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**FALSAFA VA HAYOT
XALQARO JURNAL**

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**ETHNO-LINGUISTIC REPRESENTATION OF MYSTICISM,
ENGENDERED POWER AND LEADERSHIP IN FATOU FANNY-CISSÉ'S
MADAME LA PRÉSIDENTE**

Abstract. The sociology of African literature underlines functionality of art as expressions of life and the entire human existence. Thus, the expression of human existence in literature covers individualism and collective consciousness as shown in the highlight of cultural beliefs, cosmos and traditions. Fatou Fanny-Cissé is one of the Francophone African novelists that have highlighted African cultural beliefs and tradition in the areas of mysticism and sociology of engendered power relations. With the qualitative method of textual analysis and literature review, this article adopts Skinner's behaviourism to critique how Fanny-Cissé has presented mysticism and engendered power and leadership patterns in a fictional African society.

A close reading of the novel focuses on the plot, language use, characterisation and the subject matter for the extraction of data. The findings reveal that African novelists are often influenced by the collective consciousness as found in the indigenous cultural practices. These indigenous cultural practices also impacted on the socio-cultural relations along the line of gender, race and social class. The protagonist of the novel deploys the mystical resources of African magic to attain, retain and sustain her position as the President of a fictional African society. Thus, the hegemonic representation of Africa magic in literature has had a significant impact on how African culture is perceived and how African literature is consumed. The article, therefore, concludes that the portrayal of African magic in literature is not only a source of mystery and power but a means of conveying deeper message of interconnectedness and a tool for better understanding of the role of African culture in a modern world.

Keywords: African magic, mysticism, Superstition, African belief, culture, Madame la Présidente.

INTRODUCTION

The immanent relationship between language and culture has been highlighted by Mahadi and Jafari (2012) as well as Kovesces (2010) whose submissions uphold that language is the expression of culture as evident in the literary and non-literary use. Following the submissions of these scholars, the present article upholds the view that language fosters cultural collective consciousness of the people with pre-configuration of ideas and metaphorical use of language. Particularly, the collective consciousness of a culture is often reflected in literatures, fine arts and other performing arts of a culture. This position is consistent with the view of Eagleton [Akporobaro, p.67].

That literature transforms and intensifies ordinary language with stylistic representation and manifestation of meanings with indexical and iconic significations. By extension, the present article equates the submission of Eagleton with Sapir-Whorf hypothesis that language an expression of thought also functions as the indices of cultural representation with the innate collectivism of linguistic relativism. This linguistic relativism underscores individualism which marks out literary styles of respective writers whose cultural expressions are imbued in the sociolinguistic representation of culture. Thus, creative literary texts derive their meaning partly from their context.

Revealingly, language is representational and expressive with the use of some cultural codes with connotative and situational meanings. All these are captured in literary expressions with the deployment of figures of speech, figures of sound and other metaphorical expressions. Specifically, the use of language in African texts have been representing the cultural identity and worldview of the people as shown with the use of native idioms for psycho-cognitive interpretation of overt and covert meanings of a text. This is because literature, which refers to the creation of artistic, aesthetic and moral work, is said to be the reflection of reality of the people and in the society at large. With the potential to initiate and promote social change in human societies, literary texts, as products of concrete contextual issues, re-interrogates reality through the mechanism of language. In the light of this view, the present article aligns its view with Wardhaugh's [Akwanya, 2002, p.78] that:

The structure of a language determines the way in which speakers of that language view the world or, as a weaker view, the structure does not determine the world-view but is still extremely influential in predisposing speakers of a language toward adopting their world-view.

The deduction from the submission of Wardhaugh is that language has transcendental function in the expression and validation of cultural realities through linguistic signification for the actualisation of collective memory and sustained cultural identity. This observation informs the onerous task before literary writers.

In a similar vein to Wardhaugh's position, Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin [Bourdieu, 1991, p.87] have argued that women are marginalised in patriarchal societies as manifested in action and language deployed by the masculine population and their collaborators to describe womenfolk and womanhood. These scholars, therefore, see the marginal representation of women as a form of linguistic, political and cultural imperialism. In their argument, Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin aver thus:

Women in many societies have been relegated to the position of "Other", marginalized and, in a metaphorical sense, 'colonized' They share with colonized races and peoples an intimate experience of the politics of oppression and repression, and like them they have been forced to articulate their experiences in the language of their oppressors. Women, like post-colonial peoples, have had to construct a language of their own when their only available 'tools' are those of the 'colonizers'.

