

**REINCARNATION AND NATIONALIST STRUGGLES IN SELECTED
POSTCOLONIAL FRANCOPHONE AFRICAN NOVELS**

BY

GABRIEL OLUSEGUN FASINU
NCE, B.A. (Hons) (Sokoto), M.A., MLIS (Ibadan)
Matric No: 124138

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CERTIFICATION

I certify that this work was carried out by Gabriel Olusegun FASINU in the Department of European Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

SUPERVISOR

Nwando. O. Babalobi, Ph.D.
Department of European Studies,
University of Ibadan, Ibadan.
Nigeria.

DATE

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to Almighty God, to my parents (of blessed memory), Prince and Princess Samuel Oyedirán Hundonougbo Fasinu, my lovely wife, Mrs. Eunice Bamidele Fasinu and to my children: Prince Alexander Adeyemi Mauseve, Princesses Alexandra Temilade Senami and Emmanuella Fadesekeḡi Yise.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page	i
Certification	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents	vi
Abstract	ix
Abbreviations	x
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.1.1 The Place of Death and Reincarnation in African Societies	4
1.1.2. The Difference between Ancestral Worship and Reincarnation	13
1.2 Statement of the Problem	14
1.3 Research Questions	15
1.4 Objective of the study	16
1.5 Significance of the study	17
1.6 Scope of the study	17
1.7 Organisation of the study	17
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	18
2.1 Introduction	21
2.1.1 Reincarnation in African Religion	23
2.1.2 Reincarnation as represented in African literary works	25
2.1.3 The Emergence of reincarnation in Egyptian belief	25
2.1.4 The Emergence of reincarnation in world religions	30
2.1.5 Reincarnation: Summary of Histories and Doctrines	31
2.1.6 Comparative study of reincarnation in modern thinking and African philosophy	36
2.1.7 Who is an Ancestor?	46
2.1.8 Spiritism	51
2.1.9 Sacrifices and offerings for worship of the invisibles in Africa	53
2.2 Similarities and differences in belief about reincarnation in the world Reincarnation facts and resources	54

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY	55
3.1 Theoretical Framework	56
3.2 Postcolonial Theory	64
3.3 Magical realism	68
3.4 Methodology	69
3.4.1 Principles of magical realism	73
3.4.2 Reincarnation in films and oral interview	77
CHAPTER FOUR: REINCARNATION AND NATIONALIST STRUGGLES IN <i>LES SOLEILS DES INDÉPENDANCES</i>, <i>LA VIE ET DEMIE</i> AND <i>LA PLAIE</i>	78
4.1 Introduction	84
4.1.1 Synopsis of the selected novels	84
4.1.2 Ahmadou Kourouma's <i>Les soleils des indépendances</i>	87
4.1.3 Sony Labou Tansi's <i>La Vie et demie</i>	88
4.1.4 Malick Fall's <i>La plaie</i> ,	88
4.2 Analyses of the selected novels	88
4.2.1 Ahmadou Kourouma's <i>Les soleils des indépendances</i> (1970)	103
4.3 Sony Labou Tansi's <i>La Vie et demie</i> (1979)	118
4.4 Malick Fall's <i>La Plaie</i> (1967)	126
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION	137
REFERENCES	144
APPENDIX I	148

ABBREVIATIONS

- LSDI : [Les soleils des indépendances]
- LVD : [La Vie et demie]
- NS : [Noces sacrées]
- LN : [L'Enfant noir]
- TAC: [The African Child]
- TFA: [Things Fall Apart]
- DLCR : [De l'autre côté du regard]
- LRDM : [Le respect des morts]
- SL: [Sous L'orage]
- NKJV: [New King James Version]
- PDS : [Pétales de sang]
- LDDN : [Les dits de la nuit : contes tenda du Sénégal oriental]
- APDI : [Au pays des initiés : contes ewondo du cameroun]
- SMB: [Saint monsieur Baly]
- LPN: [Le Pagne noir]
- APDI: [Au pays des initiés]
- TDOG: [The Dilemma of a Ghost]
- CLSI: [Comprendre: Les soleils des indépendances]
- LMDVA: [La Mort Dans la vie Africaine]
- CDTA: [Crépuscule des temps anciens]
- TSC : [The Spirit Child]
- LVDEM: [La Vie d'un enfant mystérieux]
- LR: [Le Revenant]
- MTSNDS: [Moi, Tituba sorcière...Noire de Salem]
- LP: [La plaie]
- SMN: [Season of Migration to the North]

ABSTRACT

Reincarnation is the belief that the spirit of man after death transmigrates into another form or body to express itself. Existing studies on reincarnation in Francophone African literature emphasise the nature of reincarnated beings, whether they manifest fully or partially in body, with less attention paid to their possession of enhanced power. The manifestation of the supernatural powers of reincarnated beings was, therefore, examined in postcolonial Francophone African novels with a view to establishing how the powers were deployed in the nationalist struggle for freedom from colonial oppression.

Postcolonial Theory and Magical Realism were adopted. Postcolonial theory emphasises the effect of culture displacement and resistance to domination while magical realism highlights the mix of a dream-like elements with the real world. Ahmadou Kourouma's *Les Soleils des indépendances* (LSDI), Sony Labou Tansi's *La Vie et demie* (LVD) and Malick Fall's *La Plaie* (LP) were purposively selected because they have reincarnation and nationalist struggle narratives. Texts were analysed using *explication de texte*.

The colonialists cause divisions among Africans, bring an alien religion, make inferior the language of their hosts, undermine common heritage and established a new dawn. The principal protagonists in LSDI, LVD and LP are reincarnated beings, who confront and resist the colonialists, namely Fama influenced by Kone, Martial and Magamou respectively. Four principles of magical realism identified in the texts are transmigration, full reincarnation, partial reincarnation and enhanced power thematise reincarnated beings in the context of the colonialists' cultural displacement. Transmigration manifests in LSDI. Koné, at his funeral, transmigrates into Fama who unusually denounces the deception of his people and mobilises them against the colonisers. Fama dies afterwards due to the injury he sustained from a possessed crocodile and a gunshot wound while defiantly about crossing the border. Koné's spirit enters into a pregnant woman, and reincarnates as a Malinké baby. In LVD, full reincarnation establishes that Martial, a freedom fighter, dies and becomes a full reincarnated being that takes active part in the struggle to liberate his people from dictatorial regimes. His spirit possesses his daughter who confronts and engages the Providential Guides' domination. He impregnates the daughter at whose death his spirit transmigrates into her triplets, who courageously put an end to the dictatorial oppressive regime in Katalanianasie. In LP, partial reincarnation expresses itself in Magamou who awakes the sensibilities of his people against the domination of the Whites. He dies but later reincarnates. The protagonists showcase one of the principles of magical realism and they manifest and deploy enhanced powers in the struggle for freedom, while death, rebirth and spirits feature prominently as reincarnated-based indices. Partial reincarnation and the possession of enhanced powers marked the dominant belief about reincarnated beings in the course of the nationalist struggles in postcolonial Francophone African novels.

Francophone African novels substantiate the universal belief in reincarnation as a veritable tool in the struggle for freedom. The demonstration of the three protagonists forms the basis for nationalist struggles in a postcolonial Francophone Africa.

Keywords: Reincarnated beings, Magical realism, Francophone African novels, Postcolonial African novels, Nationalist struggle

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Literature and literary criticism have generally awakened the minds of literary scholars to question concepts and philosophies, thereby interpreting the realities and beliefs of different societies. Ayeleru (2001:1) opines that, “African Literature of the post colonial period can be regarded as autocriticism. It is a literature that goes out in full force to correct, redress and eradicate the anomalies in the independent African society”. Therefore, if we must correct any misinterpretation of concepts, redress and eradicate the anomalies drawn from African tradition and values, postcolonial literatures could also be employed. Akorede, in Ogunsanwo (1995:40-41), argues that: “imaginative narratives should be employed to awaken in the human spirit, its full, rich, hidden dimensions...revealing a multiplicity of narrative dimensions and cultural interdiscursivity.”

According to Bhabha (1994:2), “It is in the emergence of interstices-the overlap and displacement of domains of difference-that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated”. The recognition that tradition bestows is a partial form of identification and in restaging the past, it introduces other incommensurable cultural temporalities into the invention of tradition.

Meanwhile, Rodney (1972:39), in *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* observes that the features of the traditional African religions helped to set African cultures apart from those in other continents. In this present context, it is more important to note how much African religion had in common with other religions elsewhere and how this can be used as a criterion to know the state of development in Africa before Europe’s impact in the 15th century.

Bhabha (1994:9), in *Location of Culture* argues that Fanon recognises the crucial importance for subordinated peoples of asserting their indigenous cultural traditions and retrieving their repressed histories. This fact is corroborated by Casely-Hayford (1922) in Rodney’s *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972:36), when he

admits that: “Before even the British came into relations with our people, we were a developed people, having our own institutions, having our own ideas of government”.

Many African empires existed in the pre-colonial era, such as the Ashanti Empire in Ghana, Oyo Empire, Kongo Kingdom, and the Edo Empire. Nigeria was home to Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo cultures and Chinua Achebe was among the first to take up this history in the construction of a postcolonial identity, as in *Things Fall Apart*. The government of Yoruba in the Oyo Empire is an absolute monarchy; the king is more dreaded than even the gods. The office is hereditary in the same family, but not automatically from father to son. The King is usually elected by a body of noblemen known as *Oyo Mesi*, the seven principal councillors of State (Johnson, 1921:40). This is to give credence to the statement that Africans had a principled way of governance and traditional livelihood before the arrival of the colonisers.

This study therefore aims at showcasing certain cultural beliefs common to many Africans and other races. The celebration of such beliefs, the belief in the antiquity, the power and constant presence of ancestors shows that they are considered the guardian angels of the living. An important point of the African worldview is that there is a strong link between the dead, especially ancestors, and the living. Soyinka, in *Myth, Literature and the African World* (1976:148) opines that, there is a connection between the dead, especially ancestors, and the living thus:

The past is the ancestors, the present belongs to the living, and the future to the unborn. The deities stand in the same situation to the living as do the ancestors and the unborn, obeying the same laws, suffering the same agonies and uncertainties, employing the same Masonic intelligence of rituals for the perilous plunge into the fourth area of experience, the immeasurable gulf of transition.

Giving credence to this assertion, Nazi Boni in *Crépuscules des temps anciens* (1962) submits that:

Incontestablement, en ce coin de l’Afrique noire, de cette Afrique alors vierge et mystérieuse, l’Antiquité refusait de mourir. Et cependant, l’on vivait le crépuscule des temps anciens. Un crépuscule pas comme les autres, vivace, coriace, qui durait déjà depuis des siècles. Un crépuscule qui se rebellait devant l’aurore des temps nouveaux. Entre l’ère qui se mourait et l’ère qui s’annonçait, une lutte s’engagea opiniâtre, sourde, insidieuse. Tout s’opérait avec

une vigoureuse persévérance, mais sans fracas. (CDTA 1962 :24)

Unquestionably, in this part of black Africa, of this virgin and mysterious Africa, Antiquity refused to die. However, we were living in the Twilight of the Bygone Days. Twilight not like others, perennial, tough, has existed for centuries. A Twilight recalling rebellion at the dawn of a new era between the dying era and the new era, a resistance is doggedly brewing, hidden, and insidious. All operate with a vigorous perseverance, but without a crash. (Our translation)

Despite all the oppression and arbitrary domination of the colonisers, Africans still persevere because they are assured that the guiding Spirits of their ancestors whom they believe are aware of their plight and are up to the task of avenging them of their oppressors.

In Africa, those who died at old age with good deeds in their past lives are usually regarded as ancestors while those that died young or are brutally or gruesomely murdered are said to exist as “*Akudaaya*” in Yoruba cosmology. It is also believed that the dead possess supernatural and metaphysical powers that can be used to do what ordinary human beings cannot do. The Yoruba view “*Akudaaya*” as someone who dies before his appointed time. Meanwhile, reincarnated beings go far away from where they had previously lived and re-appear elsewhere to fulfill their destiny. Quarcoopome (1987:102) corroborates this fact thus: “... A person may reincarnate in order that an uncompleted destiny may be completed”. The Western world refers to this as reincarnation (Aseyinwaye). It is worthy of note to mention that Africans do not speak ill of the dead because of their strong belief in the fact that they deserve honour. The Yoruba, no matter their belief in the modern religions of Christianity or Islam, hold their ancestors in high esteem. Their new faith in western religion especially Christianity and Islam seem to have little or nothing to do with the belief of some in the concepts of reincarnation.

This study employs postcolonial and magical realist theories as its theoretical framework and focuses on the theme of reincarnation in selected postcolonial Francophone African novels of three authors. These are; Ahmadou Kourouma (Ivorian), Sony Labou Tansi (Congolese), and Malick Fall (Senegalese).

Consequent upon these are the assumptions that the protagonists are projections of the authors' psyche. These theories, in our view, offer opportunity to the knowledge of reincarnation as regards world religions and its theme in the novels of the three Francophone authors, thereby leading to an interpretation and analysis of the texts chosen for this study.

1.1.1 Death and Reincarnation in African Societies

Death is certain in human existence, and should constitute whatever people do to achieve a fulfilling life, though human beings wish away its inevitability. Despite its ubiquity, it is a phenomenon viewed differently in the various nations depending on cultural, ideological, or idiosyncratic orientations. These differences are apparent because of our multicultural understanding of death in the African context.

Theologically, death is defined as the separation of soul and body. Phillip Keane, however, pointed out in a lecture that no one has ever seen the soul depart from the body. This definition, according to German theologian, Karl Rahner, fails to indicate "the specifically human element of human death". However, Rahner is not sure of that component in the human body that when it leaves, causes life to cease.

Philosophically, death is defined as the cessation of the integrated functioning of the human organism. This disintegration is comparable to "the separation of body and soul" but this definition is not an observable phenomenon. (Onukwugha, Gerald O: 2012).

There is no perfect answer to the meaning of death. From the Christian perspective, death is not the end of life, but rather a transformation. According to Apostle Paul, Death is a kind of sleep: *"But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope"*. (1 Thessalonians, 4 verse13, NKJV)

The cycle of birth, death and continued existence is commonly used symbolically in African art as cosmographic images. It is believed that dead people are not in heaven, but still remain among the living. In times of crises and need, *Le haut du corps de Martial venait toujours couper les appétits et le sommeil du Guide Providentiel...* p.20 (The top half of the body of Martial appears always to disturb the sleep of the Providential Guide...) (Our translation) *Quand elle se réveilla, Chaidana*

vit des lettres au noir de Martial sur la paume de son autre main: « il faut partir.» p.44 (When she awakes, Chaidana saw writings by Martial on the skin of her other hand: « go! »). (Our translation). And sometimes, in times of joy, departed loved ones are viewed as smiling down on the helpless living, looking out for them and assisting them. *A la mort du Guide Providentiel, Martial était venu lui dire adieu et l'avait veillé.* p.85. (At the death of the Providential Guide, Martial came to say farewell and to keep watch over him). (Our translation) This hope gives the living the assurance that the dead though physically absent, are spiritually present.

For many, the hard reality is that they die in a hospital, usually isolated and in pain-tethered to a frightening array of high-tech equipment. From some perspectives, this techno-environment is another denial of the naturalness of death. Many will prefer to die at home in familiar and beloved surroundings. In traditional cultures, the family comes together and children are involved in the conversation. The dying person comforted and encouraged to embrace death with dignity. (Onukwugba, Gerald: 2012)

Though death is inevitable, Africans still believe that death can still, to some extent be either pacified or warded off by rendering offerings through sacrifices using items ranging from crops and animals or human beings depending on the status and important position of the dying person. All of these are done to partly accept or deny death in daily life. This double standard can be seen in a set of beliefs sometimes referred to as “ancestor worship” or “veneration.” Ancestor worship is not an attempt to ward off or pacify the dead but rather a propitiation of the ancestor by showing honour and respect as a form of seeing to his wellbeing. In the thought of many Africans, the spirit of the dead remains in the world and there is the possibility of the dead person returning to life embodied in another person. This is prevalent in Yoruba culture, where a man passes on, after a short while if a male child who bears the resemblance of his dead father/grandfather is born into such a family, he is named Babatunde; if a woman passes on; Yetunde, Iyabode and so on are names given after a woman’s death. It is in the light of this belief that Mbiti affirms that:

For the Africans, death is a separation and not annihilation; the dead person is suddenly cut off from the human society and yet the corporate group clings to him. This is shown through the elaborate funeral rites, as well as other methods of keeping in contact with the departed. (*African Religion and Philosophy* 1970:46)

Though, it could be said that, there are differences in the conceptual belief of death among various African communities. Some view death as a shield from shame and disgrace which the dead person might have undergone if he/she were to be alive. Africans prefer natural death to an untimely one. An average African naturally wishes for a natural elongation of life before the dying process so that he could make amends where necessary, say farewell to friends and relatives and give final instructions to immediate family members. Africans do not fear death because it is considered as a transition to a life hereafter. When death is seen as a transition to an after life, people generally still want an elongated life. The only thing an African fears in death is dying either shamefully or cowardly. That was why Martial in Sony Labou Tansi's *La Vie et demie* said: "*Je ne veux pas mourir cette mort*". p.13 (I do not want to die this death).

Despite the belief in the hereafter, therefore, those who believe in total reincarnation or partial reincarnation may not be wrong after all. The unpredictability and inevitability of death fascinates or frightens the entire human race. The natural yearning to live on has generated such beliefs as the Greek immortality of the soul or the various Eastern notions of reincarnation, which appear frequently in African cultures.

African literature has evolved to respond to African beliefs and culture in which reincarnation forms a part. The fact that reincarnation forms part of African belief can be attested to in J.P Clark's "*Abiku*":

Coming and going these several seasons,
Do stay on the baobab tree,
Follow where you please your kindred spirits
If indoors is not enough for you.

10 Are ready tinder for the fire
That dries the fresh fish up on the rack.
Still, it's been the healthy stock
To several fingers, to many more will be
Who reach to the sun.

15 No longer then bestride the threshold
But step in and stay
For good. We know the knife scars
Serrating down your back and front
Like beak of the sword-fish, (J.P. Clark p.205).

And Soyinka's "Abiku" juxtaposing Clark's thus:

In vain your bangles cast
Charmed circles at my feet;
I am Abiku, calling for the first
And the repeated time.

- 5 Must I weep for goats and cowries?
 For palm oil and the sprinkled ash?
 Yams do not sprout in amulets
 To earth Abiku's limbs.
- 20 Once and the repeated time ageless
 Though I puke. And when you pour
 Libations, each finger points me near
 The way I came, where (Wole Soyinka p.189)

It could be said that cultural symbioses occur in these views. *Abiku* is a Yoruba word for a child born to die young and to be reborn by the same woman over and over again. Such children are called names like: *Kokumo*, *Malomo*, *Gbeleyi*, *Aja*, *Oku* and so on. Among the Igbo, such a child is known as *Ogbanje* and among the Akan (Ghana) as *Kosama*. A child suspected of being an *Abiku* is given several marks on the body when he or she dies.

Related to *orun/aye* (heaven/earth) distinction are beliefs in *abiku* spirits. An *abiku* may be born as a child on earth, but soon leaves for "heaven" again, or for the spirit world. The *abiku* spirits have their own "egbe" (cult) in heaven, and when one of them leaves for earth, he promises to return quickly to his companions. If a woman gives birth to a succession of children who die at infancy, it may be concluded that it is an *abiku* at work, while the next child is given a special attention. *Abiku* children are given special names, such as *Aiyedun*, 'life is good', implying that the child should stay to enjoy it, or *Durosinmi*, 'live after for me', implying that the child should outlive his parents. The appearance of these children is often neglected, since people do not take pity on them because of their wickedness and they might even be disfigured to make them less attractive to their companions in the spirit world. It is normal to postpone the circumcision or scarification of an *abiku* child until it appears likely that he or she will survive. (Verger, 1968; Morton-Williams, 1960)

In the same vein, many Africans and even the educated elites do not write their wills because it is believed that doing so is an invitation to one's death. This death-denying attitude, according to Onukwugha, is observed in how Africans

conceptualise death. The term “transition” is used to refer to dying. Transition here means the person has gone somewhere else, to the great beyond (next life). The term also implies that the person has not left us, that the person has simply changed form into another spiritual existence. At the back cover of *The Pocket Book of Quotations*, Rabelais observed that: “Half the world does not know how the other half lives.”

The above poem aligns with Sanusi’s view in *Portrayals and Gender Palaver in Francophone African Writings* (2015:27) where he opines that:

Soon after African men embraced Western education, a number of them who became writers were quick to realise how much their customs were swept under the carpet by the colonisers and decided to uplift African cultural values.

Again, Sanusi (2015:27), citing Cyril Mokwenye in his “Senghor as Pre-Independence Negritude Poet,” notes that:

Africa, during the colonial era, was portrayed in very bad light especially from the cultural point of view. For the Negritude writers in general and for Senghor in particular therefore, literature was to serve as a weapon for the enlightenment of the white race concerning the black man’s culture and civilisation. More than through any other genre, it was through the poetic genre that Negritude was to seek to accomplish this task.

Comparatively, the above view corresponds with that of Nazi Boni in *Crépuscules des temps anciens* (1962:26) that infers:

Pâti! les génies? les dieux ? Il y en avait partout. Ils occupaient les bas-fonds, les plaines, les montagnes, les forêts, les eaux, et aussi l’air ! Ils ont fui avec l’arrivée des Blancs.

