerlessly this reversal of values and virtues where minority discourses are being empowered requiring thus reconsideration, understanding, legality and finally legitimation. The questions this article attempts to clarify is: how is minority defined? Is it the numerical number of people? Or is it the power and influence of the people? If it is true that laws and regulations carry the power people give to them, what happens when these very people have no power at all? If the minority is more powerful than the majority, then the traditional values and virtues let alone the laws and the regulations lose systemically their understanding and later on their power. Then, the traditional world is "out of balance?" (S. Brooks and W. Wohlforth, 2008, p. 67).

In this vein, Okot p'Bitek's *Two Songs*,¹ a collection of poems, stands as a prophecy and revelation as far as the conflict between these minorities and the majority is concerned and how the world has become an ever-changing place in terms of values, because it helps readers "to plunge into reality" (G. A Kilcourse, 2001, 20) they are not familiar with.

As a result, this work discusses the poetic aesthetics of Okot p'Bitek and how this empowers marginal discourses towards reversing the world's traditional norms and values. In

¹ Okot p'Bitek's *Two Songs*, this book is referred to in this work as "TS" followed with page numbers

other words, this article aims to show how Okot p'Bitek is alerting readers about the birth of new world order and the problematic of the majority.

The analyses and interpretations of the poems are done through psychoanalytic theoretical and Queer Critical approaches. In Tyson's terms, "queer criticism reads texts to reveal the problematic quality of their representations of sexual categories, in other words, to show the various ways in which the categories homosexual and heterosexual break down, overlap, or do not adequately represent the dynamic range of human sexuality (L. Tyson, 2006, p. 336). The homosexual categories in this queer criticism includes the Gays and the Lesbians, because "for queer theory, then, our sexuality is socially constructed (rather than inborn) to the extent that it is based on the way in which sexuality is defined by the culture in which we live (L. Tyson, 2006, p. 336). For psychoanalytic theoretical approaches, concepts such as "the unconscious and defenses", (L. Tyson, 2006, pp.11-17) will help understand the characters' attitudes, actions, reactions and choices in the poems.

Through a qualitative research method this article analyses the ways in which gender is experienced by characters as the poet portrays their emotions, feelings, choices, actions. Malaya's prospective attitudes toward both other characters and her personal identity lays bare prostitution and its ramifications.

Structured in two parts, this work firstly addresses, human nature and gender freedom: an expression of defenses, by unveiling the hypocrisy of the majority as a fertile ground of conflicts and inefficiency of social laws. The second part, towards empowering minority discourse: new world order in making, reveals the impact of synesthetic language of the poems and the empowerment reasons of the minorities.

1- Human Nature: A Fertiliser of Minority Empowerment

Human nature, measured and evaluated through sexuality, reveals instability and frailty leading to exaggerated freedom expressed through prostitution, homosexuality, lesbianism, zoophilia, paraphilia and gender related issues. As the poet unveils the different characters involved in Malaya's sexual activities, the reader is compelled to ponder over the real motive of these characters. Through the lens of Psychologists, the reader notices immediately that "when we look at the world through a psychoanalytic lens, we see that it is comprised of individual human beings, each with a psychological history that begins in childhood experiences in the family and each with patterns of adolescent and adult behavior that are the direct result of that early experience (L. Tyson, 2006, p.12). The poet, in his poetics of sexual