The observation of the trio is also related to the situations of creative use of language in imaginative literatures. Female writers have been patterning their literary use of language to the masculine representation of gender relations until recently that some female writers began to re-interrogate gender prejudices in the ethno-linguistic representations of women most especially in female-authored literary texts. Also, language is used to re-interpret or interrogate hegemony in consistence with specific cultural and sociological parameters of race and gender. It is against this background that the present article explores the ethno-linguistic attributes in the engendered representation of power and leadership as well as mysticism in Fatou Fanny-Cissé's *Madame la Présidente*.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Fatou Fanny-Cissé's *Madame la Présidente*, published in 2015, is an award winning novel that won the "best fiction of ALA 2017". The novel presents the political situation and system in a fictional African country, Democratic Republic of Louma, which is plunged into some political crises. In social and cultural contexts, language has been playing significant roles in the attainment of sustainable human relations and social cohesion. Similarly, language has also been instrumental to the establishment or deconstruction of hegemony along the line of gender, race and ethnicity. These issues of paradigm construction have been established implicitly or overtly in Peter Ives' *Language and Hegemony in Gramsci* (2004), Umberto Eco's *The Search for the Perfect Language* (1995) and Pierre Bourdieu's *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991). The arguments of these scholars point to the fact that "language is generative and advances as human consciousness of their socio-economic status grow and develop with civilization and revolution" [Sesan and Oluremi, 2019, p.75]. The generative impulse of language informs its creative and critical use in literary texts to express specific and general worldviews owing to the fact that "words are free" and "cost nothing to produce" [Akwanya, 2005, p.145].

Like literary writers across the globe, African literary writers have also been using language consciously or unconsciously to literally or literarily represent social relations and different human behaviours in complex societal structures. Thus, the conscious and unconscious experiences of African writers which are expressed with local quality through facts and fictions are often juxtaposed to construct interesting plots of novels, plays, short stories, songs and poems for different purposes. With styles, themes, colorations and diverse pre-occupations, authors reveal, teach, correct, counsel, guide and sometimes change the society's ways of living. This is because literature, which refers to the creation of artistic, aesthetic and moral work, is said to be the reflection of reality of the people and in the society at large.

Among the major themes of African literature is leadership along the lines of social expectations, systemic failure and disillusionment. This theme, from the earliest stage of African literature, focuses on male leaders as presidents, political leaders and social crusaders with little attention paid to the proactive and reactive roles of women. This situation, however, has changed in the contemporary time with conscious attention paid to the characterisation of female protagonists as presidents, political leaders and social crusaders. In the development and advancement of the plot of the contemporary African literatures, language is often engendered thereby reflecting the ideological biases of respective authors. This view is consistent with Akwanya's [Akwanya, 2005, p.145] view that "the language use in the text was seen as embodying the unconscious signature of the author".

The unconscious signature of the authors are often representational with some inadequacies associated with biases of gender, race and social constructs. As represented in the novel under study, the election of a woman reveals the paradox of a will-power which influences individual decisions and actions. The novel, which centres on a female president and her struggles to lead an African nation in an ever-changing world, presents a critique of African democracy as it reveals politics in contemporary Africa. The republic of Louma, an imaginary African country typifies electoral crises and cruel political situation in African countries. The novel, made up of feminist force and filled with strong negativity, portrays the downgrading belief of women's ability to succeed in politics and in other affairs of life. The narrative, full of simple and direct language is filled with interesting Africanisms for which the reader will be obliged to seek their meaning.

The novel highlights social and cultural prejudices against the potential of women to assume leadership position in a patriarchal society. This position is rooted in the marginal representation of women through the stages of socialisation from childhood to adulthood. The engendering of language in the characterisation of the novel's protagonist is seen in the marginal representation of the potential of a woman to rule over patriarchy. The excerpt from the novel reveals thus:

Pour la simple raison que les temps qu'elle avait consultés pour savoir ce que l'avenir lui réservait, on lui faisait invariablement répéter qu'il n'était pas écrit dans son destin qu'elle gouver