He! the Spirits? the gods? They existed everywhere. They resided under the branches, in open spaces, the rocks, the forest, in waters, and also in the air! They disappeared with the arrival of the White men. (Our translation)

The inference drawn from the above statement that the spirits disappeared on the arrival of the White men may be partially true but their disappearance could not be as a result of fear of the colonisers rather it was due to the importation of the new religion to capture the faith of most Africans.

African traditional belief holds that their dead are neither dead nor far away from the family members. Therefore, they are believed to have taken abode in a nearby habitation that is available and preferred of the places aforementioned.

In the words of Birago Diop in his *Leurres et Lueurs*, «Souffle» ('Breath'):

Les morts ne sont pas sous la terre,
ils sont dans le feu qui s'éteint,
ils sont dans les herbes qui pleurent,
ils sont dans le rocher qui géint,
ils sont dans la forêt,
ils sont dans la demeure;
Les morts ne sont pas morts (Jacques 1984:59)

The Dead are not in the tomb,
they are in the dying fire,
they are in the weeping grasses,
they are in the wailing rocks,
they are in the forest,
they are in the home;
The dead are not dead. (Our translation)

African traditional belief is of the opinion that life is in three stages: man is born; he dies and continues to exist in another realm. The Yoruba view reincarnation (*Aseyinwaye*) as a person who dies and returns to be born as a child in his family lineage. Therefore, such an individual does not go to heaven but continues to exist in another place far away from where he/she had died until he fulfils his/her God assigned purpose in life.

L'ancien mort avait quitté sa région pour une région lointaine du Nord, puis il avait intégré les Forces armées de la démocratie nationale... (LVD, 1979:26)

The dead old man left his region for a far-away region in the north, then he joined the national democratic armed forces. (Our translation)

However, Africans strongly believe that a dead relative is not totally detached from the family; his spirit hovers around to either provide protection to his living kinsmen or assist in making fortune smile on them. African traditional beliefs also aver that those who were gruesomely murdered or killed through other diabolical means often relocate. This is to avoid denying them a full prosperous living or not fulfilling their God ordained mandate and purpose on the surface earth in their first

life. This relocation is to a far-away land to complete the purpose for which they were created, for them not to be like the title of Brian Castro's novel - *Birds of Passage*.

In Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958:54):

Ekwefi had suffered a good deal in her life. She had born ten children and nine of them had died in infancy, usually before the age of three... The birth of her children, which should be a woman's crowning glory, became for Ekwefi mere physical agony devoid of promise... Her deepening despair found expression in the names she gave her children. One of them was a pathetic cry, Onwumbiko - 'Death, I implore you.' But Death took no notice; Onwumbiko died in his fifteenth month. The next child was a girl, Ozoemena - 'May it not happen again.' She died in her eleventh month and two others after her.

Though, advancement in modern science have shown many unknown health issues and circumstances to be responsible for infant mortality, an average African who believes in the existence of *abiku*, see this in a different way. In *Things Fall Apart*, after the death of Ekwefi's second child, Okonkwo went to the medicine-man, who was also a diviner of the Afa Oracle to inquire what was amiss. "This man told him that the child was an ogbanje" (p.54)

According to Daramola and Jeje (2005:74), the Yoruba believe that calling the *abikus* by appealing names such as; "*Ebe* (appeal), *Duro-orike* (Stay to enjoy affluence), *Durosinmi* (live after me), *Igbokoyi* (forest forbids this), *Durojaye* (Stay and enjoy life), *Jokotimi* (Sit by me), *Malom* (Tarry here), *Kosok* (Hoes are exhausted)." There are other names like: *Kokum* (He forbids death), *Kukoyi* (death reject this one) and so on, that could appease them to reconsider their going back to the spirit world. However, the *abikus* are given some other names if all of these appeals fall on deaf ears and they keep on dying and returning to the spirit world, the frustrated parents then resort to calling them derogatory and pejorative names like:- *Aja* (Dog), *Kilanke* (What are we cherishing?) *Tepontan* (Useless him), *Omosaa* (Good for nothing or useless child), *Oku* (Corpse) and so on to ridicule, shame or disgrace such children. This is believed to discourage them from returning to the spirit world.

On the other hand, if these strategies fail and the stubborn *abiku* keeps reappearing, there is another technique that is employed. The parents may decide to

chop off all the fingers of the child or draw scarification marks all over his/her face to make him/her unattractive to his/her colleagues in their world. Some parents, due to the frustration these children had made them undergo, sometimes carry these punishments to the extreme, by setting the dead abiku child ablaze and throwing his/her ashes into a river with the belief that such wicked spirit-children will never come back to them. Again, Achebe in *Things Fall Apart* (1958:55) states that:

The medicine-man then ordered that there should be no mourning for the dead child. He brought up a sharp razor from the goatskin bag slung from his left shoulder and began to mutilate the child. Then he took it away to bury in the Evil Forest, holding it by the ankle and dragging it on the ground behind him. After such a treatment it would think twice before coming again, unless it was one of the stubborn ones who returned, carrying the stamp of their mutilation – a missing finger or perhaps a dark line where the medicine-man's razor had cut them.

Sanusi (2010), in *The Spirit Child* (TSC) translated as *La Vie d'un enfant mystérieux* (LVDEM) (2016), confirms Achebe's opinion on the sacrifices performed to discourage the return of an abiku to the same already traumatised family:

...on faisait rapidement des sacrifices pour apaiser les dieux et les ancêtres. Toutefois, la tradition avait enseigné aux villageois tant de choses à propos de l'enfant abiku, c'est-à-dire un enfant qui meurt et qui retourne régulièrement dans ce monde. (LVDEM, 2016:8)

Sacrifices were made hurriedly to appease the gods and ancestors against anything considered abnormal. However, tradition had taught villagers many things about the *abiku* child. (That is a child who dies and returns constantly into this world). (TSC, 2010:1)

Again in the confession of one of the stubborn types of the abiku, Ladigana:

La septième fois que je vins dans ce monde, de nombreux villageois se réunirent dans la cour de mon père pour célébrer ma naissance comme ils avaient fait auparavant. C'était en un jour pluvieux et le ciel nébuleux était peu clément, caractéristique de ces matinées étranges dans lesquelles j'étais né encore et encore...C'était de cette même façon mystérieuse que j'étais déjà venu six fois dans ce monde et les villageois qui étaient désormais accoutumés à mes fréquentes apparitions se convergèrent encore une fois vers la case de mon père. Et ce, parce qu'une forte curiosité les incitait à savoir si je ressemblais aux premiers enfants auxquels ma mère avait donné

naissance et qui étaient morts le septième jour. (LVDEM, 2016:7-8)

The seventh time I came into this world, many villagers gathered in my father's compound to celebrate my birth as they had done in the past. It was on a raining day with an unfriendly cloudy sky, characteristic of the unusual mornings in which I was born again and again...It was in this same mysterious manner that I had come to this world six times before and villagers who were now accustomed to my frequent appearances converged once again at my father's hut. They did so because a nagging curiosity was pushing them to know whether I resembled previous children that my mother gave birth to before me and who died on the seventh day. (TSC, 2010:1)

If the above confession is critically considered with our earlier submission that abiku children are wicked children, then whatever treatment their parents mete out to them should serve them right as most of them do exceed the number of times Ladigana confessed coming through a single woman.

Closely linked Abiku to reincarnation is the issue of Abiku in the traditional African society, as depicted by African writers in their works.

1.1.2. The Difference between ancestral worship and reincarnation

These concepts, although interwoven, are not the same, but they are significant and worthy of mention. Ancestral worship is a disparaging nomenclature coined by Western colonialists to refer to African Religion or belief in God. African Religion is wrongly called ancestor worship. This is wrong because according to Mbiti; "Africans do not worship their departed relatives. It is true that departed relatives are believed to continue to live and to show interest in their surviving families. These families may show their belief by building shrines for the departed and placing bits of food or drink there or on the graves, and sometimes mentioning them in their prayers. However, these acts of respect for the departed do not amount to worshipping them; they show people's belief that the departed of up to four or five generations should not be forgotten (Mbiti, 1978:16). Meanwhile reincarnation is a philosophical theory to the effect that the soul of man can be successively incarnated in several bodies, human or animal.

Africans do not worship the reincarnated. Ancestors are invisible but the reincarnated can be seen and probably recognised, once he/she feels being known

ceases to live in that area. The reincarnated does come back to life due to his unfortunate early exit from this world and under certain circumstances to live and accomplish his first life (appearance) assignment before his/her actual time of death devoid of artificial occurrences. Both the ancestors and the reincarnated beings possess enhanced powers in their after-life. According to Daramola and Jeje, (2005:157), "... that is why Yoruba believe that a dead person has four eyes, "*Se o ti ku bayi. O si ti di oloju merin.*" (Now that you are dead, you have four eyes). (Our translation) In comparison however, both of them are spirits, they are not worshipped, and they are believed to live within the domains of living human beings.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The concept of reincarnation is differently understood in most parts of the world and with diverse belief systems. These diversities make the concept difficult to comprehend, especially when considering the way some religious sects view it. It was discovered that adequate clarification of the concept has not been fully elaborated since the few available studies delve mostly both on the philosophical and cultural aspects of this concept without exploring all the features associated with it. It is deducible that there has been little attention paid to ancestors and spirits who possess enhanced power as major features in African literature. Therefore, this study examined how African literature has been used to affirm African belief on reincarnation. Also, the study will help to gain more knowledge on the belief of various African communities on reincarnation and the perspectives of other religions on the concept. This is another dimension to the resistance in the struggle for the liberation of Africans from colonial oppression and domination. The analysis of the selected texts for this study will therefore fill the gap often neglected by scholars of Francophone African literature on the concept of reincarnation and nationalist struggles for freedom.

1.3 Research Questions

This study answers the following research questions:

- (i) What are the world views on reincarnation?
- (ii) Is reincarnation a superstitious belief limited to Africa or Africans alone?

- (iii) Do reincarnated beings, ancestors and spirits exist or is it a fallacy?
- (iv) Are the chosen postcolonial Francophone African novels true representations of Africans' belief about the concept of reincarnation?
- (v) Does reincarnation have any relationship with spirits?

1.4 Objective of the study

It has been observed that contemporary studies examine how the supernatural powers of the reincarnated beings are deployed for nationalist struggles for freedom in postcolonial francophone African novels in order to show that reincarnation is a system belief widely spread among Africans, it is also universal. The study also explores the belief in reincarnation through interviews from academics. According to Chinweizu (1983:11), as cited in Akorede (2005:4), "African narrative is conceived as both the oral (translated) and written works in English language which reflect African consciousness and experiences."

This study is solely interested in examining the fact that there are beliefs in innumerable spiritual beings concerned with human affairs capable of helping or harming human interests as revealed in the chosen texts. Are there instances where the dead have truly helped or caused harm to humans? If such situations exist, what can be done to appease the dead or avert harm?

Researches on religion provides that after the age of exploration, Europe's best information on the newly discovered peoples of the Americas, Africa, Asia and Oceania often came from Christian missionaries. While they were generally unsympathetic to what was regarded as 'primitive superstition', some missionaries in the 19th century developed a scholarly interest in beliefs that seemed to represent an early type of ancestral religious creed they thought inferior to their own. It is this interest that was crystallised by Tylor in *Primitive culture* (1871), the greater part of which is given over to the description of exotic religious behaviour. To the intellectuals of that time, profoundly affected by Charles Darwin's new biology, animism seemed a key to unravelling the so-called primitive mind and human intellect at the earliest knowable stage of cultural evolution. Present day thinkers consider this view to be rooted in a profoundly mistaken premise. Since at least the

mid 20th century, all contemporary cultures and religions have been regarded by anthropologists as comparable in the sense of reflecting a fully evolved human intelligence capable of learning the arts of the most advanced societies. The religious ideas of the “Stone Age” hunters interviewed during the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries have been so far from simple.

In addition, since the “great” religions of the world all evolved in historic ancient Greek times, it may be assumed that animistic emphases dominated the globe in the pre-historic era. In societies lacking any doctrinal establishment, a closed system or beliefs was less likely to flourish than an open one. There is, however, no ground for supposing that polytheistic and monotheistic ideas were excluded, but what is plain today is that no historically given creed has an inevitable appeal to the educated mind. Therefore, the objective of this study is stated below:

- (i) the relationship between death and reincarnation.
- (ii) explore the belief in the theme of reincarnation through interview with scholars on the field of discourse.
- (iii) use three postcolonial francophone African novels to establish the belief in the existence of the reincarnated beings and possession of enhanced power.
- (iv) the use of the reincarnated beings deploying enhanced powers as weapons of resistance to oppression and domination in the nationalist struggles.

1.5 Significance of the study

This study, through the selected texts, analyses the novels of the selected authors and the general belief of Africans about reincarnation. This research work, therefore, provides, through in-depth analysis, additional knowledge to the existing works on the subject matter by exploring the chosen postcolonial Francophone African novels. The study is also poised to reaffirm the truism that Africans had a religion, values and tradition, cultural heritage, morality and pattern of governance before the advent of Asian and Western religions.

1.6 Scope of the study

The scope of the present study is on three selected postcolonial francophone African novels in addition to the use of related, useful and relevant works. The focus of the study will highlight the belief in the existence of reincarnated beings possessing and displaying enhanced power either to harm or help in African societies. When a family member dies unexpectedly, and there had been a rift between him and another person, there are always insinuations that there is foul play in the death of the deceased. His/her relatives may decide to invoke his/her spirit, and, this strong belief in reincarnation allows for this. Existence does not end with the death of any human being as postulated in this study.

According to a Yoruba proverb, there is the belief that: “*Bi a ba pe oku ni popo, alaaye eniyan ni ndahun.*” (If a dead person’s spirit is invoked, a living human being answers). (Our translation) For example, the trio of Koné who transmigrated in Fama in *Les soleils des indépendances*, Martial in *La Vie et demie* and Magamou Seck in *La plaie* clearly demonstrate reincarnation and the presence of ancestors as spirit beings that can either assist in times of trouble and harm whenever vengeance is sought or invited in times of joy and celebrations.

1.7 Organisation of the study

This research work is organised into six chapters. Chapter one presents an introduction in which a general perspective on the concept of reincarnation is discussed. The chapter examines the representation of indigenous African cultural tradition and how they tried to retrieve their repressed histories of communal and peaceful co-existence. It also showcases the contributions of several other African literary writers on the theme of reincarnation. The chapter discusses the linkage between death, abiku, and reincarnation.

Chapter Two presents a review of related literatures on the subject-matter. It touches on some world religions in relation to the belief in reincarnation.

Chapter Three focuses on the theoretical framework of the study; postcolonial and magical realist theories. The study examines the theme of reincarnation in selected postcolonial francophone African novels of three francophone authors and how the belief was affected by post colonialism using magical realism to support the

activities of spirits. This chapter also highlights the influence of postcolonialism in African political, socio-economic, cultural and religious belief as depicted in the chosen novels. The theories also reveal the dichotomy between the old and the young generation. While the young generation will not subscribe to the barbaric killings of human beings to appease the gods and agree to support a new government that will bring development and change to their livelihood, the old generation on the other hand prefers living in the past, sacrificing their heirs to their idols, according to them, "to appease" their ancestors. The chosen authors used reincarnated protagonists who possess enhanced powers to devise a new dimension to the struggle to liberate their oppressed compatriots from the shackles of colonial bondage and domination.

The chapter equally examines the methodology of the study where films with the theme of reincarnation and oral interview were used to buttress the topic of discussion. It is a well known fact that reincarnation is a universal concept that writers and playwrights have delved into in times past.

Chapter Four is an indepth investigation of the purposively selected texts, subjected to critical analysis and discussion on reincarnation. In Kourouma's *Les soleils des indépendances*, we are made to understand through Fama, that in Africa, the pattern of ceremonies for funerals, naming, chieftaincy and ancestral worship, was the same all over Africa until the arrival of the colonial government. Africans regarded themselves as one big family where an injury to one becomes an injury to all. With colonisation, communal effort was exchanged for the Western ideology of one for self, God for all. Africans, by venerating their dead, keep their departed ones in fond memories. Chapter Five provides the conclusion to the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the existing literatures that are relevant to the study of reincarnation and the different beliefs associated with the subject. For example: Reincarnation: “An Impossible Concept in the Framework of African Ontology,” “Reincarnation and Karma,” “Reincarnation, Facts and Resources,” Reincarnation-past-live” and “Ancestors–Veneration–Worship-reincarnation-and-idolatry.” Much has been earlier written on death and reincarnation in chapter one, however, we shall dwell much on some of these existing resources in this present chapter.

Majeed (2012), in “An Examination of the Concept of Reincarnation in African Philosophy” views the concept from the cultural perspective of the Akan people of Ghana. He distinguishes reincarnation from related concepts such as metempsychosis and transmigration. He, therefore, dwells more on the belief that a deceased person can be reborn, referring to reincarnation. For clear understanding of the concept, he also shows how reincarnation is understood in some religious philosophies representing the worldview. He, therefore, submits that reincarnation is not a pristine concept contrary to the belief of many scholars. Chigbo (2009), in “Belief in Reincarnation among the Igbo of Nigeria: A challenge to Christianity” submits that: “ the Igbo concept of reincarnation includes belief in a group of souls called *ogbanje* who are born, die in early life, and are reborn in the same family, often repeatedly. She finally concludes that: the subject of ‘reincarnation’ should not be, and need not to be, a Christian or Moslem or philosophers’ problem. She further postulates that researchers could delve into the subject using viable scientific method as participant observers with objectivity, tolerance, sympathy, empathy, and openness to be confronted by their findings, as well as readiness to be converted to African traditionists’ world view and modes of thought which generated *Ino uwa* (reincarnation) among the Igbo society.

It is pertinent to define the concept of reincarnation which is the focal point of this study along with concepts, which will serve as tools for our analysis; ancestors and spirits are also central to the three selected novels. We are already aware of the universality of the core concept which transcends the shores of Africa. It goes beyond Africa to Europe, America, Asia, Australia and the Caribbean. We shall duly examine

these concepts before attempting to analyse them. In the course of our analysis, constant references will be made to the following terms: theme of reincarnation, rebirth, postcolonial, ancestors and spirits.

2.1.1 Reincarnation in African Religion

Wayne House (1991) used five terms to describe what is commonly considered reincarnation. *Metempsychosis* is probably the most precise term for reincarnation, meaning, “the changing of bodies,” that is, some sort of continuity of existence occurs in sequence from one body to another. The Greek term *palingenesis*, or “origin again,” indicates the idea that one’s physical birth is an “origin again,” or a new starting point for something that had another origin previously. *Metempsychosis* is a term used to describe the classic Greek idea that the soul or spirit changes the form or body, through which it expresses itself.

Rebirth is an ambiguous term favoured especially by reincarnationists attempting to identify reincarnation with the biblical idea of the new. *Transmigration* is used more generally than reincarnation. A soul can transmigrate from one kind of life form to another, say, for example, from that of a man to that of a cow. Most contemporary Western reincarnationists reject the possibility of a human soul becoming incarnated in anything other than another human. Reincarnation can also be referred to as Metempsychosis. Metempsychosis is a philosophical theory that means the soul of man can be successively incarnated in several bodies, human or animal. This view is also held by the Pythagoreans, and it is a feature of some of the myths that are found in certain dialogues of Plato. The doctrine of reincarnation is an important element in Buddhist philosophy, linked with the conception of Karma. (Encyclopaedia Universal Library, 1969:220)

According to Echekwube (2010:20), re-affirming the position held by Conford, (1971:345), the belief in reincarnation is a veritable source of unity, not only among Nigerians but also among all the peoples of the world. The Greeks speak of transmigration of souls and metempsychosis which implies that the soul of the dead takes a new body. Socrates taught that there is punishment for the souls of the unjust, stating clearly: “Finally, the rewards and punishments which may await the soul in the unseen world and in other lives on earth...” (Conford, 1971:345)

On the other hand, the Hindu concept of *samsara* depicts a process of continuous rebirth until the person atones for his or her sins and attains the state of utter blessedness (*moksha*). With this liberation from the continuous cycle of rebirth, the soul is eternally united with the absolute spirit (*Brahman*). Worthy of note is the Hindu belief that the soul could reincarnate as a frog, dog, man, woman, et cetera.

In the series of this belief system lies the uniqueness of the Nigerian and indeed the African concept of Reincarnation. Among the Yoruba and Igbo peoples of Nigeria, the soul of the dead does not reincarnate in sub-human entities as is the case among the Hindus. On the other hand, it does not reincarnate in just one person considering the Yoruba saying that only one child does not claim the ancestral *ori*. (Idowu, E.B. (1962). What this statement is trying to clarify in essence is that, no single family member has the monopoly of expecting the return of the dead relative as reincarnation to him/her alone. This is further illustrated in the Yoruba concept of “ancestral *ori*.” If an old person dies, it does not necessarily mean that he/she must reincarnate directly in his grandchildren, the old person can reincarnate within the same extended family. The Yoruba believe in reincarnation within the family. The names; Babatunde (father returns), Yetunde (Mother returns), Iyabo (Mother arrives), Babatunji (father wakes once again) and Sotunde (The wise man returns) all offer vivid evidence of the Ifa concept of familial or lineal rebirth. However, there is no simple guarantee that one’s grandfather or great uncle will “come back” in the birth of one’s child.

