MISAPPREHENSION AS A CROSS-CULTURAL EFFECT: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF JOSEPH CONRAD'S *HEART OF DARKNESS* AND SAMMY OKE AKOMBI'S *THE RAPED AMULET*[i]

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Abstract:
This paper enrolls in an enhancement of Africa's cultural representation, long time falsely perceived. England has most of time undervalued, subject to nourish misconceptions about Africa. This, because the black continent has a range of traditions that could not be seen through western glasses. In the same line of thought, Africa's perception of England is not far from unholiness. This situation leads to discriminative behaviours towards African students in England and English tourists in African countries. In a basket, mutual-acceptance between Africans and English is difficult, because each of them misapprehend other's traditions and perceptions. This study illustrates cultural divergences between Africans and English. The emphasis here is on cultural mutual-acceptance. To reach this goal, I use New historicism, Africana critical theory, post colonialism and reader-response to explore, interpret and analyse, facts relating to cultural misapprehension in *Heart of Darkness* and *The Raped Amulet*.

Keywords: cross-cultural effect, misapprehension, mutual-acceptance, diversity

Résumé :
Cet écrit s'inscrit dans le cadre d'un rehaussement de l'image culturelle de l'Afrique, longtemps faussement perçu. En toute sincérité, les Anglais ont longtemps mésestimé l'Afrique sur le plan culturel. Ceci est dû à la diversité des traditions africaines qui sont incomprises en raison des standards anglais. Pareillement, les Africains perçoivent à tort les pratiques et habitudes anglaises en référence aux valeurs promues en Afrique. Cette situation conduit à des comportements discriminatifs tant pour les Africains aux études en Angleterre que pour les Anglais en visites touristiques en Afrique. En somme, la cohabitation entre Africains et Anglais est difficile à cause des incompréhensions

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[i] LA MALCOMPREHENSION COMME UN EFFET DE CROISEMENT DE CULTURE: UNE ETUDE COMPARÉE DE *HEART OF DARKNESS* ECRIT DE JOSEPH CONRAD ET *THE RAPED AMULET* DE L'AUTEUR SAMMY OKE AKOMBI

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culturelles des uns et des autres. Cette étude illustre les divergences culturelles entre les peuples africains et anglais. Elle met un accent particulier sur l'acceptation mutuelle des cultures. Pour atteindre cet objectif, j'utilise le nouvel historicisme, la critique africaine, le post colonialisme et la réponse du lecteur, pour explorer, interpréter et analyser les faits relatifs au mépris culturel dans *Heart of Darkness* et *The Raped Amulet*.

Mots clés : effet interculturel, mésestimation, reconnaissance mutuelle, diversité

Introduction

The inability to accept differences are most of the time the source of many problems, either social, cultural, political or even economic. The way to reach unity and mutual-acceptance is indeed hard, but not impossible. The consequences of the lack of self-control are diverse. They are ranked from racial murders, to mention the case of George Floyd, down to discriminatory attitudes. Those are facts, which should recall human dignity and fellowship love. But, I am firmly convinced that the upcoming years, human beings can get along with the concepts of mutual-acceptance, and love. Furthermore, in its ultimate stage, human beings are capable of breaking down limitations, and it is in this wave crest that I am directing my thoughts, though basing on two outstanding novels. The first is from Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and the second is Sammy Oke Akombi's *The Raped Amulet*. Those two novels depict realities of both England and Africa. This work is to shed lights on how unbeneficial pre-conceived ideas about either Africa or England can be. This study either way promotes mutual-acceptance and love to achieve development and peace. To reach this goal, it covers four sections. The first is the research key points, the second is new historical approach to Traditional values of Black Africa by Westerners, the third is the Africana critical approach and Post-colonial's to Western traditional values by Africans, and finally, the last relates to the use of Reader-response theory to draw up conclusions and make suggestions to induce mutual-respect, and tolerate cultural diversity.

1. Theoretical Key Points

1.1 Problem Statement

This work aims at equipping readers with tools of tolerance towards exotic cultures. It arises the problem of traditional mutual-acceptance and most precisely between England and Africa. In fact, those two areas belong to the zones where the problems of traditional recognision are still largely debated and some nearly reject Africa's, because it seems weird in their frame of reference. The problem is much more crucial because every day, Africans travel abroad in the English sphere, they come across the barrier of traditional mutual-acceptance and face difficulties because of their traditional difference. As an African in the modern world sharing the vision that this world could be a better place

where brotherhood and mutual acceptance can bring together different, I found wise to write on this aspect.