For the simple reason that when she had consulted to know what the future had in store for her, one made him invariably repeated that she was not destined to govern the country of Louma. The above excerpt is a further revelation of the conceived gender capacity of men and women in social and human relations. It was stated that it was not written in the destiny of Fitina, the protagonist of the novel that she will govern her country. The expression highlights the culture-nature continuum in the representation of African gender relations. The continuum conscripts women into the liminal space of wifehood and motherhood with broader expectations of serving the will and need of the patriarchy. Consequently, gender and political powers are not evenly distributed owing to the conscription of women to the liminal space of operations. Deductively, the conscription influences the thoughts and the overall self-esteem of Fitina in the novel that she is not destined to lead her people. This is not to say that she is not ambitious to become the president. This argument is premised on her action of pursuing the dream of becoming a president as inferred from the novel's excerpt "Fitina came to ask me for help to become president although this was not foreseen in his destiny". One of the core issues underlined by the novelist is that the attitude to power of men and women are similar. Fitina has just behaved in the like manner of male counterparts that could be seeking similar opportunities. Besides, the novelist is also projecting the political mentality of Africans that to serve the people and the country is by force. Fitina is ready to do anything to make her become the president of her country. Thus, Fitina is convinced with the virility of her political power and legitimacy to ascertain her will in a patriarchal society and subsequently she deploys all the social, cultural and political apparatuses to sustain this legitimacy holistic deconstruction of hegemonic masculinity which underrates the potential of women. Fitina's decision and action are consistent with the position of De Beauvoir [1976, p.480] that:

A woman fully assured in her virile powers will want only men as friends and companions; but such assurance will hardly be found in any woman who does not have interests in common with them, who in business, activities or art does not work and find success like a man.

Fitina, Madam President, aspires to surpass the records of the previous presidents as evident in her style of administration and how she relates with the masses as well as the cabinet members. She does not want to be perceived incompetent in power, perhaps, along her gender identity as a woman – a presumed weakling and appendage to men.

The society is structured in such a way that majority of women suffer from pervasive disadvantages. The narrative, a critique of African democracy, reveals the tendencies of the dictatorship of African leaders in politics in contemporary Africa. The novelist presents the change in gender president as inevitable to denote that women have moved from the jurisdiction of tameness to action both in private and public life. Africa has had a few brave women who, undaunted by their respective confining circumstances, have fought against inhibiting patriarchal factors in their societies, for the liberation of their folks. These women which

include Funmilayo Ransome Kuti, Efunsetan Aniwura of Nigeria, Mne Kathili of Kenya, Yaa Asantewa of Ghana who have managed to secure a place for themselves in the sand of time have displayed exceptional courage and fortitudes as they managed to forestall every patriarchal tenants in their societies and moved to limelight. To subvert the belief that women are weaker vessels, the novelist, through the feminization of presidential elections as a caricature of the tendencies of the dictatorship of African leaders, laden the narrative with elements of African folklore vis-à-vis superstition, mysticism and African magic to actualize archetypal meaning enshrined within the text.

Subjecting Mysticism to Engendered Cultural Discourse

African philosophy is primarily concerned with its belief in supernatural forces. Man's environment is believed to be characterized by the influence or manipulation of the spirit world. Men and women as social groups have different life chances. Mysticism, a situation of displaying and practicing certain religious beliefs in line with specific tradition, reflects the worldview of individuals or communities of people. Owing to the multiplicity in the linguistic and ethnic identities across the globe, the conceptualization and practice of mysticism is relative with specific uniqueness to the needs and aspirations of a people. Also, the deployment of mysticism in human relations has been engendered with differing perceptions of sexual identities of individuals along the line of their maleness and femaleness.

The cultural discourse of mysticism underlines differences and re-alignment of ideologies, spiritualism and gender roles. This position forms one of the major arguments of Ogundipe (2007) that cultural perspectives of sex and gender predetermine the roles and responsibilities of individuals at the profane and profound levels of relationships. Ogundipe's arguments are also consistent with Oyewumi's (1997) that prescriptive gender roles often times ascribe some degrees of sacredness and possession of mystical power to women in some African societies. In this line of argument, women are represented as mothers (iya) with the mystical and metaphorical meanings of the controller of the universe with some of their integumentary system such as hair, nails and tears that are used in the ritual process of being and becoming. To this end, the present writer aligns its view with Ogundipe's [2007, p.29] that:

As the woman is sacred in endogenous thought, her body is also sacred. Similarly, her body as the part of life, parts of her body such as her hair and nail clippings, women's discharges such as her milk, menses, tears, sweat, and even saliva are considered sacred. They can and are used as blessings, curses, and potions for power – social, material and supernatural.

Ogundipe's view further upholds the African cultural beliefs in mysticism and sacredness of some deified humans as goddesses. The overall gender perception of women in contemporary African societies negates the indigenous conception of female or feminine power of past heroines and goddesses such as Queen Amina of Zazzau, Moremi of Ile-Ife and the women Amazon of Dahomey. These women have played redemptive roles for their respective race. The negation,

perhaps, is connected to some superstitions that redefine the marginal or central position of men and women in the cultural configuration of events.

