

**REVUE INTERNATIONALE DE LITTÉRATURE
ET DE LINGUISTIQUE APPLIQUEES (RILLA)**



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**Sous la direction du :
Pr Julien K. GBAGUIDI**



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LIGNE EDITORIALE ET DOMAINES DE RECHERCHE

1. LIGNE EDITORIALE

La Revue Internationale de Littérature et de Linguistique Appliquées (RILLA) est une revue scientifique spécialisée en lettres et langues. Les articles que nous y publions peuvent être écrits en français, en anglais, en allemand, en espagnol et en yoruba. Ces articles sont reçus au secrétariat du comité de rédaction de la revue et envoyés en évaluation. Ceux qui ont reçu des avis favorables sont sélectionnés pour une réévaluation par les membres du comité scientifique en raison de leur originalité, des intérêts qu'ils présentent aux plans africain et international et de leur rigueur scientifique. Après les travaux préliminaires du secrétariat, le spécimen du numéro à publier est envoyé au comité scientifique de lecture pour des corrections éventuelles et la vérification de la conformité des articles aux normes de publication de la revue.

Notons que les articles que notre revue publie doivent respecter les normes éditoriales suivantes :

➤ **La taille des articles**

Volume : 18 à 20 pages ; interligne : 1,5 ; pas d'écriture (taille) : 12 ; police : Times New Roman.

➤ **Ordre logique du texte**

- Un TITRE en caractère d'imprimerie et en gras. Le titre ne doit pas être trop long ;
- Un Résumé fait dans la langue de publication (50 à 200 mots maximum) ;
Les mots clés (03 à 05 mots) font partie du résumé ;
- Un résumé en anglais ou en français selon la langue d'écriture de l'article. Le second résumé ou abstract est juste la traduction du premier résumé. Il est aussi fait de mots clés exactement comme dans le premier cas ;
- Introduction ;
- Développement ;

Les articulations du développement du texte doivent être titrées et / ou sous titrées ainsi :

➤ Pour le **Titre** de la première section et sous-section

1. Pour le titre de la première section

1.1. Pour le titre de la première sous-section

1.2. Pour le titre de la deuxième sous-section de la première section etc.

➤ Pour le **Titre** de la deuxième section

2. Pour le titre de la deuxième section

2.1. Pour le titre de la première sous-section de la deuxième section

2.2. Pour le titre de la deuxième sous-section de la deuxième section etc.

➤ **Conclusion**

Elle doit être brève et insister sur l'originalité des résultats de la recherche

➤ **Bibliographie**

Les sources consultées et / ou citées doivent figurer dans une rubrique, en fin de texte, intitulé :

- **Bibliographie**

Elle est classée par ordre alphabétique (en référence aux noms de famille des auteurs) et se présente comme suit :

Pour un livre : Nom, Prénoms (ou initiaux), Titre du livre (en italique), Lieu d'édition, Editions, Année d'édition.

Pour un article : Nom, Prénoms (ou initiaux), "Titre de l'article" (entre griffes) suivi de in, Titre de la revue (en italique), Volume, Numéro, Lieu d'édition, Editions, Année d'édition, Indication des pages occupées par l'article dans la revue.

Les rapports et des documents inédits mais d'intérêt scientifique peuvent être cités.

- **La présentation des notes**

- La rédaction n'admet que des notes en bas de page. **Les notes en fin de texte ne sont pas tolérées.**
- Les citations et les termes étrangers sont en italique et entre guillemets « ».
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- La revue RILLA s'interdit le soulignement.
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Le système de référence par année à l'intérieur du texte est également toléré.

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NB : Un auteur dont l'article est retenu pour publication dans la revue RILLA participe aux frais d'édition par article et par numéro. Il reçoit, à titre gratuit, un tiré-à-part et une copie de la revue publiée à raison de cinquante mille (50 000) francs CFA.