freedom expressions, reveals the hypocrisy of human beings in this hedonist modern era whereby F. M. Chipasula's point of view, "sexuality is regulated by a complex set of taboos (2009, p.2)" becomes less significant and vanishes from people's conscience and life principles. It is in such a context that Malaya uses "married whores of the world" to point at the disguise and unfaithfulness of married people who are effectively involved in prostitution as herself. This double-faced attitude of the society nourishes this sexual practice and empowers the practitioners who are hypocritically condemned, oppressed, discriminated and despised. In the first poem, "Kabiru" the poet makes the list of different people who are involved in sexual intercourses with Malaya: "welcome ashore/you vigorous young sailor/ you soldier/ you reprieved murder/you prisoner and detainee/ you drunken Sikhs/ and you skinny/ Indian vegetarian/you sweating engineer/ to you/schoolboy lover/welcoming you teachers/chieftain/you factory workers/you shop assistants/ brother, /leader of the people (TS, pp:127-131)". By listing these different social categories represented by Malaya who express their sexual freedom through prostitution, the poet is highlighting how human hypocrisy is sponsoring what the society pretends to condemn openly through laws and regulations. This depiction makes sexuality in the poem become "cognitively non-subsumable, unique objects of attention (J. M. Bernstein 2004, p. 148)". Aesthetically, the reader celebrates with the speaker the refusal and disagreement of the minorities like prostitutes, gays and lesbians and transgendered people to heed to the blames of the society, the majority. This hypocrisy translates the frailty of human nature, a private water tank revitalising these minority practices. Surprisingly, among the list there are adults and youths on the one hand, and on the other hand there are rich and poor people and this corroborates the fact that the majority and the minority are not so different for the former to condemn the latter. In addition, the list subsumes politicians and teachers who pretend to be the model of the society labelling ironically this minority devils and destroyers of moral and religious laws. The poet establishes a kind of ambiguity, complexity, and complicity as far as sexual freedom is concerned as these categories of people find interests and satisfaction in their frail nature. Malaya, knowing this, mocks vehemently and reproachfully at the society to stress on "the polyvocality of individual respondents" (L. Lamphere, H. Ragone, and P. Zavella 1997, p. 78) to prostitution and gender issues.

Why, Baba...
Was it not you
Three nights ago?

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Do you not remember
Bursting into my house
Forcing me down
And tearing my knickers...
As if I were unwilling...? (TS, pp.135-136)

Why should “Big Chief”, “Baba” fight, discriminate and despise Malaya who is his comforter in privacy? And, the poet to reveal the majority’s complicity, lets Malaya retort to “Big Chief” in these verses: “but did I not take care/ of you in my house/and wake you up/before the cock/ knocked on the door of Day?/ and you were grateful,/you smiled and wished me/good day/ and promised to meet me/ that evening.../ don’t you remember...? (TS, p.137).” To denounce this human hypocrisy and the complicity of the society, the poet focuses as well on “Big Chief” who has more than Malaya as sexual partners. In his lust, “Big Chief” is sick and wanted to blame Malaya, who reminds him assertively that, “and, Chief/ how do you know/ it was I/ who gave it to you, anyway?/ did I not see you/disappear behind the/ Night Club/ with my friend Achola?” (TS, p.137). This character of “Big Chief”, instead of caring for the country, is rather wasting his energy outside his marriage infecting consequently his wife and other women thereby losing the health and strength that should be devoted to building his society. This hypocrisy is severely denounced by the poet in the poems whenever the involved people want to criticise shamelessly Malaya as a bad character while they themselves are worse. At this level, Tyson’s “homophobic reading, that is, a reading informed by the fear and loathing of homosexuality” (2006, p.319) helps diagnose the poet’s authorial ideology. In his denunciation of this complicity, the poet launches his poetic attack on another character who is worse than the chief as he vexes in pedophilia.

And you bush teacher
Troubling my son,
How dare you
Throw the first stone
While Christ writes
In the sand?
How many teen-agers
Have you clubbed
With your large hammer,
Sowing death in their
Innocent fields?
Who does not know
The little girls
In your class
Who are your wives,

And the children
That these children
Have
By you? (TS, p.173)

This stanza about the school teacher who lives immoral life and commits paedophilia with his pupils is worse than Malaya and yet he wants to rebuke her by despising her child in the classroom. In the poet's allusion to the Bible where a woman is guilty of adultery and is saved by Jesus, the implication is that nobody is saint in this matter of prostitution and other sexual expressions to condemn his fellow. Wilfred L. Guerin et al (2005, p.224) call "crude sexuality" the poet's descriptive portrayal of sexuality. Indirectly, the poet is revealing his pessimism in front of human frailty and hypocrisy which constitute the underground stone sustaining homosexuality, lesbianism, and all other gender corollaries. What Malaya is not ready to tolerate is the society's double-faced attitude toward these minorities.

Gay men and lesbians who are members of racial minorities in America face a complex system of discrimination. In addition to the oppression they suffer in white heterosexist culture, nonstraight African Americans, Asian Americans, Chicanos/as, and Latinos/as are sometimes heavily stigmatized in their own communities (Tyson, 2006, p.320).