Ori was often adored. It was regarded as the god of fate. This is as a result of the outcome of the journey embarked upon by three people when coming to the earth; they decided to choose destinies for themselves as Abimbola (1977:178-206) situates this in an Ifa poem that tells the story of how Ori (head) was chosen from heaven and the consequences of this choice on every individual. *Oriseeku*, the son of Ogun (the god of Iron), *Orilemere* (the son of Ija) and Afuwape (the son of Orunmila) chose their Ori at the same place, the same day and at the same time in heaven while sojourning to the earth. However, only Afuwape chose a good ori which brought fortune to him as a result of his obedience to instructions to perform sacrifice. *Ori*, therefore, is an individual personal divinity (god) that either brings fortune or misfortune. It is not an ancestral inheritance (Abimbola 1977: 32-34). This is why the

Ifa corpus posits that: “*Ko si orisa tii dani gbe lehin ori eni*” (There is no divinity that can favour one without the consent of his/her head). (Our translation) This Yoruba concept expounds occurrences such as untimely death, human suffering, and strange sicknesses, a disturbed mind, and ill-luck as well as good luck.

In view of the foregoing, namely, the Greek and general concept of a soul taking a “new” body by way of metempsychosis or transmigration as against the Hindu concept of the soul taking a sub-human status; the African view, is no doubt more reasonable and much more acceptable. The reason being that it explains how the personal soul receives appropriate desserts for his/her actions on earth. However, Christians of all races believe that God the creator became incarnate in His Son, who incarnated in each one of them and guides each of them on the path of eternal salvation.

2.1.2 Reincarnation as represented in African literary works

The traditional philosophy of African literary works cannot be underrated or doubted as there are senses in the views of these writers about beliefs in reincarnation as it represents the views of the generality of Africans during the pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial eras.

Reincarnation as represented in postcolonial francophone African novels of the chosen authors was borne out of the fact that they come from different backgrounds, with different ideologies and yet they found a point of convergence on the topic of our discourse. Majeed (2012:131) states that: “I examine the concept of reincarnation from an African point of view. I seek to show that the concept is, contrary to claims by some African philosophers and scholars, existent in traditional African thought.” However, reincarnation is usually used as a weapon by some protagonists to defend their political and religious beliefs.

The concept of reincarnation is not a fallacy; it only emphasises and re-echoes the concept of African belief in animism. Whenever these literary works elucidate on the theme of reincarnation, they do not exclude spirits because the reincarnated beings, “the living-dead”, are already spirit beings that dwell among the living.

There are two opposing schools of thought on this concept. One of the schools of thought believe in “partial reincarnation” as viewed by Metuh (1981) and supported by Idowu (1982:32) that “reincarnation in Africa is partial reincarnation”. Reincarnation in Africa is partial because if a person is reborn into the world, it is only the physical and personal traits that will be observed and nothing else. While the second school of thought shows both the physical and exhibits same characteristics as of the reincarnated while alive but with an enhanced power.

Many Yorubas are identified through resemblance, dreams or divination as being reincarnations of particular ancestors, and are given names such as already mentioned earlier. However, even after their ‘reincarnation’, these ancestors may still be invoked to help their descendants. Bascon’s informants in Meko told him that the “*emi*” (life) remains in heaven as ancestral spirit, while the ancestral guardian soul is reborn, with a new body, breath and destiny (1960:404-405). The *orun/aye* distinction is relevant to Yoruba belief about death and the ancestors. Death marks the transition to the afterlife, and much of the symbolism of Yoruba burial ritual is that of a journey. The dead goes to one of the two *orun*, depending on how they are judged by Olorun (God): *orun rere*, or ‘good heaven’, for the virtuous, and *orun apadi*, ‘potsherd heaven’, for the wicked, where they are tormented and from which they cannot be reborn. (Idowu, 1962:197, Bascon, 1960:403)

According to the Chewa people in Kenya, their ancestors after death reincarnate into their descendants’ offspring. It is generally believed that the Chewa ancestors come back to the living community on earth through the infant naming ceremony. Thus, naming a child after a particular ancestor symbolises the mystical union between the ancestor and the living community. According to Wambutda (1983), “the BaManianga people in Congo, a living person consists of three elements: *nitu* – the physical, visible, mortal body; *kini* – the invisible body, a shade or reflection of *nitu*; and *mwela* – soul which has no form”. A Manianga scholar, Fukiaukia-Bunseki, states that *mwela* separates itself from *nitu* and *kini* at death and looks for a chance to reincarnate into an about-to- be-born-baby. The BaManianga people (plural of Manianga), believe in reincarnation of *mwela*, yet some of them say that this reincarnation is true to the extent of physical resemblance. However, a son may look like his father or grandfather without having his father’s *mwela*. Since this

kind of reincarnation has to do only with physical resemblance, it is traditionally believed that the spirit of a dead person may continue to reincarnate in several generations to come. Thus, the reincarnation of a *mwela* is not seen as an event that occurs just one time but it is a continuing trend. In other words, it can be understood as the process of ceaseless duplication of the soul –*mwela*.

The Akan people in Ghana also believe in the possibility of the reincarnation of the human soul. According to their traditional belief, all people, especially ancestors reincarnate themselves into the world – mostly into their own clan or descendants – in order to complete their purpose of being, called *nkrabea*. *Nkrabea*, they say, is a reason and a purpose for every person to be born. It is a duty and mission given by *Nana Nyame* – God – that must be accomplished in the mundane life of every person. Two of these missions are to live an amicable and conjugal life to produce offsprings. If the person fails to fulfil this mission, he or she must reincarnate as many times as necessary in order to achieve what was mandated by *Nana Nyame* in the beginning. ([http://sm76626.wordpress.com/2011/03/13/Aspects of Reincarnation 2014:3](http://sm76626.wordpress.com/2011/03/13/Aspects_of_Reincarnation_2014:3))

2.1.3 The Emergence of reincarnation in Egyptian belief

The concept of reincarnation in ancient Egypt on the origin of life and its relation to the notion of immortality is embedded in their cosmology. It is certain that Egyptians believe in the concept of reincarnation having the assurance of a next life.

Meanwhile, in ancient Egypt, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead* (1842) described the travel of the soul into the next world without making any allusions to its return to earth. As it is well known, the ancient Egyptians embalmed their dead in order that the body might be preserved to accompany the soul into that world.

2.1.4 The Emergence of reincarnation in world religions

The concept of reincarnation seems to offer one of the most attractive explanations of humanity's origin or destiny. It is accepted not only by adherents of Eastern religions or New Age spirituality, but also by many who do not share such esoteric interests and convictions. On the other hand, reincarnation is a way of rejecting the monotheistic teaching of the final judgment by a holy God, with the

possible result of being eternally condemned to suffer in hell. Though, this work is neither about reincarnation in world religion nor concepts in it, but for more clarity on the title of our work, mention must be made of some world religions in order to establish certain views of reincarnation. This is to demonstrate the universality of the concept as it is widespread. We shall mention briefly some of them like: Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam in the cause of this study. Others in that category are: Jainism, Taoism, and Eckankar. The classical form of the reincarnation doctrine was formulated in India, but certainly not earlier than 9th century BC, when the Brahmana's writings were composed. After the Upanishads clearly defined the concept between the 7th and the 5th century BC, it was adopted by the other important Eastern religions which originated in India: Buddhism and Jainism. Due to the spread of Buddhism in Asia, reincarnation was later adopted by Chinese Taoism which was not earlier than the 3rd century BC.

The ancient religions of the Mediterranean world developed different kinds of reincarnationist beliefs. For instance, Greek Platonism asserts the pre-existence of the soul in a celestial world and its fall into a human body due to sin. In order to be liberated from its bondage and return to a state of pure being, the soul needed to be purified through reincarnation. In stating such beliefs, Plato was strongly influenced by the earlier philosophical schools of Orphism and Pythagoreanism. The first important Greek philosophical system that adopted a view on reincarnation similar to that of Hinduism was Neo-Platonism, in the 3rd century AD, under certain Eastern influences.

This suggests their belief in resurrection rather than in reincarnation. Likewise, in many cases of ancient tribal religions that are credited today for holding on to the belief in reincarnation, they rather teach the pre-existence of the soul before birth or its independent survival after death. This has no connection with the classic idea of transmigration from one physical body to another according to the demands of an impersonal law such as Karma.

Throughout European history, philosophers such as Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, among others, contemplated the possibility that souls exist in animals, plants and people.

It is in India and Greece that the doctrine of rebirth has been most elaborately developed. This belief is shared by all the other major religions of India, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jains, Sikhs and Sufis. In ancient Greece, belief in rebirth formed part of the philosophical teachings of Pythagoras, Empodocles, Plato, and Plotinus. In modern times, religious teachers like Ramakrishna, Aurobindo or schools of thought, like Theosophy or various new “esoteric” “occultist” religious movements like New Age or humanistic psychology: thinkers like C.G. Jung and Fritz Perls, hold onto belief in reincarnation. (<http://sm76626.wordpress.com/2011/03/13/Aspects of Reincarnation 2014:3>)

Reincarnation as conceived among the Greeks developed around Orphism, an ancient religious cult also called the Orphic oracle. The adherents held that the soul, which by nature is pre-existent, survives physical death. It later reincarnates either in human or mammalian body. This cycle of reincarnation continues repeatedly until the vices which necessitate rebirth are remedied. At this time, the soul is supposed to have regained its original innocence and purity.

Pherecydes (born c. 600 B.C.) who lived before Pythagoras is said to have been the proponent of the doctrine of reincarnation or transmigration of souls. This should be understood in the sense of the formulation of a systematic and logical presentation of the belief in reincarnation. Otherwise, the belief seems to have developed almost simultaneously in various parts of the world. This is in accord with Pearson’s (1980:443) remark that: “... in popular tales the change of a man into a beast involves the assumption that though the body is different, the soul remains the same, e.g., in the metamorphosis of Odysseus’ companions into swine their intelligence remained unaffected ... brought into prominence by the religious upheaval which undoubtedly took place in the 6th century and became associated with the worship of Dionysius and the Orphic cults ...”(The *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*)

Pythagoras of Samos who lived in the 4th century B.C. is popularly believed to have given more attention to a detailed development of the doctrine of the transmigration of souls by incorporating the earlier Orphic views into his teaching. These ideas involve, the imprisonment of the soul in the body as a retribution for past ill-deeds, the undeviating recurrence of the cycle of existence, the prospect offered of ultimate escape after purification, and the abstinence from a flesh diet –

limited, however, by the reservation that it did not apply to the flesh of such animals as offered in sacrifice to the Olympian gods.

Plato (427–347 B.C.) while proving the immortality of the soul supports the transmigration doctrine when he asserts that since the soul is not destroyed by any evil, either its own or another's, clearly it must be a thing that exists forever, and is consequently immortal ... And if it is so, there must always be the same number of souls in existence. For if none perishes, their number cannot grow less, nor yet can it be increased, since any increase of the immortal must come from the mortal, and then all things would end by being immortal.”

Socrates (469 – 399 B.C.) whose thoughts were reflected mainly by Plato in the just cited statement expressed the same views in the *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, *The Republic* and *Timaeus* to the effect that there is punishment for the souls of the unjust. These views are comprehensively given by Conford thus: “Socrates, having thus met the challenge of Glaucon and Adeimantus by recommending justice for its own sake... first supports the immortality of the soul by a new proof. Then, he argues that, on the whole, justice does pay in this life. Finally, the rewards and punishments which may await the soul in the unseen world and in other lives on earth are pictured in a myth illustrating the doctrine of reincarnation.” It is clear, therefore, that in the Greek world, prominence is given to the doctrine of reincarnation as it affects the lifestyle of human beings, the need for rehabilitation and purification, fitness and perfection as well as eternal bliss.

The concept of reincarnation among the Indians has a very ancient beginning and has held sway to this day in various forms. The manner of belief and practice of the Indian populace manifest a strong inclination to the need for survival.

The Indian spiritual teacher Meher Baba (1967) stated that reincarnation occurs due to desires and once those desires are extinguished, the ego-mind ceases to reincarnate:

The power that keeps the individual soul bound to the wheel of life and death is its thirst for separate existence, which is a condition for a host of cravings connected with objects and experiences of the world of duality. It is for the fulfilment of cravings that the ego-mind keeps on incarnating itself. When all forms of craving disappear, the

impressions which create and enliven the ego-mind disappear. With the disappearance of these impressions, the ego-mind itself is shed with the result that there is only the realisation of the one eternal, unchanging Over soul or God, Who is the only reality. God-realisation is the end of the incarnations of the ego-mind because it is the end of its very existence... When there is cessation of the ego-mind, there is cessation of incarnations in the final fulfilment of Self-realisation.

Hinduism, according to Thomas as cited by Brown (1975:61) is perhaps the oldest living religion in the world. Hinduism was originally known as *Arya Dharma*, or the “Aryan way”.

Stephen Knapp in his book *Reincarnation and Karma: How They Really Affect Us* shows that the soul undergoes rounds of existence and reincarnation as upheld by the law of Karma. This book endeavoured to unravel the story of Eastern explanation of the past and future lives and how they create their own good and bad experiences. Knapp also states that, reincarnation is recognised throughout the world. Other aspects of religion in India are Buddhism, Jainism etc.

Though the major Christian denominations reject the concept of reincarnation, a large number of Christians profess that belief. In a survey by the Pew Forum in 2009, 24% of American Christians expressed a belief in reincarnation. In a 1981 Survey in Europe 31% of regular church going Catholics expressed a belief in reincarnation.

Geddes MacGregor, an Episcopalian priest who is Emeritus Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at the University of Southern California, Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, a recipient of the California Literature Award (Gold Medal, non-fiction category), and the first holder of the Rufus Jones Chair in Philosophy and Religion at Bryn Mawr, demonstrates in his book *Reincarnation in Christianity: A New Vision of the Role of Rebirth in Christian Thought*, that Christian doctrine and reincarnation are not mutually exclusive belief systems. (<http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reincarnation>, 2013.)

According to Walter Semkiw, MD, reincarnation can also be found in the teachings of Islam, a religion founded by Prophet Mohammed. The idea of reincarnation is accepted by a few Muslim sects, for example, the Ghulat and other

sects in the Muslim world such as Druzes. Historically, South Asian Isma'ilis performed *chantas* yearly, one of which is for the cleansing of sins committed in past lives. (Aga Khan IV) Sinan ibn Salman ibn Muhammad, also known as Rashid al-Din Sinan subscribed to the transmigration of souls as a tenet of the Alawi, who are thought to have been influenced by Isma'ilism.

Modern Sufis who embrace the idea of reincarnation include Bawa Muhaiyadeen. However, Hazrat Inayat Khan has criticised the idea as unhelpful to the spiritual seeker. There are several references in the Quran that seem to point to reincarnation. Let us review a few of these passages. *“And when his body falleth off altogether, as an old fish-shell, his soul doeth well by releasing, and formeth a new one instead... The person of man is only a mask which the soul putteth on for a season; it weareth its proper time and then is cast off, and another is worn in its stead.”* (1). *“God generates beings, and sends them back over and over again, till they return to him”* (2). *“I tell you, of a truth, that the spirits which now have affinity shall be kindred together, although they all meet in new persons and names.”*(3). Surat ([http:// www.en Wikipedia.org/wiki/Reincarnation](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reincarnation) 2013.) While several tribes believe in certain aspects of reincarnation, there are various “flavours” and distinction.

2.1.5 Reincarnation: Summary of histories and doctrines

According to Echekwube (2002:13):

Our survey of the history and doctrines on reincarnation has revealed largely that belief in reincarnation is world-wide and dates from very ancient times. Millions of people of various races and classes have some concept of reincarnation. The concepts are so diverse that one could err if one makes hasty generalisations and judgments. This explains our reason for seeking to study the individual religion belief of reincarnation. Though we could not gather all the information on this subject matter, yet from what we have got, useful analysis would be made.

It is noteworthy that belief in reincarnation does not feature explicitly in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. However, Origen (185-254 A.D), one of the early Church Fathers taught about the pre-existence of souls. In his book, *De Principiis*, Origen declared that “every soul ... comes unto this world strengthened by the victories or weakened by the defeats of its previous life. Its place in this world as a vessel appointed to honour and dishonour, is determined by its previous merit or

demerits ...”Such a doctrine was unacceptable to the Church and was condemned at the Provincial Synod of Constantinople in 543 A.D, stating in substance that, ‘if anyone says or believes that the punishment of demons or wicked men is but temporary and that after a certain time it will end and there will be restitution or reintegration (*apocatastasis*) of demons or wicked spirits, *anathema sit...*(this may not come to be). Consequent upon this, the Byzantine emperor, Justinian in 553 A.D. banned the teaching of the pre-existence of the soul from the Catholic Church. However, the period of renaissance revived interest in the topic of reincarnation. It was at this time that the Italian philosopher and poet, Giordano Bruno was sentenced and burned at the stake by the Inquisition because of his teaching about reincarnation, asserting that the soul “ is not the body and that it may be in one body or in another, and pass from body to body.”(William Boultong 1914:163-164)

It is clear that though the doctrine of reincarnation is acceptable to millions of people all over the world, Christians object to it, believing that judgment comes after death.

2.1.6 Comparative study of reincarnation in modern thinking and African philosophy

Once the Eastern concept of reincarnation arrived in Europe, its meaning changed. During the Middle Ages, it was a doctrine reserved for the initiates of some occult traditions such as Hermetism and Catharism, who had taken over from Neo-Platonism. A wider acceptance of reincarnation was promoted in the Western world beginning only in the 19th century, by Theosophy, and later also by Anthroposophy. Then came the Eastern gurus, the New Age movement, and the resultant effect of this was the wider acceptance of reincarnation in European society today. (<http://www.Google.com> 2011)

However, its modern version is substantially different from what Eastern religions affirmed, far from being a torment out of which man has to escape by any price through abolishing personhood. New Age thinking sees reincarnation as an eternal progression of the soul toward higher levels of spiritual knowledge. Thus, what reincarnates is not the impersonal *atman*, but an entity that is referred to as the soul, an entity which preserves the attributes of personhood from one life to the next.

This compromise obviously emerged from the desire to adapt the doctrine of reincarnation to Western thought.

Reincarnation, as we have seen, is a philosophical and religious idea. Some cultures and religions are of the notion that the soul survives the death of the body and begins a new life in a new body which may be human, animal or plant depending on the moral deeds of that soul in his first sojourn on earth. (<http://www.Google.com>) Edward B. Tylor was the exponent of the doctrine of religion called animism. This was made known in his seminal book *Primitive Culture* (1871). According to him, it is the doctrine of souls and spiritual beings. Animism is, therefore, the belief in spirits which have separate and separable existence. Examples of Animism can be found in forms of Shinto, Serer, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Pantheism, Paganism, and Neopaganism.

Animism (from Latin *anima* “soul”, life) is a set of beliefs based on the existence of non-human “spiritual beings” or similar kinds of embodied principles. Animism encompasses the beliefs that there is no separation between the spiritual and physical (or material) world, and souls or spirits that exist, not only in humans, but also in all other animals, plants, rocks, geographic features such as mountains or rivers, or other entities of the natural environment. Throughout European history, philosophers such as Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, among others, contemplated the possibility that souls exist in animals, plants, and people; however, the currently accepted definition of animism was only developed in the 19th century by Sir Edward B. Tylor.

Adeboyeke (2016:204) concretises the above view thus:

The supernatural phenomenon is not exclusive to Africa. It has existed in the literatures of Europe, Latin America and other continents in the world. In England, supernatural phenomena featured in the early Gothic fiction. The elements of horror like ghosts, haunted houses and tombs characterised Horace Walpole’s *The castle of Otranto* (1764), Mary Shelly’s *Frankeinstein* (1764) and William Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* (1606). In Greek mythology, Odysseus, in Homer’s *Odyssey* owes his greatness to his supernatural powers and his status as a semi divine being.

According to Mbiti (1978:17), “Animism means the system of belief and practices based on the idea that objects and natural phenomena are inhabited by

spirits or souls. It is true that African peoples in their traditional setting acknowledge the existence of spirits, and that some of the spirits are thought to inhabit objects like trees, ponds, and rocks.” This religion, like all other religions the world over, has always been groomed to believe in spiritual beings. The Bible notes that “*God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth*” (John 4 verse 24 KJV). Thus animism as a belief in spirits can be said to be a universal thought in almost every religion. They stressed further; “the fact is that in West Africa, as elsewhere in the world, people believe that spirits reside in material objects, expressing themselves through such objects. People who hold such beliefs regard such objects as sacred, and they are dedicated to the spirits. Thus, throughout West Africa, we have sacred spots established in certain places where such spirits are believed to have manifested and expressed themselves. The spirits are approached or worshipped through these sacred objects. Moreover, many Africans who believe in their ancestors will not incur their wrath by appeasing them through sacrifices and worship.

Animism applies to all religions, anywhere and everywhere in the world, as long as it means belief in spirits and recognition of spirits as having separate and separable entities from material objects symbolising them.

According to Adebawale (2012:172);

Plato regarded the soul as something divine in man which was accidentally united to the body and dwells in it as a prisoner but escapes at the time of death and regains its divinity. Different dialogues of Plato offer proofs of the soul’s immortality and reincarnation or metempsychosis. Metempsychosis is the passage of someone’s soul after death into the body of another person or animal.