2. DOMAINE DE RECHERCHE

La Revue Internationale de Littérature et de Linguistique Appliquées (RILLA) est un instrument au service des chercheurs qui s'intéressent à la publication d'articles et de comptes rendus de recherches approfondies dans les domaines ci-après :

- **lettres** : littératures, grammaire et stylistique des langues française, anglaise, allemande, espagnole et yoruba ;
- **langues** : linguistique, didactique des langues, traduction, interprétation des langues, civilisations française et anglaise ;
- **sujets généraux d'intérêts vitaux** pour le développement des études en lettres et langues françaises, anglaises, allemandes, espagnoles et yoruba.

Au total, la Revue Internationale de Littérature et de Linguistique Appliquées (RILLA) se veut le lieu de rencontre et de dissémination de nouvelles idées et opinions savantes dans les domaines ci-dessus cités.

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EDITORIAL

La Revue Internationale de Littérature et de Linguistique Appliquée (RILLA), publiée par l'Institut Universitaire Panafricain (IUP), est une revue ouverte aux chercheurs des institutions universitaires de recherche et enseignants-chercheurs des universités, instituts universitaires, centres universitaires et grandes écoles.

L'objectif de cette revue dont nous sommes à la douzième publication est de permettre aux collègues chercheurs et enseignants-chercheurs d'avoir une tribune pour faire connaître leurs travaux de recherche.

Le comité scientifique de lecture de la RILLA est présidé par le Pr Akanni Mamoud IGUE. Ce comité compte sept membres qui sont des Professeurs Titulaires. Aussi voudrions-nous informer les lecteurs de la RILLA, qu'elle devient multilingue avec des articles rédigés aussi bien en français, en anglais, en allemand, en espagnol qu'en yoruba.

Pr Julien Koffi GBAGUIDI
Professeur Titulaire des Universités (CAMES)

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A CONTEMPORARY IMAGE OF THE AFRICAN WOMAN IN ALLAH IS NOT OBLIGED BY AHMADOU KOUROUMA

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ABSTRACT

Women have been, from time immemorial, considered to be inferior to their male counterparts. Debates of the feminist literary writers have always been centred on the sufferings of women under the patriarchal African societies and male writers have most of the times been presenting a negative image of women. This paper, therefore, set to correct the existing misconception which affects women and brings to the fore the impressive images of African women in *Allah is not obliged* (2000) by the Ivorian, Ahmadou Kourouma. The suppression of women's oppression by men and the defence of their interest have been and have remained the bedrock of Feminist writers. However, much needs to be done in

depicting the exceptional qualities and positive contributions of African women in the modern society in order to sustain and recognise the unflinching support of women's roles to build a virile African project. Male writers have most of the time been presenting a negative image of women, Ahmadou Kourouma is out to fill the missing link in his novels where he demonstrates with dexterity the inspiring and daring images of his female characters by eclipsing the erstwhile negative image of the African woman.

Key words: Patriarchy, Feminism, Misconception, Oppression, Suppression

RESUME

Depuis fort longtemps, les femmes ont été considérées comme inférieures aux hommes. Le débat des écrivaines féministes a toujours été centré sur les souffrances et les conditions sociales déplorables des femmes sous le système patriarcal dans les sociétés africaines. Un nombre considérable d'écrivains masculins ont, la plupart du temps, présenté une image négative des femmes. Cette étude vise donc à corriger les idées erronées

qui affectent les femmes et à mettre en évidence les images impressionnantes et positives des femmes africaines dans Allah n'est pas obligé de l'ivoirien Ahmadou Kourouma. Le cheval de bataille des écrivains féministes a toujours été centré sur la suppression de l'oppression des femmes par les hommes et la défense de leurs intérêts. Cependant beaucoup reste à faire dans la description des qualités exceptionnelles de la femme africaine et de ses contributions positives des femmes africaines dans la société moderne afin de soutenir et de reconnaître le soutien indéfectible de la femme dans la construction d'un projet africain viable. Les écrivains africains ont le plus souvent présenté une image négative de la femme, Ahmadou Kourouma vient combler cette lacune à travers ses romans où il démontre avec dextérité le courage et la témérité des personnages féminins tout en effaçant cette image négative qu'on tenait d'antan de la femme africaine.