Superstition refers to beliefs or practices often based on irrationality rather than empirical evidence. It encompasses a wide range of cultural, religious or personal convictions that certain actions, objects or occurrences hold either good or bad luck. Superstition is an excessive reference for, or fear of that which is unknown or mysterious. It is presumably a belief in supernatural causation that lies in the natural world. This belief revolves round a causal relationship between certain behaviours or occurrences and results in events that cannot be reasonably explained by scientific knowledge. Superstitions vary greatly across cultures and can be rooted in historical events, myths or traditions passed down through generations.

Defiance of mind and belief are revered in many African societies. The belief in and worship of their progenitors is the important basic concept in most African religions. Destiny reflects the preponderance and the dominance of the spiritual reality in the traditional African beliefs and worldviews. In African culture, the concept of destiny permeates various aspects of life, influencing belief systems, social structures and daily practices. It is a rich, multifaceted understanding that intertwines spirituality, community and the individual's role within broader tapestry of existence. Despite advances in science and technology, superstitions persist in many intertwining with cultural heritage, folklore and personal beliefs. It is an African belief to consult the oracle/ancestors at the birth of a child wherein the Priest/diviner forecasts the future of the baby to the parents who believe in the step for guidance on navigating the child's life journey. This to them helps to know/understand what the destiny entails has done more harm than good as either the parents or the baby at old age tries all possible best to manoeuvre or avert bad destiny by all available means. Sophocles' Oedipus Rex and Ola Rotimi's adaptation in *The gods are not to blame* are cases on point. In his treatise on destiny, Akporobaro [Akporobaro, 2006, p.61) opines that the issue of human destiny is a natural issue which the traditional man expended much time in poetizing and mystifying. The concept of destiny as the captivating notion that human lives are guided by an inevitable course or predetermined fate, steeped in mystery and controversy, blending beliefs in predetermination with the idea of personal choice. The belief in destiny, though controversial, is predominant in the works of some African writers notably Ramonu Sanusi's *The Mysterious Child*, and Ola Rotimi's adaptation of Oedipus Rex titled, *The gods are not to blame*. Fatou Fanny-Cissé's *Madame la Presidente* explores the concept of destiny as an integral part of African belief.

Foregrounding on this African belief in destiny, humans are created with the ability to make moral choices and they are responsible for those choices. In *Madame la president*, superstition influences the theme of identity of the protagonist, Fitina, whose desire of becoming the president of Louma is not written in her fate. The perception of destiny which has been so debatable often sparks contemplation about free will, the meaning of life and whether one's choices truly

shape the future or merely align with a predestined plan. While some are ardent believers of this myth, some people believe that everyone is the architect of his own fortune and misfortune in life. While destiny is considered significant, African cultures often emphasize the coexistence of fate and free will. Individuals are thus seen as active participants in shaping their destinies through their choices and action, even while acknowledging a larger cosmic order. The narrative, emphasizing the belief in the myth of destiny, explores the superstitious attachment to Fitina's destiny which decoys her mischievous and mysterious acts. The excerpt of the novel reveals thus "Fitina came to ask me for help to become president although this was not foreseen in his destiny". The superstitious beliefs of individuals in the possibility of influencing fate to one's opportunity also establishes the inevitability of mysticism in human endeavours.

Mysticism governs the entire life of man. The existence of mystical and mysterious forces has become a universal belief among Africans. The manifestation and use of mystical power describes traditional African religion. Mystical power is believed to have its root in the belief in lower gods and spirits as possessor of an awe-inspiring power. The world and its components vis-à-vis, nature, man, spirit and the spirit world are believed to have been created mysteriously by the Supreme Being because the concept of nature is connected with mysterious powers. African and every aspect of traditional African culture are imparted by environment and nature. The entire creation which is replete with the dominant and pervasive presence of the impersonal power makes life becomes a mystery. In Genesis 1:1-4, the Holy Bible's reiteration of the mysterious creation of heaven and earth and everything therein through the spoken word of command within six days is a case on point.

The novel, *Madame la presidente*, with a wide range of mystical elements, conveys the power of mysticism in the journey of self-discovery. Fitina's journey of self-discovery and liberation is an imitation of contemporary mysticism and the politics of the present day which is informed by the novelist's stylistic use of mysticism. In this line of thought, an excerpt from the novel reveals thus:

La seule chose qu'il n'avait pas pu lui révéler, malgré toute sa bonne volonté, c'était l'apparence de Djomori. Parce que celui qui avait vu Djomori ne pouvait plus en parler car une fois qu'on a quitté la maison, on est devenu à moitié amnésique. Nous nous souvenions de ses recommandations mais pas de l'apparence de l'intérieur de sa maison ni même de son apparence.

The only thing he had not been able to reveal to her, despite all his good will, was Djomori's appearance. Because whoever had seen Djomori could no longer talk about him because once you left the house, you became nearly amnesiac. You could remember his recommendations but not his appearance or that of the interior of his house.