In the previous stanza, Malaya uses some words to qualify the teacher's immoral behaviour in favour of hers. The words, "children, innocent and death" epitomise the gravity and sadism in the character of the teacher. The poet goes further to portray one marriage where the husband and the wife are both unfaithful. The husband, Malaya's brother, accuses her to be a shame to their family while he lives as well the same shameful life: "do you remember/ the number of your room? /of course, / you did not know/that I/ was in the next room/with your friend, /your boss (TS, pp.176-177)". This hypocrisy of the brother has "pointed to the arbitrary nature of collectively held and unconsciously inscribed belief-systems regarding women (J. Mitchell, 1974, p.58)" and other minority groups through the eyes of men and the society. And to support Malaya in her disagreement with any criticism, the poet reveals the unfaithfulness of the brother's wife also: "have you not yet discovered/ that quite often/the foresters come/ to your hunting ground,/fell your tall nvuli tree/ and split it down the middle/in your own garden?/and hunters,/ do they not/chop their victim/in your own kitchen,/ and use the towel/ in your bathroom/to wipe the blood/off their spear and knives? (TS, p.179)". It is at this level the

word “married whores” is used to refer to both women and men who, despite their marriage, engage themselves in all kinds of sexual activities. Directly and convincingly, the poet holds society responsible for the discrimination and sufferings the Gays, Lesbians, prostitutes, and other minorities undergo mercilessly in the hands of the hypocrites. Rich Adrienne critically rejects discriminations against minorities in these terms: “heterocentrism, a more subtle form of prejudice against gay men and lesbians, is the assumption, often unconscious, that heterosexuality is the universal norm by which everyone’s experience can be understood” (1979, p.239).

Okot p’Bitek’s poetics of sexual freedom shows a challenge transfiguring sexuality from private into public and common practice highlighting gender influences as Teresa de Lauretis points it out: “sexuality, commonly thought to be a natural as well as a private matter, is in fact completely constructed in culture according to the political aims of the society’s dominant class” (1987, p.2). Malaya, the protagonist in the poem, is requiring new treatment and understanding toward those stigmatised as minority as the quotation below highlights it.

Contemporary psychoanalytic theories recognise the diversity that characterises gender roles and sexual practices in most human societies. All of these are favourable (and long overdue) developments. But what does psychoanalysis have to offer feminism (or literary studies) in our current multiracial, multiethnic, multicultural global context? Some recent movements, I believe, have merit – not only in terms of how we view women’s place(s) in society, but also in terms of how we understand historical memory (G. Plain and S. Sellers, 2007 p.248).

These scholars’ points strengthen Okot p’Bitek in his poetic enterprise to warn the society against the collective responsibility, hypocrisy, complicity and sponsorship in gender related troubles all over the world. The poet transfers his mood to Malaya who concludes the whole collection in a defying tone: “let the disappointed men/ shout abuses at us,/ let their jealous wives/let the bitches/pour boiling water on us/let our parents/spit curses/let our brothers/ choke with shame and anger/let the black Bishop/and priests/ preach against us/let Parliamentarians/ debate and pass laws/against us/let the police arrest us/and lock us up/let the magistrates/sentence us to jails... (TS, pp.182-184)”. All these punitive attempts are, in the eyes of Malaya, pure jokes and illusions as these same people are her sexual clients and partners. p’Bitek takes prostitution as a focus to denounce the “objectification (Heidegger 1975, p.110)” of sexual activities; women’s “individuation” (Horkheimer and Adorno 1998, p.156) and the society’s pretentious criminalisation and stigmatisation. Differently put, Malaya

is questioning the power of the patriarchal society and its hypocrisy coupled with the frailty of human nature to get rid of her activity.

The metaphorical defy “who can command the sun not to rise in the evening?” And the satire, “or having risen can hold it at noon and stop it from going down in the west?” reveal the futility to blame, discriminate, despise, stigmatise and oppress these minority groups known today as LGBTQ+, because they are only the visible aspect of the iceberg while the hypocrite majority, the invisible, lies in the underground.

Ironically, the poet holds these different people responsible for the society’s welfare: “tell me/You mayors and town clerks, /When will you destroy/The stinging weeds/From the City Parks?”. He knows they cannot do anything and should consequently stop discriminating against these minorities in society.