Mots Clés : Patriarcat, féminisme, idée erronée, oppression, suppression

INTRODUCTION

Literary genres in Africa have largely been the products of personal creativity of male writers. These authors, especially in the context of Post-Independence African Literature, were known for their commitment to the betterment of the living conditions of the masses through their fight for human rights, human values and justice. They displayed a vigorous and passionate resistance against domination, exploitation and tyranny in all ramifications.

However, it is glaring to note that most of these writers did not take the defence of the African women's rights into their struggle. Women's roles have rather been confined to the homes, the children and the farms; their voices were not heard. The colonial experience did not change the situation; neither did the introduction of Islam and Christianity. The assumption of the status of women being inferior to their male counterparts strongly entrenched in alien religious beliefs and in the western civilisation, was the yardstick to determine the position of women in the male dominated society. Women were depicted by their relationship with men as mothers, sisters,

wives, object of pleasure, docile, weak creatures and prostitutes, to mention but a few. To this end Olayinka Eyiunmi writes:

The works of many African male writers have also been criticised as portraying misogynistic tendencies of their various societies. In the least this is to say that they have more often than not, produced literary works that ostentatiously give men prominent roles while women are given fatalistic representations. Examples of such literary works are Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Wole Soyinka's *Ake* and Elechi Amadi's *The Concubine*, [...] and the like. (29)

To further elucidate this point, Buchi Emecha makes the following remarks: "the good woman in Achebe's portrayal is the one who kneels down and drinks the dregs after her husband. [...] 'In his view that kind of subordinate woman is the good woman'" (178)

To cap it all, a negative image of women was in vogue.

Unfortunately, the advent of women writers on the scene did a little in changing or destroying the traditional stereotypes established by male-oriented literature. The debate of the feminist literary writers has almost always been centred on the suffering of women under the patriarchal society. In this patriarchal set up, men have

been accused of being the root cause of all problems befalling the other gender. Women writers have been busy recounting the ordeal women have gone through in the hands of men thereby portraying unconsciously negative images of their female characters and experiences. To empower women to obtain more recognition, there is need to deconstruct the numerous preconceptions inherent in the literary tenets established by male writers from their own perceptions. It is time to do away with the myth of patriarchy so as to showcase the exceptional qualities and positive contributions of African women in our social lives, in addition to defending their interests and be partners in development in the African project. These conceptions of feminism are clearly spelt out by Adebayo Aduke :

African feminism is not only about defining the negative experiences of women. It is about the unique and positive experiences of African women; for to be an African woman is, and can be a beautiful experience at home, at work and in the wider society. It is bad feminism, and undesirable discourse, that which insists solely on African women's victimisation and their helplessness in the hands of their men. (5)

In *Allah is not obliged* that we are going to leaf through, the change of backdrop and themes which the

author proceeds to, attract a lot of interest. Indeed, it is no longer a question of talking about women within the framework of tradition or customs where they end up as mothers or wives. We are going to study the woman placed in atrocious and harsh conditions: the woman in war situation. This is a messy situation where the strongest dictates the law according to their whims and caprices. In such a universe, women and children are the victims; they are the ones who suffer the most from the knock-on effects, the fallout and the misdeeds of wars.

Does the woman remain passive and undergo this ordeal without flinching; does she leave herself at the mercy of men and wear the label of the victim and the martyred woman? Is she unable to defend herself or profit from the war like men? To provide some answers to these questions, we will take a close look at the author's artistic creativity through the female characters he brings into play.