As Styne (36) opines that life is saturated with supernatural possibilities, the novelist's certainty of the potency, possibilities and belief in the existence, effect and efficacy of mystical power is explored through the character of Kotigui when she writes:

Comment expliquez-vous que la maison soit restée debout et que tous les objets qui se trouvaient dans sa chambre soient restés intacts alors qu'il avait brûlé avec son lit ? Et c'est encore un candidat qui s'est étranglé avec le ventilateur du câble audio ?

How do you explain the fact that the house remained standing and that all the items in his room remained intact while he got burnt with his bed? And there is another candidate who strangled himself to death with the cable sound of the fan?

Mysticism is conveyed in the narrative's structure, plot and characters as a shaded and complex representation structure. The novelist explores a wide occurrence and belief in mysticism both with Europeans and Africans. It should be noted that the fact Sophocles' Oedipus Rex was set in ancient Greece affirms the belief of the Western world in mysteries; thereby demystifying the thought and belief that mysticism is synonymous and limited to Africans.

Les blancs ont aussi des pratiques satanistes..... les rituels ne sont pas le seul fait des Loumais et de leurs voisins, crois-moi. Tous scientifiques et rationnels qu'ils sont, les Blancs croient aussi en des puissances supérieures qui interfèrent dans la vie des hommes quand on leur fait des offrandes.

Europeans also have Satanic practices..... rituals are not limited to only Loumais and their neighbours, believe me. They are scientific and rational; Europeans also believe in spiritual powers that interfere with the lives of men when offerings are made to them.

The mysterious acts of science and technology in the society has become a wonder to man most especially in developing and under developed countries. How do we explain the wonder of Newton's law of gravity that upholds the suspension of a heavy object of an aircraft in the air if not being mysterious? The narrative reiterates mysticism as an informed act of science and technology in our contemporary world. At present, with the invention and advances of Artificial intelligence, several mysteries are evolving. New kinds of wearable devices and platforms that are built from the ground for artificial intelligence are mysteriously transforming nearly every aspect of human lives. These devices which are sensing, screen less and seamless unimaginably interact with the world as humans – hearing what human hears and seeing what human sees. The novelist satirizes the concept of African mysticism in relation to that of the Europeans when she writes:

Et puis, crois-tu que le mysticisme ne soit pratiqué que par les seuls

Loumais? Les Blancs sont plus mystiques que nous mais eux investissent leur côté obscur dans la science et la technologie. Laisse-moi t'informer que les plus grands savants occidentaux étaient de grands mystiques.

And then, do you think mysticism is practiced only by the Loumais? Europeans are more mystical than us but they invest their own dark side in Science and Technology. Let me inform you that the greatest Western scientists were great mystics.

Close to mysticism in cultural discourse is Magic. It is the power of apparently influencing events by using mysterious or supernatural forces. Magic practices in African culture often involve rituals, ceremonies, and the use of herbs,

charms, and divination methods to connect with the spiritual world and address various aspects of life, including health, prosperity, and protection. The belief and efficacy of the manipulation of magical powers on human's instinct and character in our contemporary world is conceptualized. African magic is the form, development and performance of mystic within the culture and society of Africa and diaspora. Chinua Achebe's *Things fall Apart*, Ben Okri's *The famished road* and Ramonu Sanusi's *The mysterious child's* depiction of African magic in fictional universe (which give way to surprising realities of characters possessing magical abilities which is subjected to harsh political and socioeconomic realities in their battles for survival and dignity) were done to counter the misrepresentation of traditional African belief and to reconcile the tradition with modern belief.

In the narrative, Fatous Fanny-Cissé grapples with her African identity, the pressures of modernity and the influence of traditional African magic. She explores how African magic is represented as a source of power and knowledge which provides her recipient with the tools to be who she wants to be. Through the character of Fitina, the narrative examines the complex relationship between African magic and African society in the modern area.

La candidate fitina était donc pleinement consciente de ce dont les Loumais et leurs voisins étaient capables de faire. Elle savait en son for intérieur que la magie noire était bien réelle et que, pour prospérer dans son monde, il fallait en tenir compte. Il fallait non seulement se protéger mais peut-être aussi en user pour se hisser dans la société. Elle savait que la magie noire intervenait dans beaucoup de domaines de son quotidien.

Candidate Fitina was therefore fully aware of what the Loumais and their neighbours were capable of doing. She knew deep down that african magic was very real and that in order to thrive in her world, she had to take that into consideration. It was not necessary only to protect oneself but perhaps also as a means to rise in the society. She knew that african magic has intervened in many areas of her daily life.