Ahmadou Kourouma in *Les soleils des independances* confirms that :

L’ombre du décédé allait transmettre aux mânes que sous les soleils des Indépendances les Malinkés honnissaient et même giflaient leur prince. Mânes des aïeux! Mânes de Moriba, fondateur de la dynastie ! Il était temps, vraiment temps de s’apitoyer sur le sort du dernier et légitime Doumbouya ! (p.16)

The shadow of the deceased went to transmit to the spirits that under the Suns of Independences the malinkés were

ashamed and even slapped their prince. Spirits of the ancestors! Spirit of the Moriba, founder of the dynasty! It was time to have pity on what befell the last and legitimate Dombouya! (Our translation)

Makinde, in Adebawale (2012:176-177), espoused further that the reincarnation procedure in Yoruba traditional thought is similar to that of Plato. In the Yoruba myth of the Seven Heavens, Ajalorun or Olodumare is the giver of life. At the time of reincarnation reports on each person's activity in his former life is given to Ajalorun. From this report, both just and unjust souls are judged according to their deeds on earth.

Meanwhile, Awolalu and Dopamu (1979:260) state that: "Apart from the cloth used to dress the corpse, some materials like household utensils and money are buried with him. In the olden days, slaves, men and women were made to accompany a deceased King or chief into the other world. However, on man's final end and the concept of divine judgment, some other people again modify this notion by saying that wicked persons, or those who die an ugly death as a result of their sins, continue to live on this earth because they cannot find a resting place in the world of the spirits. The ghosts of such evil persons will continue to haunt human habitation; they may even enter into animals, reptiles, birds or trees.

However, majority of West African people believe that there are real and specific places where the deceased go....For example, the Yoruba will call the compartments Orun-"heaven." The first compartment is *Orun rere*-"good Orun." This is the *Orun* of one's ancestors. It belongs to the deceased. It is meant to be occupied by those who die "a good death", and those who have been allotted the place by the Supreme Being. It is also the abode of divinities.

The other compartment is *Orun Apaadi* -"the heaven of potsherds or rubbish heap." This is the abode of the wicked, and those who die "a bad death" as a punishment for their sins. For those in the bad heaven, it is believed that their after-life is miserable. They are denied the company of ancestors, and they cannot reincarnate. They are not remembered since they cannot become ancestors. (Awolalu and Dopamu 1979:270-272)

Sakina Yusuf Khan, in *A Night of Forgiveness* published in “The Speaking Tree:” (Shab-e-Barat) states that; a night of forgiveness is also a festival associated with the dead. It is believed that the souls of the dead are set free on the night of forgiveness to visit their relatives.”Corroborating Sassine’s *Saint Monsieur Baly* (1973:219-220):

...Il avait invité chez lui tous les vieux et François pour leur révéler qu’en rêve il avait vu Monsieur Baly, le visage rayonnant, l’appeler à lui. Il évoqua ensuite vaguement et péniblement sa vie tachée par endroits d’escroqueries, avant de remettre à François une grosse somme d’argent – je pense, comme tous mes concitoyens, que c’était toute sa fortune – qu’il voulait destiner à l’agrandissement et à la modernisation de l’école. Il leur distribua après à tous des noix de cola, en leur demandant de prier pour son âme...Mais Allah ne lui a rien pardonné, sinon il ne serait pas revenu ici hanter la tombe de notre papa.

...He had invited all the old men and François to his house to reveal to them that he saw Mr Baly in his dream with a radiant look calling on him. He recalled vaguely and painfully his life full of fraud - before handing a huge sum of money to François – I think like my fellow citizens that it was all his fortune – which he wanted to dedicate to the enlargement and modernisation of the School. After all, he distributed to them some kolanut while asking them to pray for his soul....But Allah did not forgive him, if not he would not have returned here to haunt our father’s grave.
(Our translation)

This is a subtle belief in reincarnation. Sadia Dehlvi in her article “*Jesus in Islam*” (2010) argues that both Islam and Christianity believe that Christ will return to destroy the Antichrist. It is clear from the above that both Islam and Christianity appear not to oppose reincarnation. Of course, adherents of both Islam and Christianity do not believe reincarnation in a broader sense as Hindus do. Purportedly, unaccomplished activities of past lives are also one of the causes for reincarnation.

2.1.7 Who is an Ancestor?

Daramola and Jeje (1995:157), opine that West Africans and especially the Yoruba race believe that only those who lead a good life, live to a ripe old age, die a “good” death, and are accorded full burial rites can become ancestors.

Il y a, dit « l'Ancêtre », de cela environ trois cents ans moins vingt, le Bwamu jouissait d'un riche trésor de mystères et de magies, d'ineffables délices qui déteignirent sur les aïeux des grands-pères des pères de nos pères. (CDTA 1962:21)

There is, says « the ancestor », that was around three hundred less twenty, the Bwamu were wallowing in a rich treasure of miseries and magic, unutterable delights that befell the ancestors of the great grand fathers of our fathers. (Our translation)

Adeboyeku (2016:208) agrees that:

The primitive mind believes in the existence of souls after death and also in the existence of spirits, ghosts and demons. This belief in the existence of souls after death is responsible for the elaborate funeral rites accorded departed family members. It is believed that these rites grant the dead easy access into the spirit world.

Belief in ancestors supplies strong sanctions for public morality. They are the guardians of traditional morality (Awolalu and Dopamu 1979:276). The ancestors are called different names by different peoples. For example, the Yoruba call them *Awon Baba-nla wa*, the Igbo call them *Ndi ochie* or '*ndi nna nna any i ha*', the Ewe and Fon call them *tovodu*, and the Akan call them *samanfo*.

Moreover, according to Awolalu (1979) cited by Ojo (2010:17), "An ancestor is one from whom a person descends, either by the father or mother, at any distance of time; one's progenitor or forefather. The Yoruba speak of the ancestors to be the departed spirits of their forefathers or forebears with whom the living maintain filial and affectionate relationship." In reincarnation, an impression is given that a reincarnated person, who is now an invisible spirit has a superior force to do things he could not ordinarily do while alive for instance:

Martial vint lui donner une demi-douzaine de gifles. Le guide Jean-Cœur-de-Père la trouva évanouie, lui donna une cascade de huit gifles intérieures et devint fou dans la même nuit, c'est-à-dire le trois cent vingt-deuxième jour de son règne. (LVD, 1979:128)

Martial came and gave her half a dozen slaps. The guide Jean-Cœur-de-Père found her unconscious gave him a volley, eight interior slaps and became mad that same night, that is, the three hundred and twenty-second day of his reign. (Our translation)

This act by the reincarnated Martial cannot and was not accomplished by Martial while alive and when no enhanced power was at work.

Majeed (2012:174-175) citing Mogobe Ramose's observation regarding the immortality of a person observes that:

... Once the "I" crosses over to immortality, it is then referred to as an "it" by some to indicate that it is an object. However, African traditional thought tends to deny such objectification by...referring to the deceased as...that person who died. The persistent ascription of personhood to the deceased implies the recognition that somehow the person has not ceased to be a person, he or she continues to live ... [W]e can attribute life to a deceased person because... the human body alone is not the same thing as personhood. This attribution of life to a deceased person in recognition of the belief that personhood is much more and larger than the physical body is expressed in African traditional thought as the living- dead.

The above assertions, therefore, give credence to the fact that the reincarnated beings continues to live.

Again, on ancestors, the following is noted:

...J'ai regardé autour de moi. Les visiteurs avaient disparu. Une clameur s'éleva. Je me retournai vers les visages de bois, mais je ne les retrouvai plus. Le musée était vide. (NS, 1977:38)

I looked around me. The visitors had disappeared. A strange feeling ensued. I returned towards the wooden faces but I could not find them again. The museum was empty. (Our translation)

An ancestor who may have died a coward reincarnates into a warrior who is now invited through invocation by his family members to fight on their behalf. Adeboyeke (2016:208) cites Nwagba (1986:11) thus: The African belief in reincarnation implies that existence includes the visible world, the spirits of ancestors and the unborn". Awolalu and Dopamu (1979:275) further state that:

But since the ancestors are no longer visible in the physical sense, some element of enhanced power is attributed to them. Death has given them more potentialities, and has greatly enhanced their dignity, power, and prestige. They possess considerable power both for good and for evil.

The enhanced power possessed by the dead makes them either benevolent or malevolent depending on the deed meted to them. The above statement corroborates Babawale's view (2012:15) on African indigenous religions:

African indigenous religions have also been undermined by foreign religions; particularly Christianity and Islam. There is no gainsaying the fact that these two imported religions have caused more damage to the traditional arts, and values that are embedded in our culture. On conversion to any of these two religions, one of the things expected of a convert is to renounce his or her link with traditional religions, art and culture...That more people are presently advocating a return to certain traditional religions and social practices like oath taking for public office holders in order to curb corruption and bring sanity and accountability to the polity in Nigeria is a testimony to the efficacy of some aspects of our long abandoned heritage.

To buttress this view; *N'tomo est un Dieu d'un masque sacré ramené d'Afrique*. (NS, 1977:44-45) [N'Tomo is a god of a sacred mask taken from Africa. (Our translation)]

Dans de nombreuses tribus, les ancêtres sont considérés comme un élément essentiel du clan. Toute séparation entre les morts et les vivants d'un clan fait perdre le sentiment d'appartenance à la communauté, ce qui donne à l'individu un sentiment d'insécurité. (LMDVA, 1979:13)

In many tribes, ancestors are considered an essential part of the family. All separations between the dead and the living of a family cause the loss of a sense of belonging in the community; which causes the feeling of insecurity of an individual. (Our translation)

This fact could lead to arguments against those who have their belief in the ancestors. For example, in some parts of the Republic of Benin and Uganda, rituals and ceremonies are performed to honour the dead. This statement could rightly apply to all Africans and could be universal. Martial's usual saying to his daughter Chaïdana;

Elle se rappela ce proverbe que son père citait souvent: « les morts qui n'ont pas de vivants sont malheureux, aussi malheureux que les vivants qui n'ont pas des morts » (LVD, 1979:49).

She remembered this proverb her father often cited: « the dead who have no living people are unfortunate, as

unfortunate as the livings that have no dead » (Our translation)

Therefore, with this proverb, Christianity or Islam does not exclude one from having ancestors since their adherents have dead relations. The fact remains that they might not be consulting, venerating or worshipping them as some do.

Laye, in his novel *L'Enfant noir (The African Child)* (1953), reiterates the African belief in the concept of ancestral cult. Laye demonstrated the black magical prowess of his father on the gold with the frequent visit of the black snake. Snakes are harmful and dangerous, they can be said to be good for nothing creatures, but one will wonder why Laye's mother remarked thus about that little black snake:

Ce serpent-ci, mon enfant, il ne faut pas le tuer: ...n'est pas un serpent comme les autres, il ne fera aucun mal ; néanmoins ne contrarie pas sa course. (LN, 1953:15)

My son, this one must not be killed: he is not as other snakes, and will not harm you; you must never interfere with him. (TAC, 1981:15)

As if that warning was not convincing enough, his mother later adds: "*Ce serpent, ajouta ma mère est le génie de ton père.*" (1953:15)[This snake is your father's guiding Spirit. (TAC, 1981:15)] Laye was too young to understand and grasp the intricacies of the supernatural which this study seeks to unveil, where the supernatural interact with the natural and the dead with the living.

The black snake which is Laye's father guiding spirit pays him constant visits as re-echoed by his mother: "*Tu vois: le serpent va faire visite à ton père, dit encore ma mère.*" p.15 [Look, the serpent is going to pay your father a visit says my mother, again."p.16]

However, as earlier mentioned in this study, the ancestors have the supernatural power to either bring about blessing or curse on their relatives. For instance in *L'Enfant noir*, Laye's father acknowledged that his midas touch on gold as a goldsmith is not unconnected with the blessing he receives from the black snake - his guiding spirit:

S'il en est ...ainsi, c'est par la grâce seule de ce serpent, génie de notre race. C'est à ce serpent que je dois tout, et

c'est lui aussi qui m'avertit de tout. Ainsi je ne m'étonne point à mon réveil, de voir tel ou tel... (LN, 1953:19)

If these things are so, it is by virtue of this snake alone, who is the guiding spirit of our race. It is to this snake that I owe everything, and it is the likewise who gives me warning of all that is to happen. (TAC, 1981:19)

It can, however, be stated that, ancestors can be interchangeably used as guiding spirits in this study.

Amadou Koné's *Le respect des morts*, (1974:24) views the relationship between the living and the ancestors as cordial and intimate.

Commandant, peut-être vaut-il mieux dire au gouvernement dès maintenant que nous ne pourrons pas partir, que nous ne pouvons pas abandonner nos morts ici. Non, nous ne partirons pas. Les morts et les génies nous aideront.

Commander, probably it will be better to tell the government that henceforth we cannot leave, that we cannot abandon our dead here. No, we are not leaving. The dead and the gods will help us. (Our translation)

They prefer to stay where their ancestors were buried instead of relocating or allowing any displacement that would separate them from their ancestors for the purpose of development. In comparison to the idea of Fama in *Les soleils des indépendances*, Niangbo in Seydou Badian's *Le respect des morts* opines:

Voilà pourquoi nos pouvoirs nous échappent de plus en plus. Les Blancs sont arrivés. Ils nous ont vaincus. Il est dans la destinée de tout peuple de perdre une bataille mais non de se perdre lui-même. Nous, nous sommes en train de nous perdre. Entre les génies et les Blancs, vous, notre avenir, êtes en train de choisir le Blanc. Nous autres, vieux, nous savons que les Blancs ne peuvent pas remplacer les génies ; ils ne peuvent pas triompher d'eux non plus. Nous avons cet espoir tant que nous respecterons les morts et les génies. (LRM, 1974:24-25)

See why our powers failed us more and more. The White men came and conquered us. It is in the destiny of all the people to lose a war but not to lose himself. We are in the process of being lost. Between the gods and the white men, you, our future, are choosing the White. We the elders, we know that the White men cannot replace the gods; they cannot triumph over them also. We have that hope as much as we keep respecting the dead and the gods. (Our translation)

On the other hand, the above demonstrates the filial cordial relationship between the living and their ancestors which they held in high esteem.

Ayeleru's view (2001:4) coincides with Badian's *Noces sacrées* when he affirms that: "*The colonial administration succeeded in suppressing the African customs, languages, history and values.*"

Wambutda Daniel (1983:128) posits that: "what occupies the mind of Ngas most in the realm of religion are his ancestors. He swears by his dead father, or if his father is still living he swears by his dead grandfather. Even if his paternal grandfather is living he may call on either the generality of the dead in the family or may resort to swearing by the latest dead on the maternal side." (*Traditional Religion in West Africa*) This view is in tandem with that of Adeboyeku (2016:209) that: "Both humans and spirits beings cross borders to inter-relate with one another."

This observation made above represents the view and belief of Africans with respect to the enhanced power of the dead.

Africa, as earlier said, has a lot of reverence for their ancestors whom they believe possess metaphysical power«*Nous lutterons avec l'aide des dieux et les ancêtres. Là réside notre ultime espoir.* » (LRM 1974: 26) [We shall fight with the help of the gods and those of the ancestors. There lies our ultimate hope. (Our translation)] Majeed (2012:175) confirms that:

... It makes sense to an African to state, in religious discourse that I saw 'so and so' rather than I saw 'the spirit of so and so' in my dream or vision. But seeing 'so and so' in my dream or vision means having contact or communication with an inhabitant of the ontology of invisible beings, that is, an ancestor.

Meanwhile, in the Yoruba metaphysics of the afterlife, an 'ancestor' is not regarded as a mere spirit but a respectable and adorable one.

In the view of Awolalu:

[Native Faiths are] religion that is based mainly on oral transmission. It is not written on paper but in peoples' hearts, minds, oral history, rituals, shrines and religious functions...it is not the religion of one hero. It has no missionaries, or even the desire to propagate the religion,

or proselytise. (Religion in Africa and the Diaspora: Comparative Belief Study, 2014:14)

Perhaps, the above view, if critically considered with regards to ancestral veneration, worship and reincarnation, it will lead to an understanding that:

African ancestral veneration is a religious piety that centres in honouring, loving and remembering the dead, while at the same time asking for their mediatory help. It is still widely and popularly practiced in modern African ethnic groups. In early Christianity, the same practice of religious piety was slowly developed and transformed into a new form that is called devotions to the angels and saints. In addition, African ancestral veneration is never a religion in itself but an aspect of a complex religious system. (<http://sm76626.wordpress.com/2011/03/13/ancestor-veneration-worship-reincarnation-and-idolatry>)

Ama Ata Aidoo (1965:2) in *The Dilemma of a Ghost* while supporting the view that Africans' belief in ancestors posits thus: "The ghosts of the dead ancestors are invoked and there is no discord, only harmony and restoration of that which needs to be restored."

African ancestral veneration is not idolatrous due to the following three major reasons:

1. It does not consist of the worship of lifeless images or idols of emptiness. Instead, it primarily consists of venerating, honouring and loving human life – the spirit of the dead – that still survives after its death and continues to live and engage an enduring communion with their living relatives.
2. African ancestral veneration is not the worship of demons hiding in images – statues, paintings or sculptures – as often claimed by the early fathers of the Church when talking about the danger of idolatry. Instead, it is venerating the living spirits of the dead. They are not demons or evil spirits and are distinctly different from demons and evil spirits. The ancestral carved image conveys the characteristics of the ancestors and helps to make the spiritual reality of the ancestors present among the living.
3. African ancestral veneration is not the worship of creatures in place of God, since the living souls of the dead are never viewed, approached or treated as God. (<http://sm76626.wordpress.com/2011/03/13/ancestor-venerationworship-reincarnation-and-idolatry/> accessed June 25, 2014.)

Mfomo (1982:96) in *L'Orpheline et la vieille femme* recounts how a dead mother appeared to render assistance to her daughter in times of trouble. In the story, a woman who died sometime shortly after giving birth to a baby girl left behind her only child and her husband. Her husband lives alone with the child, since there was nobody to assist him in preparing food and taking care of the home. He decided to marry another wife, who bore him a baby girl in her own resemblance.

However, the step-mother started maltreating the orphan. She sends her on errands at awkward times in the day and night. One night, the step-mother sent this young girl to fetch water in a forest. The poor girl, for fear of the night, wept as she went on the errand. Suddenly, at the well appeared an elderly woman who requested for water to drink. "*Ma fille, donne – moi de l'eau à boire*" p.95 [My daughter, give me water to drink. (Our translation)] The young girl fetched the water and gave her to drink. As soon as she drank, within a twinkle of an eye, the elderly woman had changed to a youthful beautiful woman. She looked at the orphan and said:

Mon enfant, puisque tu m'as donné à boire lorsque j'avais soif, alors que tu m'as vu toute repoussante de saleté, puisque tu as tout de même voulu m'approcher pour me donner de l'eau : tu rencontreras, durant ta vie, tout le bonheur que puisse contenir la terre. Il t'arrivera qu'enouvrant simplement la bouche pour parler, il en sorte de l'or, de l'ivoire et des objets précieux ! (APDI, 1982 :96)

My child, since you gave me water to drink when I was thirsty, you saw me hideously ugly, and you even deemed it fit to approach me to give me water: you shall meet, throughout your lifetime, all the blessings that the earth can contain. When you simply open your mouth to talk, it will produce gold, ivory and precious objects. (Our translation)

After these sayings, she disappeared. The step-mother at home was furious for being kept waiting. She set out in search of the orphan, whom in her opinion had stayed too long. When she met her on the way, she flogged her with the long cane she was holding on her shoulder. The girl was hurt, but as she opened her mouth to cry, gold, silver, diamond and precious stones of great quantity fell to the ground. Upon seeing these great ornaments of wealth, the step-mother became jealous, so, she went home and asked her own daughter to go to the same river in the forest to fetch water. "*Cours vite au marigot, et ramène-nous, toi aussi, ce même bonheur!*" p.96

[Run fast to the river and bring for us, you also, these kind of blessings! (Our translation)]

Eventually, the step-mother's daughter also arrived at the forest, met the same elderly woman but was neither pleasant nor kind enough to accede to the request of this elderly woman and she even insulted the woman. Consequently, the resultant effect of evil or bad behaviours is the response of the woman:

Puisque tu n'as pas voulu me donner de l'eau quand je te demandais à boire ; puisque, bien au contraire, tu t'es mise à m'insulter au-delà de toute mesure : tu rencontreras le malheur dans ta vie. Il t'arrivera qu'au moment ou tu ouvres la bouche, il en sorte des grenouilles, des crapauds, des vipères et des serpents de toute variété. (APDI, 1982:97)

As long as you don't want to give me water to drink when I asked; as long as, in the contrary, you decided to insult me as much as you wish: you will meet with evil in your life. It will befall you the moment you open your mouth, from it will come out Frogs, Toads, Vipers and varieties of Snakes. (Our translation)

After these sayings of the elderly woman, the young girl with unruly behaviour ignored her and left for home. The mother after a long expectation became impatient as usual, met the daughter on the way and beat her in the same manner she did to the orphan. However, when she opened her mouth to cry and weep, all the deadly creatures the elderly woman spoke about started falling from her mouth, and they chased the young girl and her mother out of the village. The orphaned young wealthy girl lived to enjoy her wealth. This story really showcases the aforementioned that the dead seems to be actively involved in the activities of the living by either blessing or punishing them as the case may be.

Meanwhile, it could be deduced that the dead who have human feelings and tenderness do not forget their relatives, as a result, they do not keep a distance. Rather, they stay close by to watch those they left behind. Ama Ata Aidoo in *The Dilemma of a Ghost* (1965:50) rightly supports this claim:

And we must be careful with wife, you tell us her mother is dead, if she had any tenderness, her ghost must be keeping watch over all which happen to her... come my child.