1.2 Relevance and Objective of the Study

This work is relevant because it is a social approach to lay emphasis on the difficulties related to traditional acceptance faced by the young Africans who go abroad and most precisely in England to continue their studies. It is true, in terms of discrimination that the United Kingdom's statistics are low, but the fight is too important to set minorities. In March, 71% of the people who belong to ethnic minorities claimed to have been victims of racial discrimination, against 51% in January 2016, before the Brexit[iii]. In addition, other statistics testify that 'just 6 per cent of Black school leavers attended a Russell Group university, compared with 12 per cent of mixed and Asian school leavers and 11 per cent of White school leavers'[iv] . To finish with digits, it is worthwhile to notice that according to the research by the RSA :

> "*There is a lack of Black teachers in schools, especially amongst senior staff. 85.9% of all teachers in state-funded schools in England are White British, compared to 78.5% of the working age population (2011 census). Some 92.9% of headteachers are White British. It has suggested that the teaching workforce currently does not include enough teachers from diverse backgrounds and that they do not represent the ethnic make-up of the pupil population. The most recent official data, published on 25th June 2020 show that in primary schools, 33.9% of pupils are of minority ethnic backgrounds (up from 33.5% in January 2019). In secondary schools, 32.3% of pupils are of minority ethnic background (up from 31.3%). Not only are Children from Black backgrounds more likely to be excluded from school, to be underepresented by schools and schoolteachers, and to have their abilities, behaviours and grades undervalued, but they are also unable to access justice should they seek.*"[v]

Resorting those statistics, it is up to us Africans to start writing and working to reveal Africa, its traditional values and foremost learning to accept western differences to build unity. This, because, on the Worldwide scale, Africans are less valued.

This paper is an initiative to show and contrast Africans philosophy of Western values (England), with western (England) philosophy of African values.

[iii] https://www.lesechos.fr/monde/europe/depuis_-le-vote-sur-le-brexit-le_racisme-a-gagne-du-terrain-en-Grande-bretagne-1022764, Consulted 14 October 2020, at 11:50 pm.

[iv] https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/race-report-statistics, published 30 November 2018. Consulted 14 October 2020, at 11:50 pm.

[v] https://justforkidslaw.org/news/barrier-justice-silences-victims-racism-english-schools, Jack Shepherd, Amy Norman, published 26 June 2020. Consulted 14 October 2020, at 01:25 am.

1.3 Methodology of Research

To write this paper I use new historicism, Africana critical theory or Black existentialism, Post colonialism and Reader-response to analyse, interpret, pinpoint and establish facts to relate African conception of social realities with that of English. Most precisely, to criticise the discrimination acts, speeches in *Heart of Darkness (1899.* To contextualise this literary production, I use new historicism. As far as the second, *The Raped Amulet (2008)*, which is much more recent is concerned, I use Africana critical theory or Black existentialism to point out facts, relating to blacks' oppression. Last but not least, I use Post colonialism to contrast African and English traditional values, to establish facts and to pinpoint black dignity in this commonwealth piece of literature. Finally, I use Reader-response theory to draw conclusion from the contrast and make suggestions in the logic of mutual-acceptance and respect.

2. New Historical, Africana Critical and Post-colonial Approaches to Traditional Values of Black Africa and Westerners

2.1 New Historical Approach to Traditional Values of Black Africa by Westerners in *Heart of Darkness* (1899)

New Historicism is a theory which asserts that every work is a product of the historic moment which produced it. In other words, to study effectively a novel which comprised historical facts, it is compulsory to analyse all the political, economic and cultural facts which surround it.

Heart of Darkness (1899) finds its origins in the periods of Africa's partition and European imperialism. As such, to better lay hands on the context of publication of this novel, one should firstly know the main events which took place in this political, historical and economic era. First of all, Africa's partition or Africa's scramble was: "*the invasion, the occupation, the division, and the colonisation of African territory by European powers during a short period known to historians as the New Imperialism (between 1881 and 1914)*"[vi]. *Heart of Darkness* has been published in 1899, it means that its historical context is between 1881 and 1914. To understand plainly the motives of Joseph Conrad, a look on the period covering 1878 down to 1899 should be scrutinised. In this regards the following facts should be considered:

> "*In 1878, King Leopold II (resigned 1865-1909) of Belgium and asked Stanley to found a Belgian colony in the Congo. The king charged Stanley with setting up outposts along the Congo river, particularly at Matadi, for material gain. In 1885, At the congress of Berlin, an international committee agreed the formation of a new country to be known as the Congo Free State.*" [vii]

[vi] https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scramble_for_Africa, Consulted 15 October 2020, at 19:30.
[vii] https://sites.google.com/site/allengbacad/literature/heart-of-darkness/heart-of-darkness-historical-context, Consulted 15 October 2020, at 19:10.