Science and technology seems magical but it can never share the synonymous potency of the real African magic. While science and technology can be explained and defined in reality, the actualization of African magic remains a mystery that cannot be easily uncovered. It is no respecter of neither person nor gender. It's a true definition of African cultural belief in their progenitors and powers that be which cannot be seen by physical eyes.

Au bout de cinq minutes de ce manège, Djomori prit un chapeau parmi ceux qui étaient entassé à côté de lui et le déposa devant Fitina. Puis, il lui demanda de le lui remettre. Fitina se pencha pour se saisir du chapeau. Contre toute attente, elle trouva le chapeau incroyablement lourd. Elle ne comprenait pas comment un simple chapeau pouvait peser autant. Elle essaya encore de le soulever de toutes ses forces mais le chapeau ne bougea pas d'un pouce. Kotigui trouvant que sa sœur exagérait, tenta lui aussi de se saisir du chapeau. Mais il ne parvint pas non plus à le décoller du sol. Il tira dessus de toutes ses forces mais le chapeau demeura

à sa place. Il semblait peser une tonne. Le frère et la sœur se regardaient stupéfaits, n'y comprenant rien, visiblement très impressionnés.

After five minutes of this, Djomori took a hat from among those piled up close to him and placed it in front of Fitina. Then, he asked her to give it back to him. Fitina bent down to grab the hat. Unexpectedly, she found that the hat was incredibly heavy. She didn't understand how a simple hat could weigh so much. She tried again to lift it with all her strength but the hat didn't budge an inch. Kotigui, thinking that his sister was exaggerating, also tried to grab the hat. But he couldn't get it off the ground either. He pulled on it with all his strength but the hat remained in its place. It seemed it weighs a ton. The brother and sister looked at each other stunned, understanding nothing, obviously very impressed.

Africans recognize the existence and reality of magical powers because African divinities have varying powers which influence hierarchy and territory. Mbiti [1969, p.29] submits that Africans are notoriously religious and each people has its own religious system with set of beliefs and practices. With the belief that some people are firmly committed to doing evil to the point that they can't be restrained from it. Evil machination is no respecter of persons, tribe, place or distance.

Presenting a caustic and self-less criticism of the African countries and the ideological pretensions of the ruling class, the narrative satirizes African leaders' evil machinations which are all aimed at extracting money and power by all means in order to consolidate their regimes, subjugate the citizens and manipulate the thinking of the citizens. The consultation of herbalist-Djomori- by Fitina points to the fact that most African dictators fortify themselves with occult power whereby they are subjected to cruel prices to pay at the expense of the peace of the citizens they govern. These occult powers which include diverse sacrifices, shedding and drinking of innocent blood of old or young is observed to consolidate their regimes, to subjugate the citizens, to manipulate the thinking of the citizens, to manipulate the thinking of the citizens. President Fitina's daily obligation of drinking the blood of an albino every morning before going to her office as a president to fortify herself against all forms of attack and opposition could be a pointer to the fact that African leaders drink human blood to forcefully achieve their cruel aims. The excerpt from the novel, therefore, reveals thus:

Elle devait chaque matin boire dans le crane de cet homme avant de prendre son petit-déjeuner. Et elle devait y boire, au moins pendant deux semaines, le sang extrait de son corps.

Every morning, she had to drink from this man's skull before having breakfast. And she had to drink there, at least for two weeks, the blood extracted from his body.

The excerpt suggests that some people with metaphysical powers use them (the powers) diabolically to negatively influence a course of action or the entire human universe. Most ardent believers in this practice with these magical powers are believed to be full of evil spirits, deeds and atrocities. Since evil spirits are always associated with Satan, the metaphoric representation of black colour to

mean evil, sadness, mourning and death has come to stay, erroneously, as African quality. These faithful of African traditional religions derive great pleasure in the use of these extra-terrestrial powers as it commands honour and respect on its carrier who in turn become a physical terror to the people around him and the society. Though this power is often reflected in the representation of certain minorities, the greatest mystery of the concept of Africa magic is the fact that the result of its power on its recipient announces the invisible nature of its causative agent. The recipient is infected unknowingly either through physical material or through the air. The evil practice of African magic is revealed in the following excerpt from the novel.

Quelque temps après, on a compris que Romaric et Jacques avaient précisément été empoisonnés par le vieux le soir où il était venu les féliciter à leur QG de campagne, soi-disant pour fêter leur victoire avec eux. Il avait appliqué du poison dans sa paume et en les saluant, le leur avait transfère avec son plus beau sourire.