The above statement was made by a onetime antagonistic mother-in-law, Esi whose son Ato married and brought home to Africa a black American lady Eulalie who was yet to be pregnant because they (that is Ato and Eulalie) had agreed to delay conception. This brought misunderstanding between the family members and that created a kind of hatred for the foreign wife. Immediately the mother of Ato, the mother-in-law recollected that the son had earlier informed her that Eulalie is an orphan, she quickly rescinded, believing that Eulalie's dead mother could be seeing the maltreatment being meted on her daughter and decide to avenge her.

2.1.7 Idolatry

Belief in reincarnation is not idolatry. Idolatry is one of the easiest concepts to refute since an idolater is defined as a “worshiper of idols”. The “burden of proof” in refuting the issue of worship, but rather, in the typical understanding of what constitutes a reasonable act of worship. Worship by definition is “an expression of reverence”, or “extravagant respect or devotion”. Using this standard would cover any acknowledgement of an intermediary figure to a supreme being. The representation of this intermediary would itself constitute an act of idolatry and by extension members of every “other religion” would be categorised as idolaters. It would seem, therefore, that the act of idolatry can be more clearly, simply reduced to the worship of a man made image, carving, or representative structure, which is thought to possess God-like attributes and powers. In some modern religions, denominations for example, statues representing saints serve many functional purposes, but the substance and roles of intermediaries are arguably similar to the roles of Orisha (demi-gods) used in the Yoruba spiritual system. Mfomo (1982:79-80) posits in « La Tortue cite le léopard au tribunal des ancêtres » in *Au pays des initiés*:

Il recourut à la tradition. Un soir, quand la nuit s'étend sur le village, il saisit les bâtons de son tamtam dont les grondements retentirent jusqu'aux quatre coins de la forêt. Maître expert des généalogies ancestrales, il appela ses congénères, chacun par son sobriquet, non sans avoir évoqué, pour les flatter, la noblesse de leur ascendance et la vaillance de leurs descendants. (APDI, 1982:79-80)

It returned to the tradition. One evening, when night fell on the village, he seized his drum sticks whose sound travels to as far as the four corners of the forest. Expert in recounting the ancestral genealogies, he invites their spirits each by his deity, not without invoking them to flatter them,

the nobility of their ascendance and the watchfulness of their descendants. (Our translation)

2.1.8 Spiritism

Reincarnation is the core of the doctrine of Spiritism, a tolerant new religious movement started in France in 1857. According to Spiritists, the soul will reincarnate to perfect themselves toward communion with God. (Akash Marathakam).

Spiritism is a pseudo-Christian codified in the 19th century by the French educator Allan Kardec. Spiritism soon spread to other countries, having today thirty-five (35) countries represented in the International Spiritist Council. In countries like Brazil, the movement spread and became widely accepted, mostly due to Chico Xavier's works. Today, the official spiritist community has about twenty million (20 million) adepts, though due to local syncretism, it is accepted and somehow practised by three times as many across the country. Some statistics even mention an adherence to Spiritist practices by 40 million people in Brazil.

Spiritism teaches reincarnation or rebirth into human life after death. This basically distinguishes Spiritism from Spiritualism. According to the Spiritist doctrine, reincarnation explains the moral and intellectual differences among men. It also provides the path to man's moral and intellectual perfection by amending his mistakes and increasing his knowledge in successive lives. For this reason, Spiritism does not accept rebirth in animals as this would be retrogressive.

Reincarnation is the natural method of the perfection process through which the Spirit faces countless different solutions, problems and obstacles, and needs to learn how to deal with them. The central tenet of spiritist doctrine is the belief in spiritual life. The spirit is eternal, and its beliefs, noting that: "The common definition of reincarnation has been altered from its original meaning. The word has come 'to be born again in different life forms' whereas its actual definition is 'to be born again into the flesh of another body.' Scientology ascribes to the original definition of reincarnation. (Goggle.en wikipedia.org/reincarnation, 2014)

We have seen that, according to the African worldview, the universe is composed of visible and invisible parts. It is sometimes also believed that between

God and human beings, there are other beings that populate the universe. These are spirits and there are many types of spirits.

Edward Saïd (2002:212) in *The Empire Writes Back* observes that:

The sacred has been an empowering feature of post-colonial experience in two ways: on one hand indigenous concepts of the sacred have been able to interpolate dominant conceptions of cultural identity; and on the other western forms of the sacred have often been appropriated and transformed as a means of local empowerment.

In Mbiti's (1978:65-72) assertion, "*God created the spirits, just as He created all other things. The spirits have a status between God and men, and are not identical with either.*" Moreover, Alik Shahadah in *Spirituality and Religion* opines that: "*The spirit is an essence, not a self-contained belief system which one declares allegiance to.*"

There are many types of spirits such as:

(a) **Nature Spirits:**

Nature Spirits are those which people associate specifically with natural objects and forces. Some are thought to have been created by God initially as spirits; others are said to have been human beings of the distant past. The Nature Spirits are also in two sub-divisions:

(i) ***Nature spirits of the sky***

Some of the nature spirits are associated with objects and forces in the sky. These include; the sun, the moon, stars, "falling stars", rainbows, rain, storms, wind, thunder and lightning.

(ii) ***Nature spirits of the earth***

In furtherance of this study, just as there are spirits associated with things and forces of the sky, so there are those associated with the things and forces of the earth.

In agreement with the biblical belief that evil spirits known as demons exist, Ferry in *Les dits de la nuit: contes tenda du Sénégal oriental* (1983:43) affirms that:

Le génie et moi on s'aimait, mais ce n'était pas un bon génie,
C'est lui qui chassait le petit chien qui l'empêchait de rester,
C'est pourquoi je l'ai tué.
- Ne t'avais-je pas dit de revenir ?
- Maintenant, je suis revenue. (LDDN 1983 :43)

I and the guiding spirit were in love, but he wasn't a good
Spirit, it is he who was chasing the puppy that was preventing
him from staying, that was why I killed it.
- Did I not tell you to return?
- Now, I have returned. (Our translation)

The above tells the story of an arrogant damsel who gives a condition for going into marriage with any man. However, none of the suitors interested in her could meet the condition. When, the evil spirits learnt of it, one of them decided to disguise as an interested suitor and meet all her demands, in a bid to teach her a lesson that other arrogant beautiful ladies will take a cue from.

(b) **Human Spirits:**

Nature spirits have no direct physical kinship with people; on the other hand, human spirits are those that once were ordinary men, women and children. Belief in the existence of these spirits is widespread throughout Africa. African Religion believes strongly that human life does not terminate at the death of the individual, but continues beyond death. Many of the human spirits appear in legends, myths and folk stories; others are spoken about in normal conversations among people. We can think of human spirits as being of two different kinds.

Sassine Williams in *Saint monsieur Baly* (1973:218) avers that:

A ma mort, dites à l'iman que je ne veux pas de vos prières : je veux être enterré de la même façon que notre «papa», car à partir d'aujourd'hui moi aussi, je me placerai sous la protection du Dieu des Noirs, je le prierai de toutes mes forces pour qu'Il me reconnaisse comme un de ses enfants et dans le bienheureux séjour des esprits de nos ancêtres. (SMB 1973)

At my death, tell the Imam that I don't need your prayers: I want to be buried the same way our father was buried, because from today I also want to be under the protection of the god of the Blacks, I will pray to him with all my strength for him to recognise me as one of his children and stay in the blessings of the spirits of our ancestors. (Our translation)

(a) *Spirits of those who died a long time ago*

There are countless numbers of these spirits of those who died a long time ago. Most of them are no longer remembered in their human form by anybody. Some people still believe that such spirits must exist in the invisible world. Some of them may be recollected through myths and legends as tribal, national or clan founders, and in reciting ones pygenerics "oriki".

(b) *Spirits of those who died recently*

When we say spirits of those who died recently, it means those who are still remembered by their families, relatives and friends for up to four or five generations earlier. They are referred to as the "living dead", to distinguish them from the ghosts of those who died much earlier. The belief in the existence of the living dead is widespread all over Africa, although it is held more strongly in some societies than in others probably due to their marriage to modern religions of Christianity and Islam.

Spiritism and Spirits are not in isolation of the Judeo-Christian belief system, as clearly taught and viewed in the Bible. For instance, The Bible mentioned good and demonic spirits:

And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, what thing is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits and they do obey him. (NKJV Mark 1:27)

According to Unah Emmanuel (2016:27) reporting Chima Kalu a mortician's account on strange world of the dead and why they knock before opening mortuary door, confesses that:

Dead bodies, especially those of occultists and members of secret societies "do give us trouble while being embalmed because their bodies have been 'fortified' by the devil or some spiritual forces. In such cases, we have to pet and

persuade them by talking to them...but if they remain stubborn, we have to employ our own spiritual force. (Vanguard, 2016:27)

Dadié Bernard (1955:88) confirms the above saying that as there exist evil spirits so also do good spirits exist:

Et le génie complaisant, répondait à toutes ses questions, riait de son étonnement. A toutes les épithètes, il ne faisait que rire, le bon génie. Et à chaque rire, les acajous aux futs droits, partant en droite ligne vers le soleil, les fromagers aux troncs trapus et bosselés d'épines pareilles à d'énormes furoncles,...vraiment, c'était un nez phénoménal que le nez monstrueux de ce génie qui tout le temps riait. (LPN, 1955:88)

And the complacent guiding spirit gave answers to all the questions, laughing at its amazement. In all its attributes, it did nothing other than laugh, the good guiding spirit. And at each laughter, the straight trunked mahoganies, moved to the right side toward the sun, the cheese makers with stocky trunks and dented by thorns like so large furuncle...truly, it was a phenomenal monstrous nose of this guiding spirit that laughs always. (Our translation)

From the above, one can argue that life is in double phase of; good and bad, advantage and disadvantage, clean and unclean, saints and demons, likewise, evil and good spirits will also feature. Therefore, literature is an instrument to discourage prejudice.

2.1.9 Sacrifices and offerings for worship of the invisibles in Africa

A sacrifice, offerings for worship by Mbiti (1978:57), is stated below:

The practice of making sacrifices and offerings is found all over Africa. By this practice, material or physical things are given to God and other spiritual beings. This act marks the point where the visible and invisible worlds meet, and shows man's intention to project him into the invisible world. People make sacrifices and offerings of almost any animal or object. The distinction between sacrifices and offerings is that: sacrifices involve the shedding of blood of human beings, animals or birds; offering do not involve blood but concern the giving of all other things, such as foodstuffs, water, milk, honey or money.

There is a difference between Ancestor worship and reincarnation, while ancestor worship is simply venerating the dead ancestor, reincarnation is the return of a dead person back to the world and they are neither venerated nor worshipped.

The dead that were believed to be invisible are always given these sacrifices. « *Sur mes conseils, Pièrre, notre responsable, lui offrit un jour un mouton et cent noix de cola.* » (NS, 1977:61)[Following my advice, Peter, our coordinator, one day sacrificed a goat and a hundred cola nuts. (Our translation)]

Furthermore: « *Il crut m'avoir fait une concession en proposant que les chrétiens puissent continuer à faire des offrandes aux esprits même s'ils ne devaient pas assister aux cérémonies.* » p.62 [He thought he gave me a concession when he proposed that Christians can continue offering sacrifices to the spirits even if they don't partake in the worship. (Our translation)]

To some extent, *Sous l'orage* (1972:122), Seydou Badian commented on some hunters who sacrificed a red cock to the ancestors with these accompanying ritualistic words: « *Recevez-le en même temps que notre salut.* » « *Vous êtes toujours parmi nous dans les cases et dans la brousse.* » [Accept it, likewise our respect. You are always in our midst in the homes and in the forest. (Our translation)]

In Alik Shahadah's observation:

The thing that makes us distinctively African is our spirituality...and we are not talking denominations or names for various religious systems in living Africa. We are talking about that distinctive personality found everywhere in Ancient and modern Africa. It was this centrality of a reverence for a higher deity that traveled with us to the Americas that survived the boat and the plantation. That reformed itself into Nation of Islam, Christianity, modern Vodou, and so forth. (Religion in Africa and the Diaspora, 2014:6)

The dialogue between the casts in the novel, *Le respect des morts* (1974), visibly further demonstrates the belief in reincarnation. For instance:

...Nous parlions avec les dieux et les ancêtres morts; nous leur offrons des sacrifices et avons leur protection. (LRDM p.36)

...We speak with the gods and the late ancestors; we offer them sacrifices and we have their protection. (Our translation)

And again,

Ah, oui. Le commandant nous a dit déjà que les morts sont morts. Ça prouvent combien vous êtes perdus... Ah, oui. Il nous a appris aussi que les ingénieurs mettront les génies dans des bouteilles. (LRDM p.39)

Ah! Yes. The commander has already told us that the dead are dead. That demonstrates how far you are lost... Ah! Yes. He also informed us that the Engineers will put our guiding spirits in bottles. (Our translation)

These sentences clearly show that while the “emerging generation” is embracing the new faith and development, the so-called “established generation” is of the contrary view. To support the argument put up by the established generation, Okonkwo, in *Things Fall Apart* (1958:143) elucidates thus:

Our dead fathers are weeping because of the shameful sacrilege they are suffering and the abomination we have all seen with our eyes.

Consequently, the latter preferred their grand-children who are to be their supposed future sacrificed to the gods to disallow development. Their myopic reason for not embracing modern civilisation is that; they do not want to be separated from their ancestors. They carelessly did not think of the consequences of sacrificing all their grandchildren, and that, whose ancestors will they become after death, if all their children or grandchildren as the case may be have been sacrificed to these guiding spirits and gods?

Les génies des eaux demandent un sacrifice, un holocauste. Ils exigent qu'un jeune enfant au corps tendre, à la voix candide, un jeune enfant aux yeux limpides leur soit offert. Alors seulement ils nous aideront. (LRDM p.28)

The guiding spirits of the water request for a sacrifice, a holocaust. They insist a young child of tender flesh, with a sinless voice, a young child with clear innocent eyes be offered to them only then will they assist us. (Our translation)

Apart from the major focus of this study which is reincarnation, instances of sacrifice and ancestral worship or respect for ancestors are prevalent in all the novels

We were to choose this day because, as you know, on this day we try to drive away all evil spirits, ill luck and unkind feelings which might have invaded our house during the

past year. You know also, that we invoke our sacred dead to bring us blessings. (TDOG 1965:40)

Moreover, *Noces sacrées* also admits that forgiveness is sought whenever any of the gods has been offended either through one's utterances or attitudes, for instance what transpired between a father and his son:

À présent, tu as compris. Prépare-toi à faire des offrandes aux âmes que tu as offensées par tes attitudes de suffisance, trouve-moi un taureau, un bouc et un coq rouge, je vais tenter d'intercéder en ta faveur. Tu sais à présent que tu n'es pas grand-chose devant nos Dieux, toi qui croyais détenir par ton savoir européen la clé de tous les mystères. (NS, 1977:100)

Now, you understand. Be prepared to appease the spirits that you have offended by your self-sufficient attitude, find for me a bull, a ram and a red cock, I will try to intercede on your behalf. You now know that you are nothing before our gods, you that think you have the key to all the mysteries due to your European education. (Our translation)

However, as previously mentioned, ancestral worship and veneration will be interchangeably used in this study as it was said that Africans do not worship their ancestors but rather they venerate them as a sign of respecting their wisdom and ward off evil spirits from their environment.

2.2 Similarities and differences in belief on reincarnation in the world

What is reincarnation? Reincarnation is the concept that souls are continuously reborn in different bodies at different times and places. Many belief systems around the world, as seen in our previous discussions, embrace reincarnation, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism, Satanism, and a variety of New Age religions. Each religion professes different beliefs about the cause and purpose of reincarnation, but some facts remain consistent. In most cases, reincarnation is a natural and very important part of the development of a soul; it is the process of struggling against some negative forces, such as desire or Karma, towards a higher state of being; and it applies to all human beings, if not all living creatures.

Metempsychosis, also known as the transmigration of the soul, is a concept from ancient Greek philosophy. It refers to the journey of the soul from one incarnation (fleshy host) to the next. The soul is released from the body by death and exists briefly in a pure spiritual state before returning to a new body. The cycle of

rebirth refers to the continuous process of transmigration and rebirth that attends the history of every soul. Plato is considered the “father” of these beliefs in Western thought; however, they are prominent in many Eastern religious systems.

Reincarnation, like anything that takes place after death, is very difficult to study. The evidence of reincarnation comes from the study of incidents where people seem to remember places or people from a distant past. There is also *déjà vu* and the phenomenon of “old souls” – that is, people (including children) who conduct themselves with an aura of wisdom far beyond their years. Past-life regression therapy, including hypnosis and other methods, has purportedly been used to uncover memories and hidden psychological dynamics related to past lives. Purely scientific evidence is more scant. Some believers point to the laws of thermodynamics, which state that energy – perhaps even the energies of which a soul is made can neither be created or destroyed, but must remain constant. When understood this way, the idea may support reincarnation.

Belief in reincarnation and belief in Heaven can, side – by – side exist, for example, in Buddhism, the cycle of reincarnation ends with the attainment of nirvana, a state of bliss that ends all suffering. There is much discussion about whether beliefs similar to reincarnation were held by early Christians, for whom a belief in Heaven was most definitely central to spiritual identity, Heaven can be seen as the end result of the cycle of reincarnation, one form perfect bliss may take.

It is impossible to know precisely the number of people who believe in reincarnation, but millions worldwide identify with belief systems in which reincarnation plays a part. This includes over 300 million Buddhists, 800 million Hindus, at least one million adherents of New Age religions, and several million others, as well as many whose beliefs are held privately. Overall, it is reasonable to estimate that about a quarter of the world’s population believes in reincarnation in some form. For example, René Descartes’ statement in 1641 confirms his belief in reincarnation thus: “What I have said is sufficient to show clearly enough that the extinction of the mind does not follow from the corruption of the body and also to give men the hope of another life after death”. About 20 percent of those in the Western World whose religions shun reincarnation nevertheless believe it. According to opinion polls, this percentage is rising.

Lisa Miller, Religion Editor of Newsweek says that Americans were becoming Hindus. According to 2008 Harris Poll, 24% of Americans say they believe in reincarnation. Steven J. Rosen writes in *The Reincarnation Controversy, Uncovering the Truth in World Religions* (New Age Books), that belief in reincarnation allows us to see ourselves as architects of our own future.

Reincarnation is not exclusively an Eastern precept. It is contained in some form in almost every major religion and mystical philosophy. Research indicates that it was an accepted doctrine, at least in some quarters, at the time of Christ, and is still an integral part of some sects of the Jewish tradition. The Bible contains no condemnation of the principle of reincarnation, and in fact, when Christ was asked when Elijah would return, he answered that Elijah had returned, referring to John the Baptist.

Reincarnation has a major role in world religions. It is a central tenet of the beliefs of Hindus and Buddhists worldwide. It is also a part of Jainism, Sikhism, Taoism, and other religions. Though orthodox current of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam generally reject the idea of reincarnation, Sufi Muslims, as well as esoteric groups within Judaism and some Christian communities, do entertain the possibility.

Meanwhile, some prominent people who accepted reincarnation or appeared to recall past lives include: Dalai Lama, the leader of Tibetan Buddhists one of the most famous proponents of reincarnation. Traditionally, the Dalai Lama has been selected through a series of tests that help to establish that he is the reincarnation of a previous Dalai Lama. However, there are many other famous believers in reincarnation. Toward the end of his life, the writings of Thomas Edison disclose a clear belief in reincarnation. Henry Ford and Gen. George S. Patton also recorded their beliefs in reincarnation. Reincarnation is strongly associated with the thought of German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, and the work of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Walt Whitman, Henry David Thoreau, and others. George Harrison of *The Beatles* also affirmed his belief in reincarnation. (<http://www.datehookup.com/content-reincarnation-facts-and-resources htm>)

In this chapter, we have been able to examine major and relevant issues associated with reincarnation for better understanding of the concept. We also examined ancestors, spirits, and sacrifice and thereafter compared them. In the following chapter, theoretical framework and methodology will be examined while the theme of reincarnation in three films will be explored.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Theoretical Framework

This study adopts postcolonial and magical realist theories to analyse the theme of reincarnation in the chosen literary works. The study focuses on three selected postcolonial Francophone African novels of the Ivorian, Ahmadou Kourouma's *Les soleils des indépendances* (1970), the Congolese, Sony Labou Tansi's *La Vie et demie* (1979) and the Senegalese, Malick Fall's *La plaie* (1967). Postcolonial theory queries assumptions, omissions and silences regarding colonisation, oppression and domination while magical realist theory is an aesthetic style or genre of fiction in which a dream-like element blends with the real world experience respectively. The choice of authors from different parts of Francophone Africa indicates the spread in the concept of reincarnation and nationalist struggles for freedom.

3.2 Postcolonial Theory

Recent theorists have tended to use the hypernated term 'post-colonial' to signify the historical period following the end of European colonialism. Meanwhile, the unhyphenated word 'postcolonial' has come to be used in a much broader manner to signify the wide range of discourses, ideologies and intellectual formations which have emerged from cultures that experienced imperial encounters. (Newell 2006:3)

Postcolonialism or postcolonial studies is an academic discipline featuring methods of intellectual discourse that analyse, explain, and respond to the cultural legacies of colonialism and imperialism, to the human consequences of controlling a country and establishing settlers for the economic exploitation of the native people and their land. Drawing from postmodern schools of thought, postcolonial studies analyse the politics of knowledge (creation, control and distribution) by analysing the functional relations of social and political power that sustain colonialism and neo-colonialism – the how and the why of an imperial regime's representations (social, political, cultural) of the imperial coloniser and of the colonised people. Notable

among postcolonial theorists are: Franz Fanon, Edward Saïd, Gayatri Spivak, Siva R. Kumar, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Derek Gregory, Pascal and Blanchard etc.