Other writings mention that:

"In 1884, The Association International du Congo had signed treaties with 450 independent African entities and, on that basis, assumes its right to govern all the territory concerned as an Independent State. Between 1884 and 1885, the Berlin West Africa Conference set the rules for colonial conquest and sanctioned his control of the Congo River basin area to be known as the Congo Free State (1885-1908)."[viii]

From the beginning, colonization was a trap, a vile machinery to over-exploit African natural resources. As it is mentioned in this passage: "*European colonialism was often justified through 'a civilizing' myth"* [ix] and also "*Native populations where considered Primitive and ignorant*"[x]. From this axe, one can easily affirm that the main reason is 'civilisation' which is according to Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "*a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another*". From this on, the nature of the relationship that existed between Africa and Western countries was well perceivable. It was a power relation, that of domination. The Powerful ones dominated the weak countries of Africa. From this reality, I can firmly assert that *Heart of Darkness* is a product of an era when Africa was literally 'raped' from its natural resources as a compensation for European 'meek' proposition to set Africa on the rail of civilization.

As a matter of fact, *Heart of Darkness,* is a vivid proof of European imperialism. The following passages put a particular accent on that assertion: "*A nigger was being beaten near by. They said he had caused the fire in some way; be that as it may, he was screeching most horribly.*" (p.36). The taste of disgust at power relation here is perceivable. The term 'nigger' which stands for a black skin man, was being beaten because he has been judged to have caused fire 'in some way'. The terms 'in some way' here is significant because it can probably mean 'a rebellious behaviour' when I consider the context of the text which highly relates to 'civilization'. Later, the reason of the 'baptism of fire' of the 'nigger' has been revealed. And it is delivered in these lines :

"The business intrusted to this fellow was the making of bricks—but there wasn't a fragment of a brick anywhere in the station, and he had been there more than a year—waiting. It seems he could not make bricks without something, I don't know what—straw maybe." (p.37)

The power relationship is much clear through those lines, the 'nigger' had to be forced to execute physical work, namely 'the making of brick'. But he couldn't do so,

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viii www.britannica.com/Place/Democratic-Republic-of-the-congo-crisis, Consulted 15 October 2020, at 19:53.

ix https://www.owleyes.org/text/heart-of-darkness/analysis/historical.context, Consulted 15 October 2020, at 20:15.

x https://www.owleyes.org/text/heart-of-darkness/analysis/historical.context, Consulted 15 October 2020, at 20:16.

because he lacks something. And for that 'something' which is absent, he has been severely punished. Between European forces, Africa is only 'a profitable source of richness'. For this reason, they have sent an agent, whose mission is to serve European cause. The details are in the following lines :

He is an emissary of pity and science and progress, and devil knows what else. We want, "*he began to declaim suddenly, for the guidance of the cause intrusted to us by Europe, so to speak, higher intelligence, wide sympathies, a singleness of purpose*." (p.39)

Human beings are parts of the traditional values, because they are the ones who birthed and who implement them. It is then important to see how westerners considered worthwhile Africans' lives in *Heart of Darkness*. The first distasteful allusion to Africans' ignorance, pettiness, I come across is : "'*They adored him,*' he said. '*he came to them with thunder and lightning, you know— and they had never seen anything like it—and very terrible''*. (P 93). This passage exemplifies Africa's under development in the context of colonization. It exposes how 'naked' Africa was, and how smartly Westerners have taken the occasion to benefit from this ignorance to spoil African resources with meaningless objects.

Joseph Conrad has not forgot to make allusion to black powers, which make Africa one of the most feared. Through:

"*Suddenly round the corner of the house a group of men appeared, as though they had come up from the ground. They waded waist-deep in the grass, in a compact body, bearing an improvised stretcher in their midst. Instantly, in the emptiness of the landscape, a cry arose whose shrillness pierced the still air like a sharp arrow flying straight to the very heart of the land; and, as if by enchantment, streams of human beings—of naked human beings— with spears in their hands, with bows, with shields, with wild glances and savage movements, were poured into the clearing by the dark-faced and pensive forest. The bushes shook, the grass swayed for a time, and then everything stood still in attentive immobility.*" (p.99)

All these lines of depiction are to make relevant the fact that Africa has his own traditional values which serve as cultural legacy. In this passage, the reference is subtle, mentioned in the use of 'spears', 'bows', 'shields', and 'wild glances'. These are frightening pictures, at least, enough to thrill Marlow. This character has sensed what differentiates Africa. The uniqueness that can enrage some and awakes admiration in some other people.

Other depictions of African pride are women. In the novel under study, a portrayal of a divine woman has been made. The words went like:

"*Dark human shapes could be made out in the distance, flitting indistinctly against the gloomy border of the forest, and near the river two bronze figures, leaning on tall spears, stood in the sunlight under fantastic head-dresses of spotted skins, warlike and still in statuesque repose. And from right to left along the lighted shore moved a wild and gorgeous*

apparition of a woman. 'She walked with measured steps, draped in striped and fringed cloths, treading the earth proudly, with a slight jingle and flash of barbarous ornaments. She carried her head high; her hair was done in the shape of a helmet; she had brass leggings to the knee, brass wire gauntlets to the elbow, a crimson spot on her tawny cheek, and innumerable necklaces of glass beads on her neck; bizarre things, charms, gifts of witch-men that hung about her glittered and trembled at every step. She must have had the value of several elephant tusks upon her. She was savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent; there was something ominous and stately in her deliberate progress." (p.101).