And you headmistresses
And headmasters...
Where are your gardeners?
Do you not see
The wild thorn trees
Blossoming in your compounds?
You Presidents, Ministers,
Liberators of Africa,
You heroes,
You who defeated colonialism
And imperialism,
True sons of Africa
Brave fighters against
Corruption and decay,
You revolutionaries...
Where are the advisors
The experts and mercenaries?
Can we not free Africa
From this one pest? (TS, p.140)

This question to all nations where prostitution and other gender issues reign is very crucial as the poet refers to prostitution as a pest, because this modern technological and material world is breeding a tragedy where “man becomes human material” (Heidegger, 1975, p.111) sexually considered. This word “pest” explains as well the different categories of people who are contaminated as they vex in it. The poet’s invitation to presidents and ministers and other different societal figures shows the degree of this hypocrisy and the real effects of the frailty of human nature.

On the whole, this section discusses society's hypocrisy in partaking in the various sexual expressions while pretending to condemn and fight them. This reveals the complicity of the society and its shameless discrimination against these minorities. Additionally, the frailty of human nature has been the main factor leading the majority to privately sponsor and nourish what the society is openly despising. Consequently, such attitudes have rather empowered the minorities who are ready to challenge the society by requiring acknowledgement, acceptance, legitimization and legalisation leading to reversal of traditional values and an imposition or birth of a new world order to the hypocritical majority.

2- Empowering Minority Discourse: New World Order in Making

Using prostitution as the backdrop of his poems, p'Bitek's central personage, Malaya, as a member of the minority group, challenges the majority through violent and aggressive insults and attacks on wives, husbands, judges, lawyers, priests, and family members who bedevil her because of her prostitution. The attitude of Malaya in the poem "brings the presence of what was previously uncalled into a nearness" (Heidegger, 1975, p.198) to the reader. Aesthetically, the poet, with the complicity of his diction and synesthetic language in the poems, energises Malaya to lay bare the intricacies of prostitution and its corollaries. In all Malaya's effort to reason with her society which is the majority, she reveals psychoanalytically her own and the other characters' unconscious – fear, anger, desire and conflict – that the reader discovers as she barks and shouts at the majority, the society, around her. Her portrayal then displays new understanding and awareness the reader should have of humans' expression of sexual freedom and its corollaries in the derivative groups: LGBTQ+² as attempts to reverse the world's traditional order. When humans' troubles and sufferings are critically analyzed, it becomes clear to some extent that "our repetition of destructive behavior reveals the existence of some significant psychological difficulty that has probably been influencing us for some time without our knowing it" (L. Tyson, 2006, p.12). If Malaya may be accused of having a psychological problem, then the majority who sponsors privately her sexual activity has as well more than this mental shortcoming. The majority who blames and accuses Malaya, lives in a psychological fear to lose control of the world and its future while the minority as well lives in the same fear to be trampled and rejected. Each group strives for its survival and dominion creating thereby a kind of cold war waiting for a fertile ground to degenerate into open arm

² Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgender (transsexuals and transvertites), Homosexuals.

conflicts. In this section, the reactions and attitudes of all the characters in the poem are read through the Psychoanalytical concept “Defense” as Tyson explains it in the quotation below:

Defenses include *selective perception* (hearing and seeing only what we feel we can handle), *selective memory* (modifying our memories so that we don’t feel overwhelmed by them or forgetting painful events entirely), *denial* (believing that the problem doesn’t exist or the unpleasant incident never happened), *avoidance* (staying away from people or situations that are liable to make us anxious by stirring up some unconscious—i.e., repressed—experience or emotion), *displacement* (“taking it out” on someone or something less threatening than the person who caused our fear, hurt, frustration, or anger), and *projection* (ascribing our fear, problem, or guilty desire to someone else and then condemning him or her for it, in order to deny that we have it ourselves) (Tyson, 2006, p.15).