Postcolonial theory and criticism radically questions the aggressively expansionist imperialism of the colonising powers and in particular, the system, and values that supported imperialism and that it sees as still dominant within the Western world. It studies the process and effects of cultural displacement and the ways in which the displaced have culturally defended themselves. Postcolonial theory, views such displacements, the ambivalences and hybrid cultural forms, as vantage points that allow us to expose the internal doubts and the instances of resistance that the West has suppressed in its globalising course and to deconstruct the seamless façade that the combination of imperialism and capitalism has traditionally striven to present.

Postcolonialism and postcolonial theory is used interchangeably in this work. The theory means the totality of practices from the colonial to post-independence eras that question all forms of neo-colonial hegemonic structures. The theory queries the underlying assumptions, omissions and silences regarding colonisation and domination. It is however not just a historical marker, but also a theoretical tool which is used in decolonising “othered” societies from dominant structures. The term is used to cover all the cultures affected by the imperial processes from the moment of colonisation to the present day. (Ashcroft et al, 1995:177)

Lawal (2014), in “The Aesthetics of oil Crisis in Ahmed Yerima’s *Hard Ground, Little Drops and Ipomu*”, employs the postcolonial theory to denounce the dehumanising and despicable attitude of both the government and the native community leaders who are supposed to represent the interest of the populace, that is the Africans, mostly, the down trodden, in the agitation for better living.

Literature in French and English languages was a major channel that provided a vehicle for political protest against colonialism, and against subsequent postcolonial regimes, particularly during the so-called ‘first generation’, when Chinua Achebe, Ferdinand Oyono (1929), Mongo Beti (1932), and other writers provided African readers with frameworks for ‘thinking beyond’ their colonial identities towards a culturally authentic, non-imitative future which drew inspiration from the pre-colonial past. (Newell 2006:99-100)

According to Achebe (1975:67) as cited in Ashcroft et al (2002:79):

We lived at the cross-road of cultures. We still do today, but when I was a boy, one could see and sense the peculiar quality and atmosphere of it more clearly...But still the cross-road does have a certain dangerous potency; dangerous because a man might perish there wrestling with multiple-headed spirits, but also he might be lucky and return to his people with the boon of prophetic vision.

Lawal (2014:28) cited Agboola (2003:6) that postcolonialism encapsulates a myriad of theoretical tendencies and discursive praxes. Ashcroft et al (2002:8) contend that a school of thought sees it as a set of amorphous discursive practices akin to postmodernism, some insist it refers to the period after independence while others opine it is the totality of practices in their rich diversity which characterises postcolonial world from the moment of colonisation to the contemporary era.

The theory is employed to explicate the theme of reincarnation in Ahmadou Kourouma's *Les soleils des indépendances*, Sony Labou Tansi's *La Vie et demie* and Malick Fall's *La plaie*. This is to reveal the opposition exhibited by the Africans to defend their culture, religion, values and governance.

Bhabha, one of the most prominent postcolonial theorists, in Bertens' *Literary Theory: The Basics* (2001:200) puts it this way:

Postcolonial perspectives emerge from the colonial testimony of Third World countries and the discourses of 'minorities' within the geopolitical divisions of east and west, north and south....They formulate their critical revisions around issues of cultural difference, social authority, and political discrimination in order to reveal the antagonistic and ambivalent moments within the 'rationalisations' of modernity. (Bhabha 1992:438)

According to Ashcroft et al in *The Empire Writes Back* (2002:211):

Post-colonial theory remains the servant of literary and other cultural production rather than its master. It is abductive or appropriative rather than deductive, and asystematic rather than systematic. For this reason it remains useful for providing access to analyses that manage to extend existing formulations (race, capitalism, imperialism, nationalism etc) yet remain focused on the particularity of cultural difference. A contentious issue in post-colonial studies continues to be, and will probably always be, the distinction between theoretical formulations and the specifics of local cultures. But while post-colonial

societies share strategies for engaging colonial power, theory will remain useful to analyses of the local.

Edward Saïd's (1978) *Orientalism* is a devastating critique of how the ages, but particularly in the nineteenth century – the heyday of imperialist expansion, Western texts have presented the East and more specifically the Islamic Middle East “the Orient” or “the East”.

Saïd's *Orientalism* also draws attention to the way in which the discourse of *Orientalism* serves to create the West as well as it creates the East. West and East form a binary opposition in which the two poles define each other. The inferiority that *Orientalism* attributes to the East simultaneously serves to construct the West's superiority. The sensuality, irrationality, primitiveness, and despotism of the East construct the West as rational, democratic, progressive, and so on. The West always functions as the ‘centre’ and East is a marginal ‘other’ that simply through its existence confirms the West's centrality and superiority.

Western philosophers have partitioned the world into two halves: the West “Occident” and the East “Orient”; the civilised and the uncivilised. Saïd also asserts that, naturally the West functions as the masculine pole – enlightened, rational, entrepreneurial, disciplined – while the East is its feminine opposition – irrational, passive, undisciplined, and sensual. Moreover, Saïd also coined the term *Orientalism*, describing the binary between the Orient and the Occident. This binary, referred to the East/West binary, is key in postcolonial theory. Saïd argues that the Occident could not exist without the Orient, and vice versa. In other words, they are mutually constitutive. Notably, the concept of the East that is the ‘Orient’ was created by the West, suppressing the ability of the ‘Orient’ to express them. Western depictions of the ‘Orient’ construct an inferior world, a place of backwardness, irrationality, and wildness. This allowed the ‘West’ to identify themselves as the opposite of these characteristics; as a superior world that was progressive, rational, and civil.

Orientalism, Saïd contends, is propounded by the West to represent themselves rather than the East. They define themselves as superior people with the term, *Orientalism*, which they use to ‘other’ the East, the West, thus, justify their colonisation and domination of the Orientals. Edward Saïd in *Orientalism* shows the

manner in which production of knowledge by the West is bound to power – the control and domination of “the Orient”,

Orientalism, then, has traditionally served two purposes. It has legitimised Western expressionism and imperialism in the eyes of Western governments and their electorates and it has insidiously worked to convince the ‘natives’ that Western culture represented universal civilisation. Accepting that culture could only benefit them - it would, for instance, elevate them from the ‘backward’ or ‘superstitious conditions in which they still lived – and would make them participants in the most advanced civilisation the world had ever seen.

Postcolonial writers such as Edward Braithwaite, Wilson Harris, Chinua Achebe, and Wole Soyinka lend their voices against the oppression brought about by colonialism. Fanon offers a more violent prescription for moving beyond the colonial mindset. He argues that previously colonised peoples would remain hybrids with a miserably schizophrenic identity unless they revolt violently against their oppressors. This collective action would apparently stimulate collective pride, freeing them of their inferiority complexes. Although the study focuses on reincarnation and African tradition, there are also prevalent instances of postcolonial engagements with societal disintegration occasioned by colonialism in most parts of the world especially in Africa. These postcolonial authors explore socio-political, cultural, economic and traditional crises bedevilling their societies to interrogate and resist or subvert colonial structures. In an attempt to awaken their people, these writers made concerted efforts to align the source of their texts within their tradition, culture and government.

Another pertinent aesthetic strategy employed by the chosen writers in their engagement with postcolonial crises is the subversion of Western literary forms. For instance, the majority of their works in French through the use of their indigenous languages had been singularly designed to subvert the classical/neoclassical structure of the colonialists. This is done to suit their socio-cultural, traditional and government realities. Examples are the Kikongo language use of Sony Labou Tansi and the Malinké of Ahmadou Kourouma; these as well apply to many other African writers.

Fasinu (2010:136) while commenting on language cites Oliver Wendell Holmes where he asserts that: “language is the blood of the soul into which thoughts run and out of which they grow.” This aesthetic device functions as a tool to “talk

back” to colonial and neo-colonial powers. According to Lawal (2014:36), “this is done to subvert the ‘Masters’ languages to express cultural plurality.

To buttress the subversion of Western literary form by African writers as observed above, Munoz (2001:4) opines that:

... the Classical Tradition, (which) has remained the constant foundation of European letters and thought throughout the long history of the West. It did survive the fall of the Roman Empire and remained throughout the Middle Ages as part of the heritage of the Christian Church. One could say that when the Celtic, Nordic and Slavic cultures joined Christendom by their baptism, they also received the Classical Tradition as their inheritance.

What can be deduced from the above statement, therefore, is that, postcolonial African writers, though baptised in the Classical Tradition of the West, refused to receive it as their inheritance. Navigating through these chosen postcolonial Francophone African texts, one will agree with Fanon’s view that they offer a more violent approach against oppressors as seen in Sony Labou Tansi’s *La Vie et demie*.

Question of Subalternity

Another aspect of the postcolonial discourse that is relevant to our study is the Subaltern. In the 1980’s when postcolonial debate was steadily gaining ground in the Anglophone academy, influential postcolonial critics like Saïd, Spivak and Bhabha – often referred to as the ‘Holy Trinity’ – took their theoretical stands and positions by exploring and interpreting French intellectual critical traditions exemplified in the works of such notables as Derrida, Lyotard, Foucault, Fanon, Memmi, and by critiquing the notion of Eurocentrism. During this time, perhaps with the complicity of France’s intelligentsia, the Francophone world decided to wall off the new discursive invasion, portrayed as another weapon in the already heavily equipped arsenal of Anglo-Saxon hegemony. (Nkunzimana, *www. Postcolonial Theory: The French (dis) Connection* 2014:1)

The Subaltern can be regarded as a group of dispossessed persons or a person holding a subordinate position. They are the most marginalised whose voice cannot be heard or those who have no “voice” to speak for themselves. Gayatri Chakravorty

Spivak in “Can the Subaltern Speak” interrogates the Western thinkers’ narratives of history, gender and identity.

Spivak’s main contribution to Postcolonial theory came with her specific definition of the term *subaltern*. Spivak also introduced terms such as ‘essentialism’, ‘strategic essentialism’. The former term refers to the dangers of reviving subaltern voices in ways that might simplify heterogeneous groups, creating stereotyped impressions of their diverse group. She asserts that the “voice” of the subaltern is being heard through the elitist group such as the Sati in colonial India where she explains that the White men prefer the abolition of Sati which she sees as a barbaric custom. Though, Spivak uses the term *subaltern* to refer to marginalised women, we employed it in this study to refer to all who have been made to serve as subordinate and suppressed voices. Spivak, however, believes that essentialism can sometimes be used strategically by these groups to make it easier for the subaltern to be heard and understood when a clear identity can be created and accepted by the majority. It is important to distinguish that ‘strategic essentialism’ does not sacrifice its diversity and voices but that they are being downplayed temporarily to support the essential element of the group.

Spivak also created the term ‘epistemic violence’ which refers to the destruction of non-western ways of knowing and thereby the domination of western ways of understanding. This concept relates to Spivak’s “Subaltern must always be caught in translation, never truly expressing herself” because of the destruction and marginalisation of her understanding. Furthermore, Spivak criticizes those who ignore the “cultural others” (the subaltern) and has offered constructive theories for allowing the West to go beyond its current position through self-criticism of western methods and ideals of understanding and exploring the alternatives offered by post-colonialism.

A question that readily comes to mind here is; what is the relevance of Spivak’s postulation in “Can the Subaltern Speak?” to this study? Consequently, it is relevant to this study because of the political situation inherent in the chosen postcolonial texts thereby showcasing the individual and collective struggles of African nations during the eras in review. This subjugation prompted the reaction of Martial in *La Vie et demie* and Fanon’s view in his book *The Wretched of the Earth* where he analyses the nature of colonialism and those subjugated by it. Fanon

describes colonialism as a source of violence rather than reacting violently against resistors which had been the common view.

3.3 Magical realism

Magic realism or magical realism is an aesthetic style or genre of fiction in which a dream-like elements blend with the real world. The story explains these magical elements as real occurrences, presented in a straight forward manner that places the “real” and the “fantastic” in the same stream of thought. It is usually evident in a film, literary and visual art genres.

Matthew Strecher defines magic realism as “...what happens when a highly detailed, realistic setting is invaded by something too strange to believe.”

This critical perspective towards magical realism stems from the Western reader’s disassociation with mythology, “a root of the real” created in a magical realist text: rather than explain reality using natural or physical laws, as a typical Western text, magical realist texts create a reality” in which the relation between incidents, characters, and setting could not be based upon or justified by their status within the physical world or their normal acceptance by bourgeois mentality. (p.34)

Many writers are considered “magical realists”. While the term magical realism in its modern sense first appeared in 1955, the German art critics Franz Roh first used the phrase in 1925, to refer to a painterly style also known as *Neue Sachlichkeit* (the New Objectivity), an alternative championed by fellow German museum director Gustav Hartlaub. Roh believed magical realism is related to, but distinct from, surrealism, due to magic realism’s focus on material object and the actual existence of things in the world, as opposed to the more cerebral psychological and subconscious reality that surrealists explore. Magic realism was later used to describe the uncanny realism by American painters such as Ivan Albright, Paul Cadmus, George Tooker and other artists during the 1940s and 1950s.

However, with its use in literature, magical realist art does not often include overtly fantastic or magical content, but rather looks at the mundane, the every day, through a hyper-realistic and often mysterious lens. Roh’s magic realism’s theoretical

implications greatly influenced European and Latin American literature. Italian Massimo Bontempelli, for instance, considered the first magic realist creative writer, sought to present the "...mysterious and fantastic quality of reality." He claims that literature could be a means to create a collective consciousness by "... opening new mythical and magical perspectives on reality," and used his writing to inspire an Italian nation governed by Fascism. Venezuelan Arturo Uslar- Pietri was closely associated with Roh's form of magic realism and knew Bontempelli in Paris. Rather than follow Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier's developing versions of "the (Latin) American marvelous real" Uslar-Pietri's writings emphasize, "the mystery of human living amongst the reality of life." He believed magic realism was "...a continuation of the "vanguardia" [or Avant-gardé] modernist experimental writings of Latin America."

Literary magic realism originated in Latin America. Writers often travelled between their home country and European cultural hubs, such as Paris or Berlin, and were influenced by the art movement of the time. Carpentier and Uslar-Pietri, for example, were strongly influenced by European artistic movements, such as Surrealism, during their stay in Paris in the 1920s and 1930s. One major event that linked painterly and literary magic realisms was the translation and publication of Roh's book into Spanish by Spain's *Revista de Occidente* in 1927, headed by major literary figure Jose Ortega y Gasset.

Magical realism generally hinges upon the presentation of real, imagined or magical elements as if they were real. It relies upon realism, but only so that it can stretch what is acceptable as real to its limits. As a simple point of comparison, Roh's differentiation between expressionism and post-expressionism as described in *German Art in the 20th Century* may be applied to magical realism. Realism pertains to the term 'history,' 'mimetic,' 'familiarization,' 'empiricism/logic,' 'narration,' 'closure ridden/reductive naturalism,' and naturalisation/cause effect. On the other hand, magical realism encompasses terms: "myth/legend," "fantastic /supplementation," "defamiliarisation", "mysticism/magic," "meta-narration," "open-ended /expansive romanticism", and "imagination/negative capability". (Roh, Franz 1925)

Fakorede (2010:54) citing Moore (1963); avers that realism in French African writing reflects preference for revolutionary statements about the situation of the Africans.

Magical Realism contradicts romanticism because romantic idealism deforms the truth for aesthetic and sentimental reasons. Famous among European and Latin-American realists writers are: Stendhal, Flaubert, Emile Zola, Maggie Ann Bowers, Pietri and their African realists counterparts among whom are: Ahmadou Kourouma, Sony Labou Tansi, Malick Fall, Kouyaté Badian, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, Amos Tutuola and so on. Realism in modern day world has gone beyond those days of Stendhal, Flaubert and Emile Zola. In contemporary literature, there is social realism, linguistic realism and most importantly magical realism which form one of the bases for this study.

Magical realism is not speculative but relays histories of the peoples' perception in our society who have a real experience different from those referred to as objective. A magical realist text manifests the reality of the experience of the writer and not the fantasy that it contains. Magical realism shows a world viewed with "other eyes".

Sangotade (2008:10) put the above view thus:

Dans les textes réalistes magiques, l'intrigue se perd dans les contes magiques, mythiques, allégoriques...hors temps, hors réalité...et qui sont pourtant bien ancrés dans l'Histoire. Ils redisent le passé en se servant des outils de l'écriture postcoloniale : l'ironie, la parodie, le ludique, la langue, le jeu avec le mythe.

In the magic realist texts, the plot is lost in the magical story, mystical, allegorical...outdated, unrealistic...and sometimes very deep in history. They retell the past using the tools of postcolonial writings: ironies, mockery, play, language, play way method and myth. (Our translation)

Instances of magical realism are seen in Sony Labou Tansi's *La Vie et demie*, in relation to Martial's display of supernatural tendencies, readers are left with the impression that the reincarnated possess metaphysical powers.

Franz Roh first coined the term in 1925 in connection with Post-Expressionist art, it has been closely associated, at least in terms of literary practice, with two major

periods in Latin-American and Caribbean culture. The first being that of the 1940's and 1950's in which the concept was closely aligned with that of the "marvellous" as something ontologically necessary to the regional population's "vision of everyday reality"; the second being that of the "boom" period of the Latin-American novel in the late 1950's and 1960's, where the term was applied to works varying widely in genre and discursive strategy. (Alexis, 1956:9)

In Latin-America, the badge of magic realism has signified a kind of uniqueness or difference from mainstream culture – what in another context, Alejo Carpentier has called *lo real maravilloso* or "marvellous American reality" – and this gives the concept the stamp of cultural authority if not theoretical soundness. And recently, the locus for critical studies on magical realism has been broadened outward from Latin America and the Caribbean to include speculations on its place in the literatures of India, Nigeria and English Canada, this last being perhaps the most startling development for magic realism in recent years, since Canada, unlike these other regions, is not part of the Third World, a condition long thought necessary to the currency of the term in regard to literature, though not to art. Further, critics until very recently have been singularly uninterested in applying the concept of magic realism to texts written in English. (Weisgerber, 1982:9)

The incompatibility of magic realism with the more established genre systems becomes itself interesting, itself a focus for critical attention, when one considers the fact that it seems, in a literary context, to be most obviously operative in cultures situated at the fringes of mainstream literary traditions. The use of the concept of magic realism, can itself signify resistance to central assimilation by more stable generic systems and more monumental theories of literary practice, a way of suggesting that there is something in the nature of the literature it identifies that confounds the capacities of the major genre systems to come to terms with it. Magical realist text reflects in its language of narration real conditions of speech and cognition within the actual social relations of a post-colonial culture, a reflection Garcia Marquez thematises in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* as a "speaking mirror." (Marquez, 1967:12)

Tudor (2010:8) opines that: “Magical Realism is fundamentally about the real juxtaposed to the unreal”. However magic realism and magical realism will be used interchangeably in this study to mean same thing.

3.4 Methodology

This study aims at establishing the fact that despite strong belief in modern religions, most Africans still believe in spirits and reincarnation as depicted in the novels selected for this study. This study also explores the oral aspect of reincarnation from interviews from an elder who is a scholar as well as the motion pictures on this concept. The main source of data of this study is the three already selected texts. These texts were chosen because of their relevance to the study. The selected texts are found suitable for the theme of the study using the postcolonial and magical realist theories to X-ray the political situation and the nationalist struggles for freedom in Africa before independence. They were primarily chosen because of the following reasons:

- (a) the authors’ commitments to the independence of Africa and the liberation of their people against inhuman treatment in the hands of the colonisers.
- (b) their continuous antagonistic manner towards the dictatorial government of the Masters.
- (c) their strong belief in Africa and African culture, tradition and values.
- (d) their belief in Africa’s independence.
- (e) their quest for Africa’s development.

The authors have the same perception on related topics surrounding African traditional religion, despite different indigenous spoken languages, backgrounds and landscape. The texts were selected based on the background of the authors and their works.

The methodology for this study is textual analysis. It employs the French method of “*explication de texte*” which is the literary analysis of novels that are explored in order to enhance the understanding of the chosen texts. It will also adopt the earlier mentioned theories to analyse and interpret. In doing this, we will bring out the principles of magical realism that have to do with the theme of reincarnation and its subordinates from the chosen texts of the three Francophone African writers. There

was also an extensive review of scholarly works on traditional African religion. This study dwells extensively on the traditional values and beliefs of the Yoruba people of Nigeria. Some of the qualitative texts gathered on the study have also been used.

The justification for using these two theories is that; post-colonialism re-echoes the concept of Africans' belief in their dead's possession of enhanced power and belief in spirits which emphasises the effect of the colonialists' cultural displacement and resistance to external domination while magical realism showcases and emphasises the beauty of fiction where a dream-like element blend with the real world respectively. This re-emphasised both the African and Western Worldview of reincarnation and the deployment of their possessed enhanced power in the nationalist struggles for freedom from oppression, making it a universal concept.

3.4.1 Principles of magical realism

Four distinct principles of magical realism are drawn from this present study as follows: (a) transmigration, (b) full reincarnation, (c) partial reincarnation, (d) enhanced power.

(i) **Transmigration of the protagonist in Ahmadou Kourouma's *Les soleils des independences* (LSDI)**

The concept of transmigration is robust and is evident in *Les soleils des independences* (LSDI) where the dead Koné at his funeral transmigrated in Fama, the principal protagonist whose actions and utterances immediately became influenced by Koné. The effect of magical realism in the situation was when; the reincarnated Koné appeared and participated at his own funeral burial, this dead Koné was seen only by an elderly man who possesses metaphysical powers. Unfortunately, immediately Fama died, Koné's transmigrated spirit left his corpse, and as he was going met and entered into a pregnant kinswoman who later gave birth to a Malinké baby.