Here, the references are clear enough to be considerably significant. Marlow is portraying the most beautiful woman he discovered. Through the use of 'magnificient' he means that the woman he discovered was 'a rough diamond', both in appearances, in dressing, than in 'measured steps'.

Other traditional practices highlighted by Joseph Conrad's writing are the traditional rites. In this framework, he wrote :

"When we came abreast again, they faced the river, stamped their feet, nodded their horned heads, swayed their scarlet bodies; they shook towards the fierce river-demon a bunch of black feathers, a mangy skin with a pendent tail—something that looked a dried gourd; they shouted periodically together strings of amazing words that resembled no sounds of human language; and the deep murmurs of the crowd, interrupted suddenly, were like the responses of some satanic litany." (p.112)

And also :

"The monotonous beating of a big drum filled the air with muffled shocks and a lingering vibration. A steady droning sound of many men chanting each to himself some weird incantation came out from the black, flat wall of the woods as the humming of bees comes out of a hive, and had a strange narcotic effect upon my half-awake senses." (p.107)

These passages are misconceptions of African traditional practices. Because Marlow could not understand what was happening in front of his eyes, he qualified the very essence of the sounds he was hearing as 'satanic litany'. Furthermore, Westerners, having not the traditional use of drums, Marlow was astonished to hear the way the 'big drum' was handled.

In summary, the inability to conceive and to bear the differences of Marlow, brought him to see, appreciate, misapprehend and actively judge Blacks practices without clear understanding of them. For him he knows much than 'the pilgrims' would dreamt of, and indeed despite his knowledge, he couldn't deny that this Black Africa's experience has marked him forever. Maybe he felt lucky, to belong to the survivors of this 'immense darkness', but what I am sure of is that he would forever etch in his

memory what he discovered to be the patrimonial Africa. These last words are the evidence of this assurance:

> "*The vision seemed to enter the house with me—the stretcher, the phantom-bearers, the wild crowd of obedient worshippers, the gloom of the forests, the glitter of the reach between the murky bends, the beat of the drum, regular and muffled like the beating of a heart—the heart of a conquering darkness. It was a moment of triumph for the wilderness, an invading and vengeful rush which, it seemed to me, I would have to keep back alone for the salvation of another soul.*" (p.123)

2.2 The Africana critical approach to Western traditional values by Africans in *The Raped Amulet* (2008)

Africana critical theory or Black existentialism is a school of thought that critiques domination and affirms the empowerment of Black people in the world. It is predicated on the liberation of all black people in the world from oppression. It may also be seen as a method which allows one to read works which address the intersection of problems of existence in black contexts.[xi]

From the above, one has a clear idea about what Africana critical theory is and how it can be used. In the framework of this study, I use it firstly to explore the forms of oppression faced by the protagonist of the novel namely Dion Ekpochaba, and secondly to measure the weight of traditional values in the context of a western country, here England. In the last point, it is directed to contrast African conceptions of social realities with English ones. Before proceeding to the different analyses and interpretations, I would like to mention that *The Raped Amulet* is a post-modern writing about African culture and in a narrow perspective, shed lights on some post-modern realities of England.

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 9th edition, Oppression is the act of treating somebody in a cruel and unfair way, especially by not giving them the same freedom, rights, etc. as other people. Etymologically, the word comes from *opprimere*, which means "pressed down". It is expressed through many forms. The most common ones are Sexism, Heterosexism, Ableism, Nativism, Cisgenderism, Classism, Racism, Colorism, Lookism, Sizeism, Colonialism, Cultural Imperialism and sexual harassment.

In Sammy Oke Akombi's *The Raped Amulet*, the first social oppression Dion Ekpochaba faced is racism in the city of Coventry. After this rejection, he decided never to return in this city. This is perceivable in these lines:

> "*It imposes its rays on the city of Coventry. A name that reminded Dion of his secondary school days when he and his girlfriend were sent to Coventry and nobody wanted to speak to them or make friends with them. They were isolated for almost a month and this had*

[xi] https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_existentialism#, 16 October, 2020, at 20:32.

affected their studies very much. After that he had never approved that anyone be sent to Coventry and had inwardly vowed never to have anything to do with Coventry." (p.4)

The first encounter of social oppression to pave the way to this study is the rejection, racism that 'secondary students' Dion and his girlfriend have been victims of. The imminent consequence of this lack of mutual-acceptance is 'the trauma' both of them had had. To bring back the words, I cite 'this affected their studies very much', to mean that either be a conscious or an unconscious reactions of the 'secondary students of coventry', the result is quite negative.