These concepts as the various aspects of defense have been the lens through which the various characters’ behaviours make sense or can be understood. Malaya’s overreactions, anger and insults, as a minority, exhibit some of these aspects of defense while the other characters’ lives as the majority group highlight the other aspects of the concepts. These two groups are interconnected to effectively empower minority discourses and are foregrounding thereby new apprehension of traditional common shared values and principles. The speaker in “part-time”, shouts rhetorically: “and you/ my married Sister,/ you whose husband/ I also love dearly,/ when will you learn/ to be grateful/ to me? (TS, p.147)”. By claiming acknowledgement from the unfaithful husband’s wife, Malaya, the prostitute shows the importance of her sexual activity with the man who is neglected by the wife: “when you turn/ into a bitch/ and he storms out/ of your house,/ mad at you, hungry, thirsty...(TS, p.148)”. Pointing out at the wives’ neglect and bad treatment of their husbands as the cause of prostitution, these verses stress as well the soothing and palliative role of Malaya. The husband is facing a problem in his marriage as his ‘wife turns into bitch’ and leaves him in hunger and thirst. These are serious private problems that empower humans in their frailty to give vent to their weaknesses. At this level, the Psychoanalytical concept “*avoidance*, staying away from people or situations that are liable to make us anxious by stirring up some unconscious—i.e., repressed—experience or emotion” (L. Tyson 2006, p.15), helps assess the husband’s reaction towards his wife’s educational shortcomings. The impacts of hunger and thirst whether they are sexual, emotional, dietary and spiritual on nearly all human beings are often disastrous. In other words, these two lacks –thirst

and hunger – destabilize many humans’ psychology and productivity from privacy to public. To save the situation, Malaya’s prostitution stands as an antidote and a tranquilizer for the man. To give credit to this palliative aspect of prostitution, the speaker reasons as follows

Is not I
Who nurse and soothe him
Like my own baby?
Does he not return to you
Clean shave, smiling
Like a boy of fifteen
Does he ever come home
With dirty clothes...? (TS, p.148)

Given the list of care Malaya gives to the hungry, thirsty and abandoned husband, the reader is aesthetically dumbfounded to accuse her and despise her activity. Malaya nurses, soothes the man because he is abandoned in hunger and thirst which cripple and dirty his physical appearance. But, as he meets Malaya, he goes back home rejuvenated, revived, energized and clean without stress and nervousness. The poet is describing Malaya and her prostitution as psychiatrist and psychologist saving mental deranged people. The man enters Malaya’s room as a sick man entering hospital and comes out healed and cured. As the man returns to his lovelorn wife completely energized, Malaya is sending a warning to the wives who represent here the hypocrite majority not to downgrade the importance of her sexual activity. As the orchestrator of all this, the poet stresses the invisible power the so-called minorities have in privacy which fosters them to challenge the traditional consensus on some values. Malaya in such a portrayal, highlights the psychoanalytical concept “denial, believing that the problem doesn’t exist or the unpleasant incident never happened” (L. Tyson, 2006, p.15) as she is blinded by the benefits the hypocrite majority gets from her enterprise. Ironically, the so-called majority is a fake majority while the minority is rather the unknown majority. In other words, the minority has in secrecy the support of the majority who in definite is rather a minority in privacy. The poet’s portrayal holds wives responsible for the spread of prostitution empowered by husbands’ unfaithfulness. Malaya, the prostitute, is presented by the poet as the alternative for husbands whose marriage suffers wives’ inappropriate and careless behaviours and attitudes. Okot p’Bitek’s such portrayal of sexuality advocates new understanding of gay and lesbian experiences from the minority standpoint referred to as “minoritizing views” and an appraisal of gay and lesbian experiences from the homosexual standpoint known as “universalizing views”. These two viewpoints developed by Eve

Kosofsky Sedgwick (1990, p. 145) in *Epistemology of the Closet*, demand acceptance of these minorities among the majority.