Women are to be brought into spaces that have long been considered the exclusive domain of men. Women are going to plunge their noses into the exercise of power; they are going to enlist in the army. For this fact,

the author will operate in a sphere with three axes, an equation with three variables, namely power, woman and myth. Women are at the forefront, with the men, without complex. They wonderfully manipulate the *kalachnikov* and control troops, ready to blow up this machine of oppression long set up by men. The author skilfully uses myth to shape out these characters. It is not about presenting to us myths of ancient ages but rather, bringing literature into play in the mythical domain. The author explores literary myth to create his own heroic characters. These heroes always lead a tough fight against evil or the bad guys. They go from exploit to exploit by exploiting means out of the ordinary to overcome obstacles. They are always faced with insurmountable situations in which they ultimately end up crossing the bar even if it is with some difficulties.

1. WOMAN AND PHALLOCRACY

From time immemorial, in the writings of French, English and Portuguese speaking authors, the woman is silenced, she remains speechless. However, there are

authors, that is, writers who see themselves as spokespersons for these muzzled women who languish under the weight of male domination. They create female characters who fiercely oppose all domination, characters who take their destiny into their hands and who actively participate, with other members of society, in building a better and viable African community.

The Senegalese writer and filmmaker Sembène Ousmane and the Angolan Arthur Carlos Mauricio Pestana dos Santos known by the pseudonym Pepetela, have a lot in common. These are committed writers who have shown fierce opposition to colonialism, they have the same Marxist orientations which proclaim the abolition of domination in all its forms. They are convinced that it is necessary to combat all cultural and traditional practices which can undermine the development of women in African societies. They made a harsh criticism of polygamy, early and forced marriage, domination and neglect that are the lot of women in patriarchal societies. According to Omidire: «What one thus retains most readily in their works and ideas are the two axial points of the transformation of Africa and the betterment of the lot

of African women, the two being, in most cases, necessarily inseparable» (342).

Each of these authors was able, in his own way, and starting from Marxist theory, to recreate historical events to achieve their goals. Sembène Ousmane deconstructs or reconstructs a real story, the strike of the Dakar-Niger railway workers (1947-1948). The latter were able to resist and fight the colonial power with the unfailing assistance they received from the women folk. Sembène attributes a place of honour to women through the characters of Penda and Ramatoulaye. Ramatoulaye takes up the heroic and moving words of Penda which galvanized and mobilized the crowd. Ramatoulaye, a woman, launches the slogan, by this the author makes us realize that it is possible to overcome all domination once all the oppressed classes unite against the enemy, because the union makes the strength. Death, famine and violence did not weaken the strikers. Victory was achieved; thanks to the participation of all, dynamic men and women, without discrimination in the midst of a patriarchal society. Pepetela in *A Revolta da casa dos Ídolos* reconstructed the popular revolt which took place in the

16th century in the kingdom of KONGO under Portuguese domination. Here too, the place of honour goes to a woman, a character whose personality overshadows that of her husband throughout the play; Temona, a peasant, plays a key role. The story takes place during a period when patriarchal values are supreme and in force, the woman has no right to speak, she remains confined to the house and to the kitchen. The society is made up of kings, nobles and peasants; the public space is prohibited to the woman. But Temona, like the Great Royal in the *Ambiguous Adventure*, by Cheikh Amidou Kane, goes to the public square thus defying the established order. Pepetela assigns to her the role of awakening of conscience. Temona said: « Cowardly men! Do you prefer that we wait until they come to catch us and sell us as slaves? Or till they take from us all our remedies » (353). Temona confronts Mani Mbata and incites people to rebel against the nobility. She had mobilized the women, among whom sprung up an unprecedented awareness. Another woman speaks and vociferates the following words:

Our eyes are already opened. We are wise to your tricks now. We don't want you anymore. What have you done so far to defend us? Nothing. Did you ever

oppose the payment of tributes? No, because you live on them. Did you do anything to prevent the white men from destroying our charms? Nothing.