Other forms of oppression include the sexual harassment, which is usually used to serve women's cause. Here it matches with the context of homosexuality. Indeed, Dion has been twice harassed. The first time was owing to his ignorance. The second was nearly a rape, but thanks to his tact, he succeeded in getting this young sexually inverted off him. The following words give a clear picture of what happens during the two sexual harassment he has been victim of :

"*The friend who had taken him to the meeting made many attempts to caress him but each time he avoided his itchy fingers. Dion reflected on the word gay which he had always thought was positive and a very high frequency word which meant happy and full of fun.*" (p.50)

Above, he has meekly attended a club of meeting hoping to enjoy the presence of new friends, but instead it was another reality which was awaited him. Later on, Dion has fully made the homosexual harassment.

"*Dion's friend was so carried away with the rhythm that he jumped on him and before he could realise I the was being kissed all over the place and moans I love you, I love you Di.i..on were spilling out of his desperate and shivering lips.*" (p.51)

This passage, far from being fictional, depicts facts that are realities experienced by the African abroad for studies. Most of the time the young men and women are raped, deprived from pride and dignity. The world should be a better place, if some could learn to respect each other, and has the self-discipline enough to control themselves. Being justified or not, a sexual assault is a moral crime.

2.3 Post-colonial Approach to Contrast African Traditional Values with English Ones

Postcolonial theory is a literary theory or critical approach that deals with literature produced in countries that were once, or are now, colonies of other countries. It may also deal with literature written in or by citizens of colonizing countries that takes colonies or their peoples as its subject matter. The theory is based around concepts of otherness and resistance.[xii]

[xii] An introduction to Post-Colonialism, Post-colonial Theory and Post-colonial Literature.

The Raped Amulet, is written by a Cameroonian scholar. Though Cameroon belongs to the Commonwealth of Nations, which is under the sovereignty of the United Kingdom, it is firstly rooted in African traditional values, because being an African country. It is clear then that a contrastive exploration of traditional values of both Africa and England is appropriate here to think of mutual-respect. To it, I would like to remind that Cameroon was partially one of the colonies of Great Britain. This analysis helps here to know the different traditional conceptions about realities in Africa and England.

In the novel under study, two conceptions of realities are in continuous contradiction. In fact, the first one is about cooking. In Africa, from childhood, male children are prevented from kitchen. This because, in the old times, kitchen is the apanage of female sex. This practice is still perpetrated in some parts of Africa, like Benin, Togo, Niger, to name but a few. In the novel, Dion had been also raised according to such traditional standards. The following lines mention:

> *"Cooking had never been his strong point ever since he was born, twenty-eight years ago. He could only vaguely remember the number of times he had entered the kitchen-only a few times, probably ten times. He had grown up in an environment where boys had nothing to do with the kitchen. A father usually got terribly agitated on finding his son in the kitchen. 'What in the name of my maternal ancestry are you doing there?' he would bellow, 'Would you get out of there, with immediate effect!'*
> *Dion had always known the kitchen to be the exclusive reserve of the womenfolk. His father had always pulled his ears and told him that women had been made for only three things: kids, kitchen and church and the rest of things were for men."* (p.2)

These lines wonderfully depict African conception of kitchen and its exclusive link to women. Although this conception has to be reshaped and updated to contemporary norms and needs, it testifies African opposition towards western values.

Unlike this African conception of kitchen, English values oblige men and women to get down to kitchen matters. After he has faced the difficulties related to feeding, Dion has been obliged to face bravely the affair:

> *"But the present time had taught him that he had to face the kitchen squarely"* (p.2).

To partially conclude, I can say that Africa reserves girls for the question of kitchen, whereas England doesn't.

Other opposition between Africa and England is on the question of appellation. For an African student, when the interaction is with an elder person, and furthermore somebody who has heavy title, the usage requires that the younger one or the student calls the honourable one with his title. This is demonstrated in the words:

"He found the culture rather strange. How would he start calling an elderly person like Mister Tom Jones by his first name. A man on whose neck the title papa should be hung. Papa should be a most suitable appellation for him." (p.20)

On the contrary hand, for westerners, either a honourable one or not, people over there insist on being called by their first name. In these words, this reality is perceivable :

"Dion's teachers in the university had also insisted on the first name issue." (p.20).

Obviously though, for upbrought African children, this requirement would be difficult to implement, just because it is firmly rooted in respect, and demonstrates a sign of high homage to the background of the person. An African proverb states that: "*A chief is never wrong even if he is naked*". This to mean that Africans do respect titles.

To mention sense of hospitality, Africans to receive their guests offer most of the time drinks, often cold beer and food. To bring back Dion's words, I can mention: "*Back home, guests were offered a bottle of cold beer and sometimes food, when it was available*" (p.38). Whereas English people offer: "*coffee or tea*" (p.39). The positive point here is that both African and English people are hospitable though in different ways.