(ii) **Full reincarnation of the protagonist in Sony Labou Tansi's *La Vie et demie* (LVD)**

The emergence of full reincarnation is undoubtedly evident in Sony Labou Tansi's *La Vie et demie* (LVD) and its magical implication glaring as noticed in Martial, the principal protagonist appears and disappears,

transforming itself to multiple Martial before the very eyes of the Providential Guides as they take their turn in the affairs of governance as generation of rulers. The magical happenings here are enormous. For instance, Layisho, one of the grand sons of Martial and one of the Triplets of Seylata Chaïdana in the course of the nationalist struggle to avenge the death of his grand father who also doubles as his biological father was arrested by the dictator's men, had his tongue cut. This is one of the characteristics of dictators who silence every opposition that dares challenge their authority. However, the gushing flow of blood from the cut tongue became a stream that tranverses the entire forest.

The dictators who engaged Seylata Chaïdana were rendered impotent; they were not able to have affairs with the pretty and charming Seylata Chaïdana. Ayeleru (2001:55) agrees with the above statement thus:

Providential Guide himself becomes impotent after Martial's ghost inflicted the impotency on him. This accounts for his inability to have sex with Chaïdana as directed by his marabout.

Eventually, when Martial's ghost is about the last stage of disappearing after he had given unrepeated unheeded warnings to the daughter to escape from the Guide. Martial's ghost gave her thorough beatings and raped her; this resulted in the birth of the Triplets who later continued the nationalist struggles lost by both their grand father and their mother. Chanka Chaïdana, the only female among the Triplets, also, an elegant and charming daughter of Seylata Chaïdana vowed not to lose the battle both her grand father, Martial and her mother, Seylata Chaïdana lost, a vow she pursued till the end of the least of the Providential Guides were eliminated.

Magical evidences also manifest when Chaïdana takes up prostitution, as a hobby in the Hotel- *La Vie et demie*, using sex and "*Champagne de Chaïdana*", as deadly tools of vengeance, operated under the presence of fierce, daring and heavily armed security apparatus of each regime. She trendily engaged ninety-three different State officials in government and killed them one after the other using varied strategies without any of them suspecting or detecting her gimmicks as a result of the enhanced power with which her reincarnated father had procured her. Furthermore, Seylata

Chaïdana constantly takes up new identity to disguise and deal with her unsuspecting, unrepenting brutal victims.

Another stunning dream-like element displayed was, Martial, despite his stunt refusal to die that death was brutally murdered, his flesh cut into pieces, cooked and fed his family members except his daughter who refused feeding on the father's flesh. Unbelievable, Martial reincarnated, took active part in the nationalist struggles displaying enhanced power to; leave an uneraseable thumb print of a blood stain on the forehead of a Guide, even after the fore-skin of the fore-head is removed, he also single-handedly re-buried Layisho that was halfly buried after his demise. He gave him a befitting burial, while Seylata Chaïdana was ill, he usually visits and prepares tea and encourages her to drink. Katalamanasie finally achieve freedom and enjoyed peace after the battle was won by Chanka Chaïdana in collaboration with the rebel children of the dictators who joined forces with her. Even this collaboration may not be unconnected with the influence of enhanced supernatural powers. In another instance where magical realism was made manifest was where Martial's ghost appeared to the Guide right in his bedroom, all he could do was to pick up his pistol and kill a good number of his guards whom he felt should have prevented a spirit from entering his room because he was priviledged to see the ghost that himself could not eliminate. p.19. All of these demonstrate full reincarnation.

(iii) **Partial reincarnation of the protagonist in Malick Fall's *La plaie* (LP)**

The third text of this study – Malick Fall's *La plaie* portrays Magamou, the principal protagonist, a young man, full of energy, who desires a change of better living for his people. In the process of trying to carve a niche for himself, abandoned his mother in the village to the city centre in search for greener pasture like every young and agile men. He was arrested security officials of the State, incarcerated for some years, when later released; he had lost a better part of his useful self and became almost a nonentity. The wound he sustained in the hands of his captors left a scar on him which became an emblem with which he was known and referred. Magamou sleeps in the market square; various kinds of animals became his close companions since

the odour that oozes out of the wound on him made people abandon him as he was mistaken for a madman.

Meanwhile, when constituting a nuisance in the society, he was taken to the hospital by the environmental health workers, there he confirmed dead, after sometime he disappeared and could not be traced. When he went back to the animals one will expect to receive him also abandoned him and fled. He dies twice and reincarnates twice. This is truly magical. The episodes here show that everyone must fight to sustain his destiny and not leaving it in noone's custody.

(iv.) **Deployment of enhanced power by the protagonists**

The enhanced power of the reincarnated beings is the fourth principle of magical realism figured out in this study. The deployment of enhanced powers physically manifests in all the protagonists. For example, the dead Koné in LSDI who transmigrates in Fama at his own funeral was aware that there is somebody among his sympathisers who is able to see him through the help of the possession of the enhanced power in him. He afterwards departed the the body of the dead Fama, the last of the Doumbouyas and enters into an unsuspecting pregnant woman he met while going away, the former later gave birth to a Malinké baby.

However, Martial demonstrated the use of enhanced power by appearing and disappearing at will, tormented the Providential Guides, talks at different places in the presidential lodge at a time, making impotent and ineffective the manhood of his killers against his daughter among others authenticates the possession of enhanced power by the dead in African belief system.

Meanwhile, Magamou, due to enhanced power was able to live in the market place and relate with spirits and able to make mockery of the Marabouts whose powers he discountenanced as ineffective.

The enhanced power inherent in the reincarnated beings made them supernatural and able to succeed in the nationalist struggles for freedom.

3.4.2 Reincarnation in films.

In this study, films and oral interviews are used to support our view of reincarnation and magical realism. These therefore, form part of the methods. These will be used to substantiate the fact that reincarnation, which is a belief universally accepted also features in films.

Majeed (2012:132) opines thus:

Among traditional elders of every generation, it cannot be expected that all of them be philosophers (sages); even so, a non-philosopher is still capable of occasionally producing thoughts that are philosophical or, at least, have philosophic relevance. It would therefore not be out of place for a qualitative research like the present one, to make use of the views of such men and women in the traditional setting.

Going by the above view, it is, therefore expedient to seek the views and experiences of such “traditional African philosophers” on the subject matter. These experiences are reflected in this work. The theme of reincarnation as a popular belief has also found its way into the film industry and stage plays. Here, stories from three different films: “*Omo Ode de*”, “*Ilu awon Akudaaya*”, “*Aditu Olorun Funfun*”, and an oral interview granted by a Yoruba language specialist will be highlighted one after the other.

“*Omo Ode de*” (The Hunter has arrived) written by Bolaji Amusan (a.k.a Mr. Latin), a popular Yoruba Nollywood actor, reiterates the confirmation that there exists the concept of reincarnation (*Oku Orun/Isinku Orun*). In the film, he depicts a woman who died leaving a month old baby girl, with the aged husband in a small village. Much effort was made to ensure that the baby eventually survives. Elders had advised the old man to employ the services of a baby-seater to take good care of the child. The spirit of the dead mother usually comes around to breastfeed her baby without anybody seeing her. However, Omo Ode had earlier washed his face in mystical water, after having seen a spirit being do the same in one of his hunting expeditions. The result was that he started seeing forbidden spirits that no normal naked eyes could see.

On a particular day, the late woman (Iya Kafaya) was going, as usual, to breast feed her baby, walked through *Omo Ode's* (Mr Latin) house. By the reason of the mystical powers he now has, "*Omo Ode*" sensed that something strange was coming towards his house. As he peeped, he saw *Iya Kafaya* (the reincarnated woman). He ran after her but weird beings or Spirits are said to be faster than normal human beings. Meanwhile, the old man (husband of the dead woman) was visited by a friend who was still advising him on where to take the child for proper care. At this time moreover, the baby's cry was disturbing their conversation, so the old man decided to put the baby on the mat where she was laid. Inadvertently, both men were standing by the door post, but could not see the reincarnated woman (*Iya Kafaya*) who invisibly walked past in-between both men, but they stopped the on-rushing "*Omo Ode*" who was still trying to stop *Iya Kafaya*.

He narrated the story to them as the woman was breastfeeding her baby inside the house and came out but they only laughed thinking he was probably mentally imbalance or psychologically traumatised. "*Omo Ode*" whom nobody took serious as no one seemed to understand and appreciate his predicaments. In an instance, *Iya Kafaya* after the breast feeding came out of the house and "*Omo Ode*" continued his chase of the reincarnated woman until she was leaving the outskirts of the village. Meanwhile, she discovered that "*Omo Ode*" was still running after her with a shout of her name "*Iya Kafaya*"! *Iya Kafaya*! *Iya Kafaya*! Suddenly, she stopped, muttered some incantations, turned and then warned that; "it was not everything a man sees that he says". She therefore gave him a powerful slap on his bald head, it was then he let go of her.

In another film: "*Ilu awon Akudaaya*" (The Land of the Dead) written and produced by Murphy Afolabi. The storyline has to do with living dead. There was a woman whose daughter Lemiboye got pregnant through the bad influence of her friend Asono and was disowned by her mother who eventually sent her away from home. Lemiboye, now in dilemma of neither having a particular person to claim responsibility for the pregnancy nor a place of abode, went to Lagos where she met a lady who made a living from carrying loads. She approached her, narrated the story of her life and the former took pity on her and accommodated her. As days passed by, the pregnancy was due for delivery. One day, as she was in the Market where she

worked, she fell into labour and she was delivered of the baby with the assistance of elderly market women.

After the birth of her baby, Lemiboye felt homesick and very eager to see her mother in the village whom she left some months earlier. Though she was advised against going for the visit by friends, she insisted on seeing her mother to settle the misunderstanding between them. Unfortunately, while travelling, those who deal in human flesh for money rituals had sent their spiritual “agents of death” to cause accidents on the road. Few seconds after that scene, the bus in which Lemiboye and some other passengers were travelling, within just some kilometres away from her village, had a fatal accident which claimed their lives. Consequently, some few seconds after this ghastly occurrence, some people emerged from the dark and began to mutilate the dead bodies. Soon after this evil deed, they left. A couple was passing-by, saw the scene and decided to help, while trying to rescue the victims, then they discovered that Lemiboye was conscious though about to give up the ghost. She handed her baby over to the couple with a description of her village and mother, the couple tried to get more information from her but unfortunately, she died.

Fundamentally, the spirits of the invisible beings move faster than those of the living beings. The reincarnated Lemiboye appeared to her mother with her baby to appeal to her mother’s psyche but she was adamant. As soon as she sent her away, an elderly neighbour of hers rebuked her sharply. No sooner had Lemiboye left her mother’s presence, than the couple arrived with the baby whose mother was described in the message. It was at this moment that it dawned on her mother that she had over-reacted and that her daughter’s spirit had visited her. However, she regretted her actions and accepted the baby as her grand-child. Thus, as the days advanced, the reincarnated Lemiboye continued to appear. The first time she did, the elderly man (her mother’s neighbour) who happened to possess some metaphysical powers saw and drove her away using some incantatory words.

Lemiboye’s re-appearance caught the old man unawares since he was away in the garden. She entered and took away her baby. This act supports the position of Chinua Achebe in *Things Fall Apart* who opines that; “*The land of the living was not far removed from the domain of ancestors*” (1958:85) that is the dead are always around the living. The reincarnated Lemiboye returned to her grave from where she

usually comes out to take her child whom she hid behind her tomb covering her with her metaphysical power. These prevented living beings from seeing her. Every night at a particular hour, she would come out to take her baby to the market where she makes purchases for her, thereafter, returning to her grave.

This episode is corroborated by Ken Bugul in her book, *De l'autre côté du regard* (2004:162-163) where there is a dialogue between a dead but reincarnated invisible mother and her living daughter whenever there is rainfall:

Pourquoi pleures-tu? Ne pleure plus. Je ne suis plus là, mais je ne suis pas morte. Je suis de l'autre côté du regard. Je peux te parler, mais je ne peux te parler que dans l'eau de pluie. Donc n'aie pas peur, et surtout ne pleure plus. Tes larmes me brûlent et dans ce cas je n'arrive pas à te joindre. Ne pleure plus. Nous allons parler. Je vais tout te raconter. Toi aussi tu vas me dire. Tout ce que tu as ressenti, senti et que tu n'as pu dire à personne.

Why do you weep? Weep no more. I am no more there, but I am not dead. I am on the other side beyond the physical eyes. I can talk to you, but I cannot talk to you except in the rain water. Therefore entertain no fear, and under no circumstances should you weep. Your tear hurts me and that prevents me from meeting you. Weep no more. We shall talk. I will narrate everything to you. You will also tell me all you felt, which you could not share with anybody. (Our translation)

The above scenario is also seen in *Moi, Tituba sorcière...Noire de Salem* (1986:31-37) when Man Yaya et Abena, Tituba's reincarnated mother visits:

C'était ma mère. Je ne l'avais pas appelée et je compris que l'imminence d'un danger la faisait sortir de l'invisible...Je ne trouvai rien à répliquer et Man Yaya disparut comme elle était venue laissant derrière elle ce parfum d'eucalyptus qui signale le passage d'un invisible.

It was my mother. I did not call her and I know that there is an imminent danger that made her come out of the invisible world...I had nothing to say and Man Yaya disappeared the way she came leaving behind her an eucalyptus perfume that reveals the presence of an invisible. (Our translation)

Moreover, in Nazi Boni's *Crépuscule des temps anciens* when Terhe at the point of death encouraged his wife Hakani not to cry, he knew that even if he is dead, he will be very much around to render necessary assistance when the need arises.

Ne pleure pas, Hakanni. Je suis un homme. Je ne crains pas Humu- la –Mort, car qu'est-ce la mort si ce n'est un simple transfèrement d'un monde à un autre. Je n'ai qu'un seul regret, celui de m'en aller avant la prochaine guerre annoncée par les devins. Je vais partir comme un déserteur qui fuit les champs de bataille. Malheureusement, nul n'est maître de son destin. (CDTA 1962 :246)

Do not weep, Hakanni. I am a man. I do not fear death, even what is death if it is not simply a transfer from one world to the other. I have no regret except one, which is of going before the coming war which was announced by the diviners. I want to go like an absconder that runs away from battlefield. Unfortunately, no one is master over his destiny. (Our translation)

In a related episode, the third film “*Aditu Olorun Funfun*” (2013) by Mayowa Orisatola had a segment that narrated a true life story of a reincarnated Ndako from Muwo town in Kwara State. Ndako was from Tapa tribe; his occupation was farming as his people were predominantly farmers. He returned from the farm one fateful day and complained of headache. Not long after, he died and was buried according to Islamic rites, by his wife, children and relatives. He reincarnated and continued a new life in not too distant a land from his former region. Due to the magical prowess of the Tapa people, they were able to detect that Ndako was a reincarnated man. After some period, they eventually trapped the reincarnated Ndako with their magical powers. They interrogated him and brought him back home. Immediately after that incident, the writer of this film heard about it and decided to research into the details of what actually happened. Orisatola actually met with Ndako, who when interviewed through one of his sons who served as an interpreter confirmed the whole story as a true life story. He conducted him round his (Ndako) former burial site.

Orisatola showed a place in that film around Niger State across a very black river where he said that the surrounding villages confirmed that there is a market (of the dead/spirits) that usually holds in that forest but nobody could go near the place because of the terrifying conversations that do emanate from there.

To corroborate both films on the subject of our discourse, we conducted an interview on reincarnation with Ogunranti (2014), he narrated so many instances of the evidences of the presence of the reincarnated in African societies. He went further to mention some night markets where the reincarnated do buy and sell at

Iseyin, and Igbeti, both in Oyo State and Itoku in Abeokuta, Ogun State. He also narrated a particular known story of a dead man from Saki. Years after his death, he reincarnated and lived in Abeokuta, where he had built a bungalow, married a wife and had children. All along, the wife had noticed that he never talked of going home to introduce his new family to either his parents or relatives. As time went on, the wife mounted pressure and he assured her and the children that he would take them home one day.

According to the narrator, one day when the children were on holidays, he hired a driver to drive them in his own car to Saki, his hometown while in his former life. With a few meters left to reach his home, he stopped the driver, pointed to the house and told them to go and inform the family members of their identity while he will greet some old neighbours before joining them. They went as he had directed, and found the family members; who gladly received them in the true spirit of genuine African hospitality. They narrated their stories and waited for the arrival of their father and husband who was nowhere to be found till nightfall.

However, the wife was becoming nervous and could not understand what was really happening. The elders, seeing the semblance between the dead and the children, understood what happened. The elders of the town met to console the woman on the second day when her husband did not show up. Consequently, the can of worms was opened and the truth of her husband's death, burial and reincarnation was revealed and she was taken to his tomb in front of the foundation of a house, he was to build before his untimely death. Immediately she confirmed it, she fainted and it took the elders and grown-up step-children some hours to revive her.

The narrator of this very incident then cited an Ifa corpus, which has to do with reincarnation. "Odu Ogundabede". It goes thus:

Bi o Kólá, ki Ó kólá bi o o gbeni, kí o gbeni èwo ni a
déédé maa woju òku lojà Èjìgbò-mèkùn

If you want to buy Okro, buy Okro if you want to
protect me, protect me what is the meaning of
deliberately staring at the dead at Ejigbo-mekun
market. (Our translation)

This Ifa chant is said to have emerged to confirm that this theme of reincarnation is real in the sense that, in one of the markets at Ejigbo-mekun, the reincarnated beings do sell and buy there and when these reincarnated beings sense that known human beings are coming to make purchases and transact business, they usually turn their back and tell the person to buy whatever he or she wants and drop his money. However, in the instance where the living are either staring or gazing at the dead in suspicion (poking their nose into the secret of misery) that the reincarnated being is a familiar face, the reincarnated muttered the above statement to dissuade the gazer to stop with a warning that; he may not like the consequences of his action. This warning is given in order to make the living being shut his mouth concerning what he has seen. (Ogunranti, J.I. Department of Yoruba, Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo.)

In another vein, in a song: “The Ghost” Ama Ata Aidoo corroborated the belief in reincarnation thus:

One early morning, when the moon was upshining as the sun,
I went to Elmina Junction and there and there, I saw a
wretched ghost Going up and down, singing to himself
“Shall I go to Cape Coast, or to Elmina I don’t know, I
can’t tell, I don’t know, I can’t tell.”(TDOG, 1965:23-24)

Therefore, the reincarnated had not experienced or got to that God’s appointed time or what shall we say of a reincarnated being who after showing the wife and children his earthly biological parents’ house disappeared and watched with despair and agony from afar.

The theme of reincarnation also features prominently in Marquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) as regards Meme. Meme’s mother observed that her daughter exhibited same traits as those of her late father. She posits: “...*Quel desastre! Gemit Fernanda. Cette enfant est aussi barbare que son père.*” (1967:274) [...What a disaster! Gemit Fernanda. This child is as barbaric as her father. (Our translation)]

In the following chapter, textual analysis and discussion of the theme of reincarnation in the selected novels will be examined while brief summary and biography of the authors of each of the major novels of discourse will be highlighted for better understanding.

CHAPTER FOUR

REINCARNATION AND NATIONALIST STRUGGLES IN *LES SOLEILS DES INDÉPENDANCES*, *LA VIE ET DEMIE* AND *LA PLAIE*

4.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights the theme of reincarnation, magical realism and postcolonial governance in each of the chosen texts – Ahmadou Kourouma’s *Les soleils des indépendances*, Sony Labou Tansi’s *La Vie et demie*, and Malick Fall’s *La plaie*. Thereafter, the analysis and the discussions on the subject matter will be done. The selected postcolonial francophone African novels will be analysed one after the other.

Rodney (1972:37-39) notes that:

As far as Africa is concerned during the period of early development, it is preferable to speak in terms of ‘culture’ rather than civilisations. Fama holds this same opinion. He further states that: in addition, the continent of Africa south of the great Sahara desert formed a broad community where resemblances were clearly discernible. For example, music and dance had key roles in ‘uncontaminated’ African society. They were ever present at birth, initiation, marriage, death, etc., as well as appearing at times of recreation. Africa is the continent of drums and percussion.

African ancestral religions were no better or worse than other religions as such. In contrast, religion pervaded African life in the period before the coming of the whites, just as it pervaded life in other pre-feudal societies, such as those of the Maoris of Australia or the Afghans of Afghanistan or the Vikings of Scandinavia.

In a foreword to his book, *The Cultural Unity of Black Africa: The Domains of Patriarchy/Matriarchy in Classical Antiquity*. Anta Diop (1989) opines that:

Intellectuals ought to study the past not for the pleasure they find in so doing; but to derive lessons from it or, if necessary, to discern those lessons in full knowledge of the facts. Only a real knowledge of the past can keep in one’s consciousness the feeling of historical continuity essential to the consolation of a multinational state.

However, to understand African tradition as suggested by Diop in the quotation above, it is important to examine the views of some pioneer literary writers. In the view of Jean Copans, cited by Sissao (1998:16):

Si la société africaine reste cachée dans ce brouillard de la tradition modernisée ou de la modernisation traditionnelle c'est que la modernisation des études africaines est loin d'être achevée (...) ces études ne sont pas encore partie prenante du paradigme de la modernité. (...) Nous savons tous que le fonctionnement réel de nos disciplines se déroule au niveau national.