Now you want us to listen to you. I say go away,

Mani! (354)

Temona succeeds in making women realize that there is practically no difference between men and women. In contrast to the railway strike which ends in victory, the failure of Pepetela revolution is due to the lack of collaboration between women and men. While the women want to go on the offensive, the panicked men remain undecided. Temona who suspects a certain infidelity on the part of the men, takes the direction of the businesses, expresses her distress and indicates that the opportune moment is there and that it is necessary to exploit it:

I'm not pleased with the way you men are taking this. We're here wasting time (arguing with the nobles) and losing our venom. Why don't we attack the palace right away? We have the advantage of surprise on our side, and even the support of some of the king's soldiers. They are waiting for us and we are here undecided (361).

This uprising was put down following the "madness" and the cowardice of the men. They did not realize like those of the railway strike that unity is strength and that no tyrannical force can stand up to the collective resolution of the masses. The men did not comply, they did not follow

Temona's instructions; they did not collaborate with the women, so the failure was total and fatal.

2. WOMAN WARLORD

The tribal war in Liberia gave birth to warlords in the sub-region. These war mongers were only interested in sharing the country's space and its riches. They killed innocent people, children and women as they are pleased, without reporting to anyone. These warlords underwent military training and guerrilla techniques either in their homeland or outside the country. We are told about the famous Taylor's training and his triangular journey between Libya, Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina. He was trained in Libya:

He fled to Libya where he presented himself to Gaddafi as the intractable leader of the opposition to the bloody and dictatorial regime of Samuel Doe. Gaddafi, the dictator of Libya who had long sought to destabilize Doe, kissed him on the mouth. He sent him and his supporters to the camp where Libya produced terrorists" (Allah 44).

It is not enough to have training to be a warlord; you need a base, training camp, weapons and ammunition. To facilitate his task, Gaddafi put him in contact with

Compaoré and the latter recommended him to Houphouët-Boigny. Thus, the vicious circle was closed: "Houphouët and Compaoré quickly agreed on the help to bring to the bandit. Compaoré on behalf of Bourkina Faso was in charge of training and supervision, Houphouët on behalf of Ivory Coast was responsible for paying for weapons and their transportation "(Allah 44). Taylor jostled everything, harassed everyone and the slogan "No Taylor No peace" (Allah 43) became popular. He was the founder of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) which spread terror in the sub-region with the support of its allies. From this account, it is therefore obvious that one does not become a warlord overnight. It is not by miracle that one becomes perfect in the handling of the *kalach*, one needs to undergo a rigorous training, have financial and logistic supports.

Generally during wartime, women are at the rear, they occupy the positions of cooks or nurses. They are victims of violence and rape. Most often frightened, they flee the war torn areas to go and inflate the masses of refugees with their children. They are most often exploited and recruited as prostitutes to satisfy soldiers' sexual

instinct at the front. Colonial army officers were not only feeding the soldiers, but were also concerned about their sexual satisfaction. If by necessity some women decide to take up arms, it is to take revenge on the killed family members or to protect themselves from violence and rape; they are never at the forefront. They rarely have a territorial ambition or take advantage of the war to enrich themselves. The advent of a woman as gang leader therefore remains very surprising, even incredible. A woman who has not been to Libya, who has not attended this famous terrorists' training camps nevertheless, manages to impose herself.

Onika Dokui, twin sister of Samuel Doe, was very realistic; she studied the situation carefully before putting her plan into play. Her brother appointed her a sergeant in the Liberian army. She changed her name because the native name she bore was not going to give her prestige. She now becomes Onika Baclay: "Baclay, because it sounds Black-American and, it may be said, being African-American in Liberia gave a certain prestige, it was better than being of native origin, an indigenous black African Negro" (Allah 74). To this must be added that a