Some point of differentiation is however noticeable. The first one is on the sexual orientation. In Africa, sexual inversion is not accepted. Africans do not support homosexual behaviours because, it is culturally incomprehensible and does not match with traditional standards. Whereas in England, the whole thing is accepted, sexual freedom is publicly exposed. The case of the club meeting is a vivid proof :

"He looked around and he was the only black person. The others were handsome young men and stunningly beautiful ladies. What was peculiar was the fact that they sat in pairs during the meeting and the pairs were bone to bone and flesh to flesh, instead of bone to flesh as usual." (p.50)

And then arose his feeling, which is :

"He found the whole thing very disgusting and felt very embarassed to be in their midst" (p.50).

This obvious sexual assertion is not common in Africa, this is the reason why he felt bad.

Additional negative point is the sense of unity. English people don't resent the need of joining together people having been colonized by different colonizers. Tom Jones' assertions bear deep feeling of misapprehension and disappointment. Here they are:

"Dion, are your people still peace loving, warm and inordinately optimistic ? I was really tongue-tied at the fact that such a large group of people who didn't share a single mother

tongue could stay together under a single umbrella called Cameroon. What was even more striking was the fact that some of those tribes that were brought up by us, the British, bundled themselves together to join people who had been brought up by the frogs, the French." (p.42)

The sense of unity! it is the core value which characterises mostly African children. This value through these assertions seem absent and irrelevant to Tom Jones, because of the difference of the powers (British and French) who once colonised a distant part of this country. Fortunately, the words of Dion have calmed this British and shown him how Africans are united despite having been colonised by two colonial powers. they are :

"Would it be stupid for children born of the same mother but brought up in different homes to say they belong to the same family, and would want to live together as a family ? I think my people are inordinately optimistic. They thought they would take advantage of both British experience and the French experience." (p.43)

Another difference is the conception of peace which slightly opposes African and English. For the African view, peace is too expensive to be considered petty, and as such if one finds his 'bread', he thanks 'gods' and if the possibility to share it with his starving brother appears, he does so, and both of them live happily. In Africa, hunger and peace are intimately related, for it is when one starved that problems are justified and troublesome atmospheres seem perpetual.

"As for the peace back home, it is predicated on the fact that the Cameroonian is never hungry, and by God's grace can never be hungry. There's peace where there's no hunger. Another factor that makes us proud of ourselves is that in spite of our numerous mother tongues, everybody else depends on everybody else. And if everybody else depends on everybody else, there can't be absolute suffering nor absolute poverty, for never will all of us be poor all the time." (p.43)

Surprisingly, for English values, peace is reachable only through the culture of dominance. There is peace only when a minority imposes their rules and are recognised legitimacy.

"The old man had also said that peace was all conquering." (p.96)

About absurdity, one can say that absurd values are highly promoted over there. Approaching the marital question, westerners reduced the female tenderness to the most basic use. In fact, when Tom Jones considered a 'micro-computer' to be his wife, Dion was nearly overdone. His behaviour is justified in the logic that African are accustomed to family life, made up of a father, chief of the house, a mother (a female), the pillar of the

house and children, the ones to perpetuate the surname of the father. In that traditional conception of the family life, Africans are raised and are expected to pass on those values. Tom got up briskly and asked Dion to follow him. When he got to the door, he opened it gently as if he didn't want to disturb anyone. He showed Dion in and then pointed to a micro-computer and said calmly, "*there, dear is my pretty little wife*". "*But I can't see anyone*". Dion complained. "*What have you seen, then ? asked Tom 'A micro-computer' said Dion, getting confused*". "*That's her then. Lovely, intelligent and tolerant.*" […] Sure I mean it. Of what use is a wife to an old man like me ? "*Keeps him company at least*". "*And precisely, that's what she does for me. Her name is Lisa. Lisa Amstrad' Tom said smilling.*" (p.45)

Many other realities contrast African and English values. The most valuable ones are the conception of epilepsy and AIDS which are still for Africans related to witchcraft in some villages though the propaganda about the handling of this illness. Whereas for Westerners, these are just illnesses to be taken care of. The sense of pessimism in Africa is much wider than in England and this represent one of the barriers to be developed. As soon as this stops, Africans should be more conscious of the bets of social progress. The mindset, this is what is causing trouble to Africans.

Indeed, AIDS has a scientific origin, but for Africans, it covers a whole varieties of sources. The following words give ideas about Africans' perceptions of this illness. "*The general assumption was that God has become impatient with the wrongs of humanity and has sent down this illness in his anger to humiliate and wipe out the human race.*" (p.54). This interpretation is a bit religious. Fervent Africans always interpret events using biblical references. Some others, find that it originated from Africans' traditional practices. For this category of speculators, the novel mentions: "*It had originated from black Africans, who had occult dealings with monkeys and chimpanzees*" (p.54). For some other viewers, it is the product of westerners' sexual appetite. "*And yet others said it had nothing to do with Africans, it had resulted from a deviant practice called homosexuality*" (p.54). For the last category of viewers, it is a scientific creation to destroy some human fellows. The words are:

> "*Still, there were some people who speculated that it was the creation of some evil scientists whose tendency for self-destruction did not end with themselves but had to extend to the whole human race. They were said to have created the Human Immune Virus to be injected into every human being through the most reliable source- sex.*" (p.54)

From the above one can see all the different speculations Africans have made about this illness. The most striking fact is that, in Western countries, people over there don't waste time of useless conceptions, they instead take responsibility to face the situation.