The poet's empowerment of Malaya is so strong that the speaker vocalises the following verses as a leitmotiv traversing the whole song. This takes the form of epilogue for every single poem as follows, "Sister Prostitutes/wherever you are,/wealth and health/to us all (TS, p. 142)". The use of the plural pronoun "us" is very telling of the poet's ideological project to illustrate Tyson's "social constructionism" which holds that "homosexuality and heterosexuality are products of social, not biological, forces" (Tyson, 2006: 321). Such identification with this character by the poet gives the poem homosexual orientation: "another task a lesbian critic might perform is to show the ways in which a text that is clearly heterosexual in its intention nevertheless has an important lesbian dimension" (Tyson, 2006: 327). In this sympathy, encouragement and empowerment by the poet to Malaya, he pictures another situation where he asks metaphorically and rhetorically, Malaya: "do you see/ the maggots/limping from the wounds/ of loneliness? / they crawl in haste/to the motherly warmth/of your embrace.../ angel Prostitutes (TS, p.154)". Husbands are negatively portrayed or depersonalized as "maggots limping from the wounds of loneliness" to the "motherly warmth and embrace" of Malaya. In other words, the husbands are wounded and left in loneliness that is why they limp as maggots to Malaya who is pictured as a source of energy to give life to them. The metaphor in the word "maggot" is very importance as it hints at the destroying process of the husbands saved at the right time by Malaya, who is presented as a mother caring for them. So far, p'Bitek's poetic narrative and portrayal deconstruct any blame, reproach, denigration of Malaya as her sexual business is highlighted as mending the falling marital walls of the societies. p'Bitek bends the society to be victim of what Psychoanalysts call in defense "projection, ascribing our fear, problem, or guilty desire to someone else and then condemning him or her for it, in order to deny that we have it ourselves". In his poetic commitment in favour of these minorities, the poet goes far to reveal another modern practice that drive husbands out into the arms of prostitutes. In the stanza, "what better proof/ of manhood?/ especially when the wife/ in the house/ eats lizard eggs/to prevent pregnancy (TS, p.151)", the poet gives justification to prostitution as he presents wives' refusal to prove their husbands' manhood through contraceptive methods. What this stanza stresses is of daily importance today in marriages where without the consent of husbands, wives take drugs and other planning familial methods to refuse pregnancy. In such a situation, husbands either divorce or become unfaithful to their wives to get children outside or simply marry privately another wife. In the context of the

corpus, the poet restricts the choices for husbands and forces them into prostitution as his intentional empowerment of Malaya to impose her as the solution to these frustrated husbands. This depersonalisation of husbands by the poet is better explained by Psychologists as “displacement, taking it out” on someone or something less threatening than the person who caused our fear, hurt, frustration, or anger” (L. Tyson, 2006, p. 15). These husbands as part of the majority, blame, reproach, stigmatise, criminalise, despise, discriminates Malaya instead of being sincere to acknowledge openly either Malaya’s social importance or their own frailty, hypocrisy and complicity. Addressing such wives, Malaya rejects the negative identities the society gives to her.

My friend,
Did your father teach you
To hate your husband’s
Outside wives?
To hate his children
By his part-time wives?
You have two little daughters,
I have three sons...
Our husband is father
To, at least, five kids (TS, p.150)

The poet’s empowerment of Malaya is so alarming as she becomes the continuation and not the destruction of the society. In her vindicated attitude, Malaya considers herself as a part-time wife not a prostitute and the poet as well qualifies indirectly Malaya’s sexual activity as normal and inevitable since it palliates some troubles in the society, because “our sexuality is one of the clearest and most consistent barometers of our psychological state in general. For psychoanalysis, our sexuality is an inescapable human reality to which we must live a relationship (L. Tyson, 2006, p.24)”. In a kind of celebration, the poet praises Malaya and encourages her: “sister.../take your rightful share/of your man... (TS, p.158)”. For the poet, it is the right of Malaya and her likes to share other women’s husbands as they give them care and solutions in dire situations. And the stanza ends in plausible manner: “take him by hand/Along the beautiful garden/Along the Red River,/Let him play with the soft grass/And touch the slippery banks/Give him a ride/On the mad mule,/Up and down/The steep hillside...”

Let him taste
The wild honey
He cannot get
In his own home...
Sister Malaya
Wherever you are,

Wealth and health
To us all (TS, p. 159).

Given the poet's portrayal of sexuality and the predominate erotic atmosphere, the whole poem draws Gay critics' attention to assess the thematic orientation, for "Gay critics also examine how gay sensibility affects literary expression and study the ways in which heterosexual texts can have a homoerotic dimension" (L. Tyson, 2006: 332). The poet's use of "to us all" which ends the stanza added to his praising them in "sister Prostitutes/ wherever you are/ power and fame (TS, p.167)" testifies to his empowering endeavor toward these minorities. With the power given to them, Malaya, the spokeswoman for the minorities, disagrees with critics and demands respect from them to confirm the text's homosexual trend and orientation.

Look at the slaves
Of the World
Calling themselves
Wives,
Penned like goats
To unwilling pegs...
Married whores of the world
Why don't you
Leave me alone?