sergeant is not in a position of strength so she was eagerly aspiring for the post of commandant; she thought she must be at the head to execute her plan. After several manoeuvres, her brother, the dictator Doe, appointed her Lieutenant. Her goal was still yet to be achieved; Onika Baclay was an ambitious woman. She was finally appointed commander of the presidential guard. On the death of Samuel Doe, Baclay did not consider herself beaten, she skilfully exploited the situation and projected herself at the helm of affairs; she no longer had to receive orders from anyone. She carried out her plan: "When Samuel Doe died, when Samuel Doe was butchered, Baclay appointed herself general and head of the Sanniquellie region" (Allah 74). Baclay thus became the chief and she placed the gold zone of the country under her control without consultations: "That is to say that the general was a smart woman who did not let her sauce be lapped at the bottom of the pot by ouya-ouyas of 'men. Walahé'" (Allah 74). After leaving the NPFL camp, little Birahima and Yacoub joined the United Liberian Movement (ULIMO) camp of President-Dictator Samuel Doe's Liberian Unity. They were sent to Onika Baclay

Doe's headquarters; to their great astonishment the general was a woman: "General Baclay was a woman" (Allah 74). Little Birahima couldn't get over it, as a Malinke, he had never seen a woman leader. According to the tradition, women were not naturally designed to lead in the midst of men. It was the first time that he, Birahima, "a man" was going to be under the command of a woman.

General Baclay had absolute power in Sanniquellie; everyone, men and women, were under her command. She led with firmness and had become over time a dictator: "General Baclay had the right to life and death over everyone in Sanniquellie and she used it. And abused it"(Allah 76). Acting as a well-informed dictator, she shared the management, control and manna of the city with the members of her family. Everything oscillated between her, her only son and his three wives: Sita, Monita and Rita. These three women were commanders and held the key sectors: finance, prison and child soldiers. The management of Sanniquellie thus became a family affair; Sita took care of the finances, Monita of the prisons, Rita of the child soldiers and Colonel Johnny took charge of the command of the most seasoned regiment. General Baclay

ruled over a considerable territorial space where gold and diamonds were mined: a large agglomeration which sheltered natives, foreigners and refugees. It was a sensitive area because of its wealth and frequently assaulted by bandits and thieves, it was a centre of attraction for the thieves: "All the thieves of the Republic of Liberia converge in Sanniquellie" (Allah 79).

To maintain peace and serenity, Baclay applied merciless law, no pity for a thief. ‘‘We must scare thieves and bandits, keep them away from our land and at the same time ensure the protection of its inhabitants’’, she would say. The general was a merciless woman, thieves or bandits caught in the act were shot every Saturday around nine o'clock in the market square in front of a cheerful crowd which applauded her. Quotes from the text attest to this: "General Baclay, it was a funny serial number. But a funny woman, very fair in her own way. She shot women and men alike, all thieves, whether he stole a needle or an ox. A thief is a thief and she gets them shot all. It's fair" (Allah 73-74). General Baclay also took care of the security of the associated bosses, gold miners, mines and the river where the minerals were washed. The associated

bosses are the masters of the mines; they are the ones who provide the capital: "It's the associate bosses who finance everything. They provide the hoes, the baskets, the gruband pay the monthly fee of half a US dollar for mining rights" (Allah 76). They lived within the sites, they needed protection; their homes and dwellings were veritable fortresses. Places highly secured by drugged and child soldiers armed to the teeth; who stopped at nothing. She would not joke with this protection that she was rendering because it earned her a lot of dollars and she bragged about it.

The other warlords always coveted this mining locality that Baclay defended tooth and nail perfectly. She fiercely repelled all attacks; a woman of such stature was very rare. She made men shiver, she was an extraordinary general and an exceptional commander; a woman like no other. The mighty NPFL of the great Taylor repeatedly stormed General Baclay's base without success: "The NPFL had always wanted to command the gold city of Sanniquellie. Several times they attacked her, each time they were pushed back with losses" (Allah 90). How to explain these blatant failures: Charles Taylor's army

repelled and then brought to its knees by a woman who was not trained in Gaddafi's terrorists' camp and who received no extraordinary military training. These exploits, her spirit of organisation and dynamism not expected from a woman in the African context, conferred on her nothing less than the qualities and spirit of a mythical hero.