The last matter to address here is the mental weigh of HIV illness on African psychology. The matter is dramatised at an extent that people would rather die than coping with it. From people's representations of the latter, down to the financial investment to handle it, people are too negative. This pessimism is seen in these words:

"*AIDS, the offshoot of HIV,' he thought, 'is known to be a devastating disease because it almost always ends in death. It had not been around much, but millions of people had taken their leave off the stage because of it. Many are those who had collapsed and died simply by spelling out the word positive in their test result notification. Others had simply given up the will to live. Some had fought bravely with the devastating effects but had run short of the means and died.*" (p.67)

From this passage, the main deduction I can make is that Africans are too much preoccupied with the appearances, the expenses and finally the disease itself.

3. Drawing up of Conclusions with Reader-response and Suggestions

3.1. Drawing up of Conclusions with Reader-response in Both Novels

At its most basic level, reader-response criticism considers readers' reactions to literature as vital to interpreting the meaning of the text. However, reader-response theory can take a number of different approaches.[xiii]

In *Heart of Darkness*, the tendencies are enrolled in a context of colonisation and power relationships. From the dark atmosphere mirrored, readers perceive how Black Africa has suffered from western oppression. Add it, the character Marlow has been thrilled, amazed and astonished to discover black practices. Sometimes, the savage culture has been depicted to reveal Africa as the most horrible place, continent of all the era. This depiction, rather testimonies Western misapprehension of social realities of Africa. This has engendered a deep panic. The inability of Westerners to appreciate, respect and accept Africa as such, Africa, has created racism, colorism and furthermore hegemonic feelings. To that Africans most often react violently because, they have been over years victims of oppression. When it occurs Westerners justify their action with the qualification of Barbarism and savagery. At the end of the economic imperialism in *Heart of Darkness*, Kurtz was right to cry out load "*The horror! The horror!*" (p.116). This appellation is to exemplify how cruel European powers have been to Africa. At the death of Kurtz, it was the villagers, same savages with whom he surrounded himself with, who gave him the burial ceremony, though according to their beliefs. This shows Africans' sense of humanity.

In *Raped Amulet*, the secondary young learners Dion and his girlfriend have been kept apart, as though they were not human beings. Later on, the protagonist has been nearly raped by a homosexual product of England. However, from this novel, one can perceive the usual opposition of African and English values. Some are rather positive, while other are negative. To mention the positive ones, I come across the question of kitchen, which pushes westerners either male or female to get accustomed to the matters relating to cooking. Whereas, for ancestral reasons, African fathers warmed seriously their male children to enter kitchen.

[xiii]https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/writing_in_literature/literature_theory_and_schools_of_criticism/reader_response_criticism.html, consulted 17 October, 2020 at 20:13.

The second one is the question of appellation, which opposes those two conceptions. For Westerners, this has no place as they are called to collaborate. But, for Africans, it gives a sense of respect and allows to pay tribute to the high graded or aged person. The third one, hospitality, it resorts that Both Africa and England have their ways of receiving guests. For Africans, it consists of offering drinks, either manufactured or traditional like palm wine, locally called 'Sodabi' in Beninese's Fongbe. Unlike Africans, English people do with coffee or tea.

For the points of differentiation, I notice the questions of sexual orientation, the sense of unity, the conception of peace, the marital link, and the general mindset on strange illnesses such as epilepsy and AIDS. In fact, for the first one, it is a slight contradiction between Africa and Europe. Africans cherish heterosexual relationships, whereas Europeans don't really care. Because they don't mind it, many sorts of sexual deviances occurred.

The second is the sense of unity. Europeans don't perceive the use of being together when realities are different. On the contrary, Africans do stand together, and they really do so. Black pride is expressed everywhere Africans gathered. About the conception of peace, European view asserts that power to conquer is peace, whereas in African view, solidarity has its place in social realities, and it is only when people can lean on each other that peace is achievable. For the importance of marriage, Westerners have a strange way of conceiving female role from the sixties.

The last issue to tackle in this part is the conception of strange illnesses such as epilepsy and AIDS. Strange in the way that they are not really known to all Africans. The realities behind them are still 'traditional' according to the large majority in villages and as such, they still cure them with traditional medicine. Europeans, on that matter, have started since decades taking care of those illnesses, because instead of making useless conceptions about their origins, found ways to get rid or at least to handle them properly.