For Malaya, those who are married are rather slaves because they are not only unfaithful to their spouses but they are evils and agents of social troubles because of their hypocrisy and irresponsibility. These people, in Malaya's terms "fail to achieve a coherent sense of self" (N. F Radel, 1994, p.187). Because they – the majority and the minorities – are the same, there is no need, in Malaya's viewpoint, to criticise her as she contributes to peace, mental tranquility and barrenness in marriages. On the whole, prostitution is portrayed by Okot p'Bitek as solving marital problems from emotional to psychological ones. The poet's sympathy with the prostitutes, Malaya, is very poignant and revelatory in his synesthetic language and portrayal. Rhetorically, Malaya asks:

But
Who can command
The sun
Not to rise in the morning?
Or having risen
Can hold it
At noon
And stop it

From going down
In the west? (TS, p.184)

It is daunting for this character to make prudishly such a declaration comparing herself and other prostitutes with sun at its zenith. The boldness of the character derives from the poet's empowering project toward the world's minorities and his anger and regret coupled with his awareness that people are fake and pretentious as far responsibility and sincerity are concerned in social relationships. As the moon is unstoppable from its journey because it is not human made, the poet is warning the world against the private sponsorship of the majority to the minorities who, in the near future will become very powerful to reverse and redefine traditional values and structures of societies all over the world.

Conclusion

This work has discussed the poetic aesthetics of p'Bitek and how this empowers marginal discourses thereby alerting readers to the birth of new world order. Okot p'Bitek's collection "predisposes its audience to a very specific kind of reception" (H. R. Jauss, 1982, p. 23) of prostitution as a focus of minority in this poem. The work has two subchapters wherein the first one focuses on human nature as an aspect of minority empowerment and the second one discusses the birth of new world order from the minorities.

In the process of my arguments in the first section, it proved that prostitution serves a tranquilising and soothing instrument in privacy for lovelorn, disappointed and distraught husbands who believe in women's "obedience to the social hierarchy (M. Horkheimer, and W. Theodor Adorno, 1998, p.131)". In this vein, prostitution has been used to bring together different groups of people in the society involved it. Using prostitution as the focal point to raise minority and gender issues, the poet, in showing the interests different people have privately in prostitution, reveals the frailty of human nature. It is argued that, the hypocrisy of human being both man and woman whether married or not has empowered Malaya and her minority groups. In addition to this frailty, the analyse stresses as well the complicity of the society with these minorities. These two realities have been used by the poet to energize Malaya who does not admit any discrimination, blame and critique from husbands, wives, family members, lawyers, and religious leaders who are her private sexual partners. Malaya, a representative of the minorities all over the world, challenges by barking, insulting and lecturing the majority to be responsible. This chapter establishes familiarity between Malaya

and the poet to reveal the poet's weakness and affection for this character which in fact gives a homosexual trait to the collection.

In the second subchapter, the work has stressed the different interests people have in prostitution and how this sexual practice has contributed to solving marriage problems. In addition, this discussion highlights Malaya's social importance which permits her to reclaim respect, consideration and encouragement. In this chapter, Malaya, the spokeswoman of the world's minorities, is redefining and requiring the society's understanding of some traditional values and virtues through her rejection of any criminalisation of her sexual activity. Malaya's characterisation is obliging the world not to consider prostitution as "a crisis of human relationships, and of the human personality, as well as a social convulsion" (E. Terry, 1996, p. 131).

Through this study it is discovered that the frailty of human nature is sponsoring privately what was and is commonly, legally, traditionally, morally and religiously condemned. In the same vein, the complicity of the society is also proved to empower it while the same society intends to combat this. While these reasons nourish prostitution as a focus of minority practices, the world's traditional understanding and definition of some values and virtues are being challenged and consequently lose their classical and collective comprehension. Another result which is alarming is the disintegration of the so-called majority of the world due to people's hypocrisy in favour of the minority who, though few in number, is imposing a new world order in terms of values and virtues. If the world's minorities known as LGBTQ+ succeed in imposing their views and understandings to the world, what future is reserved to the world in terms of values and virtues? Can these minorities and majorities cooperate peacefully and eternally in the different societies? Is the hegemony of these minorities not leading to the apocalyptic end of the world?

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