Sometimes later, we understood that Romaric and Jacques had been poisoned by the old man the evening he came to congratulate them at their campaign headquarters, supposedly to celebrate their victory with them. He had applied poison in his palm and while greeting them, had transferred it to them with his most beautiful smile.

As shown in the above excerpt, the practice of black magic on African continent is acquired through social interactions. This is consistent with the position of behaviourists that all human beings can acquire anything (language, culture or acts) around them whether they are taught its formal rules or not. This to them is because since children are motivated to speak in the same way, adults /human beings are motivated by merely copying and learning behavior. This justifies the behaviourists assertion that the environment in which one grows determines what one becomes. Fitina who was believed to be a compassionate woman was changed to a cruel woman who is ready to kill anyone that attempted to hinder her rule as the president of Louma at the influence of Djomori's assurance of being the all-in-all through the blood sacrifice of an albino. The following excerpt reveals thus:

Ce sang était destiné à forger son caractère, à endurcir son Cœur pour la rendre féroce à souhait. Ce sang devait lui enlever progressivement toute humanité et la débarrasser de toute sorte de pitié. Elle ne devait pas céder à la pitié.

This blood was intended to change her character, to harden her heart and make her heart fierce as desired. This blood was to gradually strip her of all humanity and rid her of any kind of pity. She must not give in to pity.

African magic is shaped by cultural, political and economic context of the continent. The paradox of African magic in the narrative is explored as a means of understanding how both positive and negative aspects of the practice influence Fitina's identity. For Fitina, it is paradoxical that a female gender which is believed to have been wired from creation as being compassionate could behave so weird at the order of African magic. Fitina's behaviour is largely determined by spiritual

forces that her physical strength and human understanding cannot control. Her personality and predisposition vary due to the distinction of her familial environment, social influence and the influence of African magic. Fitina prepares to go to any length to secure her position as the president. This decision includes the possession of mystical power of transformation from human to animal. The following excerpt reveals thus:

Une présidente métamorphose en grenouille!..... Comme Fitina refusait de reprendre sa forme humaine, le vieux fantôme se dirigea vers le petit colis qui rassemblait à un entrelacement de lianes, en retira deux balais avec lesquels il vint frapper un des battants de la porte du sous-sol. Sous les coups de balai, la présidente retrouvait tout doucement sa forme humaine. C'était proprement effarant. Le balai était son totem et cela, les fantômes le savaient car on ne pouvait rien cacher aux morts.

A president metamorphoses into a frog!..... As Fitina refused to return to her human form, the old ghost went towards the small package which was gathered in an intertwining of vines, removed two brooms with which he hit one of the basement doors. Under the knock-backs of the broom, the president gradually regained her human form. It was really frightening. The broom was his talisman and the ghosts knew this because nothing could be hidden from the dead.

Fitina was driven by ignorance and fear with the vague hope that what is believed will come to pass. Whatever form it takes, the ignorance and or fear that undergird every superstitious act comes with a cost. Her passion for taking people's lives is alarming. As it is with African leaders, they destroy opponents and all those who criticize them. Skinner submits that behaviours could be shaped when the use of reinforcement without emotions is implemented. African culture and beliefs and particularly the use of African magic influence the president's identity as a good and successful leader. One wonders, if blood is life, why take someone's life for your own existence. The outcome of these cruel and deadly acts behaviours was heavily influenced by circumstantial factors. The role of magic and witchcraft in her transformation of power and the consequence of its social implication.

CONCLUSION

The relationship between language and the nonlinguistic cultural behavior of the people who speak the language cannot be overemphasized. Based on the discourse of hegemony, which is a form of power that is held by dominant groups within a society, this paper looks at how Fatou Fanny-Cissé's work of literature – *Madame la présidente*- has conformed to, challenged, resisted and deviated from the hegemonic representations of Africa magic in literature and the implications of these representations for readers of African literature. This paper argues that hegemonic representation of Africa magic in literature has had a significant impact on how African culture is perceived and how African literature is consumed. This study draws on a range of research to facilitate an ethnolinguistic analysis of the novel's themes of African magic, mysticism and superstition. The study illustrates

the importance of African magic in the novel. It further suggests that the portrayal of African magic in literature can act as a tool for better understanding of the role of African culture in a modern world. The result of this study provides a valuable contribution to the field of ethno linguistics and open up new avenues for further research. The findings of this paper suggest that hegemonic representations of African magic in literature have had a significant impact on readers of African literature.