3.2. Suggestions to Induce Mutual-respect, and Tolerate Cultural Diversity

Human beings are indebted to cultural moral values. Yes, I do believe that everybody have been created or is the product of a pre-evolution which has given what we perceive today as human beings. As such, we all are committed to recognise diversity as what should bring human beings together, not just for superficial interests, but for unity as the dominant reign over animals. Humans are not animals, for that reason, they should be much more oriented towards the acceptance of cultural diversity, which for me is the right to freely accept others as exceptional different beings, from skin colour, culture, beliefs, sexual orientation, mindsets and even more on the physical appearance. Only when we all will give a cheer chance to tolerate people other than ours, belonging to different horizons, having personal manners, but also sharing love in their own ways, we could make this world a better place. Throughout these lines, I warmly recommend first, self-acceptance, then, mutual-acceptance to better respect others.

The gap between Sexism, Heterosexism, Ableism, Nativism, Cisgenderism, Classism, Racism, Colorism, Lookism, Sizeism, Colonialism, Cultural Imperialism,

sexual harassment, and love is getting deeper and deeper. Before it could be impossible to fill it, I would like to urge us all, to start working so not to loose or waste our sense of brotherhood. To avoid seeing the weak ones broken by the system of oppression, it is important that each of us, starts pulling out love, not just words, but actions. Yes, only lovable actions can help us all liberate the whole system from oppression. Some would ask to know how it is possible to pull out love in actions. The steps are easy to take.

The first one is always to put ourselves in others' shoes when we act. By asking the question 'will I be happy with that if I were in his shoes?' This self-inverted question will serve as a compass to direct our actions. The second step is self-love, for one could not give what he does not have. The essence of gift is possession. The third is freedom of conscience. It the freedom to believe, think, and act, according to one's own moral values. Mutual-acceptance without freedom of conscience is vain, because it will stand for accepting any moral transgressive behaviour. With freedom of conscience, the worst should be abandoned for the best. And finally, the last step is children's education.

Children should be educated to love their friends despite their differences. I strongly hold on the point that children are better than adults. They easily accept their personal imperfections and then easily accept others' differences. They are endowed with a formidable sense of brotherhood and that is the reason why they are so interesting. When they are educated to know that they are defined by their choices, they grow up confident and hard worker. The final step is to teach them to really care about others' lives. When they will really care about others' lives, despite their cultural diversity, they will be defined by the content of their character.

> "*All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood*"[xiv].

To wrap it all, the best ways to benefit from both African cultural values and Westerners' is to be ready to take the positive points each of them promotes.

4. Conclusion

Cultural diversity is one of the greatest challenges today, because its effects are more harmful to the society than beneficial. In the frame of this study, I contrast African values with European. To do so, I use new historicism, Africana critical theory or Black existentialism, Post colonialism and Reader-response to analyse, interpret, pinpoint and establish facts to relate African conception of social realities with that of Englanders. The main result I come across is that African cultural values have both negative and positive points similarly to those of England. The positive ones relate to kitchen matters, to appellation and sense of hospitality. Pointing out the differences, I can notice the realities of sexual orientation, sense of unity, conception of peace, marital link, and mindset on

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[xiv] https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/Article1, consulted 20 October, 2020, at 17:27 pm.

strange illnesses such as epilepsy and AIDS. Thinking of the misapprehension of cultural diversity which ends up in discriminative behaviours towards Africans studying abroad, I make some suggestions, consisting of steps' taking. The first is always to put ourselves in others' shoes when we act, the second is self-love, the third is freedom of conscience and the last one is children's education. The last issue I would like to remind is Article 2 of the universal declaration of human rights which stipulates:

> "*Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust non-self-governing or under any limitation of sovereignty*".[xv]

Equality stands for parity and it means same rights for everybody without discrimination of any kind.

Conflict of Interests Statement
There's no conflict of interest. This article has never been published in another scientific journal.

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Monsieur Seguedeme Alexis Hergie est Maitre-Assistant en Littérature Anglaise au Département d'Anglais, de l'Université d'Abomey-Calavi (Bénin). Il est très laborieux et engagé pour la recherche, l'enseignement et le service à la communauté. D'abord, professeur certifié d'anglais, ensuite Docteur en Etudes Britanniques, il est présentement le Chef Division de la Cellule Universitaire des Relations Internationales (CD/CURI) au niveau de la Faculté des Lettres Langues Arts et Communication (FLLAC) de son Université. Par ailleurs, dans sa mission à la communauté, Docteur SEGUEDEME est le Président Fondateur de L'ONG SOS ''Enfants et Jeunes d'Afrique-Bénin''. Auteur d'une vingtaine d'articles scientifiques, ses recherches sont publiées dans les revues scientifiques nationales, régionales et internationales, hautement indexées et à facteur d'impact. Elles sont prioritairement axées sur les questions de religion, d'amour, de justice et autres faits de société dans le paysage fictif d'auteurs anglais et ou britanniques afin de corriger les tares de notre société moderne.

[xv] https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/Article12, consulted 20 October, 2020, at 17:28 pm.

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