Unfortunately for General Baclay, two of the associated bosses were kidnapped and the bandits disappeared with them in the middle of night. The remaining bosses panicked and closed their shops. She must convince them to stay to prevent the system she has set up from collapsing. The associated bosses represented the general's garner; its survival depended on these bosses. They ensured the proper functioning of the system skilfully set up by the general. Her survival depended on these bosses who provided the dollars and the wealth she lived on. She must therefore find the kidnapped bosses at all cost to reassure others and give a harsh lesson to the attackers to discourage the bandits: "Onika was like crazy. You had to see that. The tip of the woman with all that it wore howled 'Stay! Stay! I'll find them, bring them over.

They are in Niangbo. I know it. They are in Niangbo. In Niangbo '' (Allah 78). She could not authorize such actions, the hostage taking would sully her reputation and cast doubt on the confidence that the bosses had in her. These cowards were going to pay dearly for it, no ransom. Onika negotiated with the kidnappers and quietly prepared for the takeover of Niangbo. She puts a plan in action: they have to take the city by storm. They will have to go through the forest, the walking will be done at night and during the day they will stay in hiding. All child soldiers will be deprived of hash to avoid any smudge or suspicion. The plan was successfully executed and they succeeded in surrounding the city. General Onika was there to lead the operation:

We were camped and served hash, profusely. We were the first, at the forefront, the scouts. We were impatient to fight. We were all strong with hash like bulls and we all trusted our fetishes. Behind us, the soldiers' regiment and, a little further, the staff with General Onika in person. The operation was led by the general. She wanted to be there to punish the people of Niangbo. (Allah 79)

The fighting was tough and the bursts of gusto reasoned on both sides. The bandits were not intimidated and were not ready to surrender. There were losses of life on the side of the general's camp; Onika Baclay was forced to make two technical withdrawals before finally coming to the end of the kidnappers. The victory was well deserved and the general savoured it and celebrated it in her own way

General Onika was a woman like no other, an exceptional woman. A true fighter, she did not send a detachment to lead the action. She saw the kidnapping as an affront, a humiliation and a challenge. She was mad with rage, she found it unacceptable as a real, experienced and talented warlord, she led and monitored the operation in person; she made sure that the mission was well coordinated. This resounding victory would dissuade hostage-taking and later put an end to this practice in Sanniquellie, in the heart of her stronghold. With this feat which resulted in the release of the two associated owners, she thus regained the respect and confidence of the other bosses and retained her contract. She would therefore continue to protect the gold mines and all of its personnel.

Through her prowess, her bravery and her skill, the woman-general, Onika was a warlord in the true sense of the word. She was without weakness and had practically nothing to envy from her male counterparts. Her womanhood was never a handicap and had no negative effect on her performance. It is hard to imagine that a woman in the midst of these voracious and cruel generals in a tough war situation could enjoy or demonstrate such exceptional qualities. The author confers on her the qualities of mythical heroes; she manages to rise above men without any logical explanation. Such mythical heroes are endowed with incredible power that transcends human understanding and are ready to sacrifice themselves for others.

CONCLUSION

Majority of Francophone African female writers dwell on the suffering of women under the yoke of men. The tendency to define women by their relationship to men should be eradicated. There is therefore a need to deconstruct the numerous preconceptions inherent in the male dominated beliefs of these writers. Feminist writers

should endeavour to depict women, who through their struggles, succeeded in overcoming cultural and religious barriers to affirm themselves, make choices and take their own destinies in their own hands. For the docile and silent women, Ahmadou Kouroma substitutes the rebellious type, ready to take their destinies in their own hands, free themselves from the yoke of men and participate effectively in nation building. It is very pertinent to note that women writers need to go beyond feminism, so as to remain relevant, by not setting only as target the cause of women but by treating themes that have a wider impact on the society in general.

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