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**ЭТНОЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКОЕ ОТОБРАЖЕНИЕ МИСТИЦИЗМА,
ГЕНДЕРНОЙ ВЛАСТИ И ЛИДЕРСТВА В РОМАНЕ ФАТУ
ФАННИ-СИССЕ «МАДАМ ПРЕЗИДЕНТ»**

Аннотация. Социология африканской литературы подчеркивает функциональность искусства как выражения жизни и человеческого бытия в целом. Таким образом, выражение человеческого существования в литературе охватывает как индивидуализм, так и коллективное сознание, проявляющееся в изображении культурных верований, космологии и традиций. Фату Фанни-Сиссе — одна из франкоязычных африканских писательниц, которая акцентирует внимание на африканских культурных верованиях и традициях, особенно в сфере мистицизма и социологии гендерных властных отношений. Используя качественный метод текстового анализа и литературного обзора, в статье применяется бихевиоризм Скиннера для анализа того, как Фанни-Сиссе представляет мистицизм, властные структуры и модели лидерства в вымышленном африканском обществе.

Внимательное прочтение романа сосредоточено на сюжете, использовании языка, характеристике персонажей и тематике, что позволяет извлекать необходимые данные. Результаты показывают, что африканские писатели часто находятся под влиянием коллективного сознания, отраженного в коренных культурных практиках. Эти практики также оказывают влияние на социокультурные отношения с точки зрения гендера, расы и социального класса. Главная героиня романа использует мистические ресурсы африканской магии для достижения, удержания и поддержания своей позиции Президента вымышленного африканского общества. Таким образом, гегемоническое изображение африканской магии в литературе существенно влияет на восприятие африканской культуры и на то, как воспринимается африканская литература. В статье делается вывод о том, что изображение африканской магии в литературе является не только источником мистики и власти, но и средством передачи более глубокого послания о взаимосвязанности и инструментом лучшего понимания роли африканской культуры в современном мире.

Ключевые слова: африканская магия, мистицизм, суеверие, африканское верование, культура, Madame la Présidente.

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FATOU FANNY-CISSÉ'NING “MADAME LA PRÉSIDENTE” ASARIDA MISTITSIZM, GENDER ASOSIDAGI KUCH VA YETAKCHILIKNING ETNOLINGVISTIK TASVIRI

Annotatsiya. Afrika adabiyotining sotsiologiyasi san'atning inson hayoti va mavjudligini ifoda etuvchi amaliy funksiyasini ta'kidlaydi. Shu bois, adabiyotda inson mavjudligini ifodalash individualizm va jamoaviy ongini o'z ichiga oladi; bu esa madaniy e'tiqodlar, kosmos va an'analar tasvirida aks etadi. Fatou Fanny-Cissé — frankofon afrikalik yozuvchilardan biri bo'lib, u o'z asarlarida Afrika madaniy e'tiqodlari va an'alarini, xususan mistitsizm va gender asosida shakllangan ijtimoiy kuch munosabatlari doirasida yoritgan. Ushbu maqolada sifatli matn tahlili va adabiyot sharhi metodlariga tayanilgan bo'lib, Fanny-Cissé'ning afrikalik xayoliy jamiyatda mistitsizm, gender kuchi va yetakchilik naqshlarini qanday aks ettirganini Skinnerning behaviorizm nazariyasi orqali tahlil qilinadi. Roman diqqat bilan o'qib chiqilib, syujet, til ishlatilishi, obraz yaratish va asosiy mavzu orqali ma'lumotlar ajratib olindi.

Olingan natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, afrikalik yozuvchilar ko'pincha o'zlarining mahalliy madaniy amaliyotlarida mujassam bo'lgan jamoaviy ongdan ilhomlanadilar. Ushbu mahalliy amaliyotlar gender, irq va ijtimoiy tabaqa yo'nalishidagi ijtimoiy-madaniy munosabatlarga ham ta'sir qiladi. Roman bosh qahramoni afrikalik sehr-jodu vositalaridan foydalanib, xayoliy afrikalik jamiyatda Prezident lavozimiga erishadi, uni saqlab qoladi va mustahkamlaydi. Shu tariqa, adabiyotda Afrika sehrining hegemonik tasviri Afrika madaniyatining qanday qabul qilinishi va Afrika adabiyotining qanday iste'mol qilinishiga sezilarli ta'sir ko'rsatadi. Maqola xulosa qilib aytadiki, Afrika sehrining adabiyotdagi tasviri nafaqat sir-sinoat va kuch manbai, balki chuqur bog'liqlik haqidagi xabarni yetkazish vositasi va zamonaviy dunyoda Afrika madaniyatining o'rnini yaxshiroq tushunishga xizmat qiluvchi quroldir.

Kalit so'zlar: Afrika sehr-jodusi, mistitsizm, xurofot, afrikalik e'tiqod, madaniyat, Madame la Présidente.