If African society remain hidden in this fog of modern tradition or the modernised tradition that is, modernisation ... African studies is far from been achieved ... These studies have not yet got the paradigm of modernity... We all know that the real function of our discipline takes place in our collectivity. (Our translation)

The above saying is correct and it could be deduced that many critics wave aside knowledge of facts simply because probably they do not have consideration for real knowledge of the past. To infer from Adebayo (1996:6) in *Feminism and Black Women's Creative Writing* where she posits on the issue of feminism thus:

More often than not, feminism is adopted or rejected in our part of the world without an adequate appreciation of what the term implies for different writers and cultures.

Similarly, this same attitude could be a factor affecting our work in the sense that little research is carried out in this area of study. However, for any critical work of this nature that projects the image, tradition and culture of Africa and Africans be either adopted or rejected, the writers' tradition and culture should be first appreciated.

Moreover, to corroborate the aforementioned, Munoz (2001:13) posits that:

...The necessary effort of understanding our alienation and coming to terms with it, justifies all forms of scholarship devoted to European culture and Western civilisation, considered as a totality. Indeed, we have been so involved in this civilisation that to consider it as something set apart from us is to set it up as an abstraction.

It is interesting to note that globally, there seems to be subtle belief in the concept of re-incarnation. Citing Omoregbe's assertion that:

The history of Europe shows very clearly the indispensable role of philosophy in the development of Europe which is incomplete without mentioning names of philosophers like those of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Pythagoras, John Locke and René Descartes. He also explains further that the philosophical ideas of these philosophers were the moving forces that propelled the developmental process of their nations for ideas move the world and give birth to events.

On his own part, Echekwube further opines that:

Now, if we believe in the Genesis account that an intelligent God created us in his own image and likeness, it means that we are intelligent beings. It means that we are rational like our European, American, Caribbean and Australian counter parts. (Echekwube, 2010:2).

This is a key goal of post-colonial theorists to clear space for multiple voices. This is especially true of those voices that have been previously silenced by dominant ideologies, that is, the subalterns. It is widely recognised within the discourse that this space must first be cleared within academia. Edward Saïd, in his canonical book, *Orientalism* provides a clear picture of the ways social scientists, specifically Orientalists, can disregard the views of those they actually study - preferring instead to rely on the intellectual superiority of themselves and their peers.

It would then not be inappropriate, to recommend that, if all Africans also rely on the intellectual superiority of their writers who uses their beliefs as themes to project their being, then truly, they will not be silenced.

Still, thematic study and comparative analyses of the texts, with regard to sacrifices and rituals being propitiated, consultations to a divine oracle and experiences of retribution where necessary demonstrates a literary commitment to the theme of re-incarnation.

...Les morts auront toujours raison, dit le docteur. Il n'a pas parlé. Sans doute à cause de la blessure. Les morts auront toujours raison répéta le docteur. Lui avait refusé. Je commence à croire qu'il avait refusé sa mort. » (LVD, 1979:28)

The dead may always have reasons, says the doctor. He did not talk. Undoubtedly because of the wound. The dead may always have reasons, the doctor repeated. I begin to think that he had rejected his death.) (Our translation)

It can, therefore, be said on reincarnation that, human thought worldwide is communal when we take into consideration this view of Tahar Ben Jelloun's *Les Yeux Baissés* (1991:182):

La seule chose qu'elle ne savait pas, c'est que le mort qui mordit dans la pâte était le pauvre Brahim, qui venait d'être terrassé par la fameuse vipère bleue, réincarnation d'une jeune fille enlevée par des singes de l'Atlas qui l'auraient enfermée dans une cage au milieu de serpents.

The only strange thing to her is that the death which kills in the paste was the poor Brahim, who was floored by the much talked-about blue viper, the reincarnation of a young girl brought up by Atlas monkeys that had locked her up in a cage among the snakes. (Our translation)

According to Sadiki (2004:9), who states that: "with notable exceptions like Egypt, Iran, Iraq, and Syria, most (countries)...had to (re-) invent, their historical roots after colonialism."

Pendant les années nos Ancêtres pleurèrent leurs morts et maudirent l'insouciance. En souvenir de cette catastrophe de notre histoire, ils décidèrent que la devise de la ville se résumerait en un seul mot : Nihî'nlé « mortalité ». (CDTA 1962: 47)

For years our Ancestors wept their death and cursing their freeness. In consequence of this catastrophe of our history, they decided that the currency of the city is sum up in a word: Nihî'nlé" mortality". (Our translation)

However, before a detailed analysis of the novels is done, a brief summary of each of the purposively selected texts will be highlighted as follows:

4.1.1 Synopsis of the selected novels

It is important to do a brief synopsis of the three purposively selected novels of these francophone African writers, to paint a clearer picture and to defray anxieties in understanding their expressed thoughts. It will be discovered that each of the novels have a better representation of Africa and what it is not.

4.1.2 Ahmadou Kourouma's *Les soleils des indépendances*

The novel is about the traditional culture of the Malinkés, portraying many of their practices such as burial ceremonies, weddings, initiation to womanhood, witchcraft, herbal practices and belief in reincarnation.

The protagonist, Fama Doumbouya, was the last descendant of a royal family in Horodougou, Togobala. He lived in the capital city. As a result of the political change of baton, he lost all his riches, political position, honour and possessions. Life became difficult and unbearable for a Prince born into affluence with his family. They became scavengers who went from one ceremony to the other in order to feed.

Fama in his bid to maintain the dignity of a genuine and contented African, experienced the shock of his life as his friends abandoned tradition, values and religion to embrace the new era brought about by the colonisers. He felt betrayed and wept for his generation and the generations yet unborn; this deed of grief demonstrated his love for Africa, Africans, its culture and values. Fama stood against the inequalities and injustices of the authorities like a one-man Army. He was a believer in the tradition of his ancestors and he will not do anything to either disappoint or hurt them. His wife Salimata also an ardent Muslim was barren, all efforts to get her pregnant proved abortive.

Meanwhile, out of frustration, Fama got a second wife, Mariam, but the story remained the same. In the capital city and its environs, things were difficult except for those in power. There was only one political party that is; the nation was a one party State to which all citizens must adhere. Many people ran away from the city to avoid the clamp down from the government of the day since no one dare discuss political issues. It is even forbidden for people in the rural areas to listen to a political discussion from those who reside at the city centre.

One day, there was a coup-d'état and the city was in disarray. Fama, an innocent poor Prince, was arrested along with many other citizens. They were imprisoned. Many lost their lives while in the prison. Many years later, an amnesty was granted to the 'prisoner of conscience' in order to pave way for national reconciliation. The released prisoners were asked to converge at the nation's capital for compensation. Fama, who felt cheated and disgraced, prefer instead to return to

his hometown of Horodougou. He wanted to fulfil the prophecies of his marabouts that he was not going to die outside Horodougou.

Fama, while trying to escape another arrest after he failed to show an identity card before a defiant attempt to cross the last check point/border post to his home country, was shot by one of security guards. The wounded Fama fell into a nearby crocodile pond where he also sustained a high level of injury. All of these attempts were taken to avoid dying in exile or escape anything that will take him back to the capital city, he fled, but for the prompt intervention of a senior officer who understood his plight, he would have been shut dead. Unfortunately, he died from a crocodile attack in a garden on his home soil. As an aftermath of these issues, a rebirth eventually came and led to divisions among Africans and misgivings among a once united people.

4.1.3 Sony Labou Tansi's *La Vie et demie*. The novel depicts Martial's Marxist revolutionary stance which brought about his fight for the defense of his oppressed compatriots. Martial resisted the dictatorial attitude of the Providential Guides. He was captured and arrested in the course of his agitation for freedom. Shortly after his arrest, he was brutally and gruesomely murdered. Though, he denounced in very strong terms the nature of his death in the hands of his captors. However, when he eventually died, his reincarnated spirit refuse to have a respite, always seeking revenge.

Martial's spirit's constant appearances to both his killers and daughter especially at important occasions testified to the fact that, he was not happy about his life that was abruptly cut short without fulfilling his destiny. *La Vie et demie* is the name of the hotel where Chaïdana avenged the gruesome murder of his father. She married ninety-three government officials that she strategically and systematically eliminated under the guise of different identities.

In addition, the novel, *La Vie et demie*, is about the highest order of decadence in Katamalanasié, which represents most African nations. Martial, though murdered, refused "to die that death" till he reincarnated in his grand-children who actually destroyed the despotic rulers after which his spirit rested. Chanka Chaïdana had vowed to win the battle thus:

Mon grand-père avait perdu la guerre. Il avait perdu une guerre. J'inventerai une autre. Pas celle que ma mère avait perdue. Si je ne gagne pas, la terre tombera...Mon sang le crie. Va vaincre! Sans penser, car penser est défendu. (LVD, 1979:99-100)

My grandfather had lost the battle. He had lost a battle. I will invent another one. Not the one lost by my mother. If I do not win, heaven will fall...My blood is groaning. Go and conquer! Without hesitation, because hesitation is forbidden.

The above statement demonstrates an unwavering commitment to a struggle she believes in and decides not to leave any stone unturned to achieve this feat even if it requires the last drop of her blood. It is indeed a nationalist struggle embarked upon by Martial's heroine.

Ayeleru (2001:53) in his summation of Sony Labou Tansi's works opines:

Labou Tansi used his works of art to defend his people, in fact he goes by the history of these same people to open for himself a world of wisdom...He was a mediator between his people (the Africans) [Emphasis ours] on one side, his ancestors and history on the other.

However, the mix of postcolonial and magical elements in his writings are similar to those of his colleagues in this study, a revolutionary stance of denunciation of colonial domination by deploying supernatural powers to fight nationalist struggles and resist oppression in Africa.

4.1.4 Malick Fall's *La plaie*, is a novel that showcases the power of authority in the wish of parents over their children, depicts Africans' belief in spirits, ancestors and reincarnation, that is, the dead whom they believe are everywhere. Magamou the protagonist is of the tribe of Seck from Gaya village. Magamou lived in Gaya with his mother Yaye Aïda, one day, Magamou Seck decided to embark on an adventure to the city centre in search of greener pasture though opposed to by his mother who feared that, his son might not return, he resisted even after his mother's prayer of negative inclinations.

Magamou avait disparu quand elle se fut arrêtée de pleurer. Yaye Aïda avisa alors une vieille houe que la glèbe avait tapissée de boue encore molle, puis elle se dirigea vers les champs, le cœur gros et la tête vide.« Mon Dieu, fais qu'il me revienne ! Fais qu'il soit malheureux là-bas. (La prière

d'une mère, mon Dieu, tu l'as toujours exaucée !) Fais q'il languisse à la ville !... Ferme son Coeur à la tentation de s'établir définitivement à N'Dar. Que les contrariétés l'obligent à reprendre le chemin du salut. Amen. >> (LP, 1967:31)

Magamou disappeared when she ceases to cry. Yaye Aïda then sighted one old hoe on which mould earth is stuck still wet, then she headed toward the farms, with a heavy heart and an empty head. << My God, make him come back to me! Make him unfortunate there. (A mother's prayer, my God you always honour this!) Make him suffer in the city!... Harden his heart against the idea of staying at N'Dar indefinitely. Let contrariness prevails on him to reconsider his return to his birth place. Amen.>> (Our translation)

In his quest to become an independent man, left for the city, but on his way he encountered a great disappointment that changed his destiny, gave him a new way of living, a wound and a different identity. This wound handed him a new identity that launched him to his world. He was abandoned by human beings; he, however, became a friend to animals that became his sole companion that at a time also deserted Magamou when they felt betrayed that he left them for long, died and reincarnated. The animals could no longer recognise, a one time man-with -the wound as he was foundly called.

4.2 Analyses of the selected novels

4.2.1 Ahmadou Kourouma's *Les soleils des indépendances*

The analysis of this novel revolves round the protagonist Fama Doumbouya, the central character and the last chief of the once powerful Doumbouya tribe that ruled over Horodougou – an area that has now been divided between two newly independent African states, the Ebony Coast and the Socialist Republic of Nikinai. p.189

Ahmadou Kourouma is the eldest son of a distinguished Malinké family. Ahmadou Kourouma was born in 1927 in Boudiali, Côte-d'Ivoire. He is an Ivorian, was raised by his uncle, he initially pursued his studies in Bamako, Mali. From 1950-1954, when his country was still under French colonial control, he voluntarily participated in French military campaigns in Indochina, after which he journeyed to France to study Mathematics in Lyon. Kourouma returned to his native Côte-d'Ivoire after it won its independence in 1960, yet he quickly found himself questioning the

government of Felix Houphouët-Boigny. After a brief imprisonment, Kourouma spent several years in exile, first in Algeria (1964-1969), then in Cameroon (1974-1984) and Togo (1984-1994), before finally returning to Côte-d'Ivoire.

His first novel, *Les soleils des indépendances* (1970), (*The Suns of Independence*) is about a critical treatment of post-colonial governments in Africa. Other novels include: *Monnè, outrage et défis* (1990), a history of a century of colonialism, *En attendant le vote des bêtes sauvages* (1998) (*Waiting for the Wild Beasts to vote*), which is a satire of post-colonial Africa in which a griot recounts the story of a tribal hunter's transformation into a dictator. This was inspired by President Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo. *Allah n'est pas obligé* (2000) (*Allah is not Obliged*), is a tale of an orphan, Birahima, who became a child soldier in an attempt to escape the war in Côte-d'Ivoire then to locate and live with his aunt in Liberia and *Quand on refuse on dit non* (2004) (*When One Disagrees, One Says No*). This is a post-humous publication of Kourouma who died at Lyon, France in 2003.

Les soleils des indépendances is about the traditional culture of the Malinkés portraying many of their practices such as burial ceremonies, weddings, initiation to womanhood, witchcraft, herbal practices, ancestral worship and belief in reincarnation.

The protagonist, Fama Doumbouya, was the last descendant of a royal family in Horodougou, Togobala. He lived in the capital city. As a result of the political change of baton, he lost all his riches, political position and possessions. Life became difficult for a Prince born into affluence with his family. They became scavengers who went from one ceremony to the other in order to feed.

Despite his financial handicap, Fama stood against the inequalities and injustices of the authorities. He was a dogged fighter for what he believes in. He was a fervent Muslim who stood for the truth. His wife Salimata, also an ardent Muslim, was barren and all efforts by her and her husband to be pregnant proved abortive.

Meanwhile, out of frustration, Fama got another wife but the story remained the same. In the capital city and its environs, things were difficult except for those in power. There was only one political party to which all citizens must adhere. Many people ran away from the city to avoid the clamp down from the one-party system.

One day, there was a coup-d'état and the city was in disarray. Fama, an innocent poor Prince, was arrested along with many other citizens. They were imprisoned. Many lost their lives while in the prison. Many years later, an amnesty was granted the 'prisoner of conscience' in order to pave way for national reconciliation. The released prisoners were asked to converge at the nation's capital for compensation. Fama who felt cheated and disgraced after he learnt of his wives' behaviours rejected every offer. He wanted to fulfil the prophecies of his marabouts that he was not going to die outside Horodougou. Fama, while trying to escape another arrest that will take him back to the capital city died after sustaining a crocodile attack on his home soil.

Kourouma in *Les soleils des indépendances* demonstrates how one day, there was a coup d'état that threw the whole country into a state of confusion, anarchy and disarray. Fama, the protagonist, an innocent poor Prince was among many other citizens that were arrested by the State. After his arrest, imprisonment and release, he lost contact with reality, mistaking the present for the past. Many of the citizens that were arrested alongside Fama lost their lives while in the prison. Many years later, an amnesty was granted the 'prisoner of conscience' in order to pave way for national reconciliation. This is usually the practice in most cases when the government in power is in dire need of the support and acceptance of the populace that has been sourly offended. The released prisoners were asked to converge at the nation's capital in order to be compensated in cash and kind. Fama, who thought he is a man of honour by his ego, felt cheated and disgraced after Bakary his friend had informed him of his wives shameful behaviours. He declined to go for whatever money or medal even after much persuasion from his friend, Bakary. Though, Bakary was only encouraging Fama to change his mind, abandon the struggle, go and accept the cash reward as compensation offered by the government that had treated him unfairly. This Bakary did for his own selfish gain. This attitude has always been the behaviour of most Africans, especially the stooge and collaborators of the colonisers.

In the words of Chinua Achebe in *Things Fall Apart*, the centre could no longer hold in Fama's Horodougou, everything had changed. « *Le juge donna la liste des peines. Fama était condamné à vingt ans de reclusion criminelle.* (LSDI

1970:168) (The judge handed down the sentences. Fama was sentenced to twenty years imprisonment.) (Our translation)

At this juncture, Fama probably needed to be reminded of a proverb he knows too well to awaken his consciousness that yesterday is gone. With the change of government, he ought to stop living in the past while in the new era, “*Que feras-tu à Togobala? La chefferie est morte.*”p.189 (What will you do at Togobala? The traditional chieftancy is dead). (Our translation) Decades ago, there was a voice that reminded Bakary of the impending end of the dynasty. «Ta descendance coulera, faiblira, séchera jusqu’à disparaître.» p.99 However, the proverb reads thus: “*Ecoutez ce proverbe bien connu: l’esclave appartient à son maître: mais le maître des rêves de l’esclave est l’esclave seul.* [Hear this well known proverb: the slave belongs to his master: but the master of the slave’s dreams is the slave himself.] (Our translation)]

Kourouma showcases Fama as an ardent believer in the culture, traditions, values and norms of his ancestors. For this, he is ready to die for what he believes. He considers it a cowardly act to allow the colonial masters to have their way as “easy” as they had got it without a stiff resistance. According to Karl Marx: “*Religion is the opium of the people*” (Karl Marx, *Intro. to Critique of...Hegel*) Therefore, Fama is right to defend whatever he believes in, even if it will claim his life.

Fama, with his belief in reincarnation, holds that his ancestors were around the corner seeing everything they have worked so hard to earn drift away into the hands of strangers who had come to desecrate their land. This, to them (the ancestors), is an abomination which saddens their emotions. “*Heureux étaient tous les morts, surtout les aïeux de Fama*” p.145 (Happy were all the dead, especially Fama’s ancestors). (Our translation) Fama, a political detainee, refused to betray his ancestors despite the greed exhibited by his friend Bakary who wanted him to forget about his inheritance and honour, but should instead opt for the money reward. Moreover, when he (Bakary) discovered that Fama who kept mute was determined not to sell his conscience to enrich his corrupt and self-centred friend, decided to rain insults on Fama when he confessed:

Moi, quand j’avais appris ta libération et su ce qu’on allait vous promettre, j’étais heureux et voilà que...Fama, en mourant tu te rappelleras d’avoir été

un mauvais ami. Je comptais sur toi pour vivre le reste de mes jours et gagner de l'argent. Tu me laisses dans le désespoir, tu es un mauvais ami. (LSDI, 1970:182-183)

I, when I learnt of your release and knew what you were promised, I was happy and seeing that... Fama, at death you will remember you had one bad friend. I relied on you to live the rest of my life and earn money. You left me in misery, you are a bad friend. (Our translation)

Without mincing words, Bakary is indeed a very bad friend; he is so self-centered that he did not think of the agony of death and psychological trauma Fama was struggling with as he battles for survival. Bakary displayed a high level of greed and corrupt tendency associated with most African leaders.

The dead were happy when the colonial masters had not come to Africa. Communal life was still strong, certain dead persons were buried with gold, cowries, cloths and slaves to accompany and serve them in the great beyond. Moreover, the belief in the reincarnation of the dead relatives is also attested to by dogs which are assumed to have "four eyes" though two are not physically seen. These eyes enable them to see the invisible. "*Les chiens se relancèrent dans les cours et reprirent à hurler aux morts.* p.188 (The dogs were gathered outside started barking again at the dead). (Our translation) Meanwhile, the dogs are not the only ones assumed to have "four eyes", the Yorubas belief that after the death of either a father or mother of a person is dead, such will possess "four eyes" "*Se o ti ku bayi, O si ti di oloju merin.*" (Daramola and Jeje 2005:157) (Now that you are dead, you have four eyes. (Our translation)

It could also be seen that this belief in reincarnation still propels people in some parts of Africa to bury their relatives either in a room or at a corner in their compound. "...; *et les coutumes malinké disent qu'un chef de famille couche dans la case patriarcale.*" (LSDI, 1970:105) (... and it is said in malinké customs that a family head sleeps in the patriarchal home). (Our translation) Death has been hovering on Fama since his imprisonment p.167 « *La mort était devenue son seul compagnon... Fama avait déjà la mort dans son corps* » p.193 (Death became his sole companion...Fama already has death dwelling in his body. (Our translation)

Les chiens qui les premiers avaient prédit que la journée serait maléfique hurlaient aux morts, toutes gorges déployées, sans se préoccuper des cailloux que les gardes leur lançaient. (LSDI p.193)

The dogs that were the first to predict that the journey will be full of evil barked at the dead, with all their energy not minding the stones that the guards were hurling at them. (Our translation)

Nevertheless, it is obvious that, since death has become the sole companion of Fama despite the alarm raised by the animals to draw his attention to the danger ahead, he prefers to sleep with his ancestor, which to him is the singular honour he can give to demonstrate his unalloyed loyalty to his ancestors and Horodougou. Really, things have changed; a new era has emerged, a new dawn of independence is in vogue, mentalities must change, sensibilities must be awakened, the old is gone and the new has been welcomed by his compatriots. These realities dawned on Fama when it was too late to cry over spilled milk.

Nazi Boni also attests to what shocked Fama this way:

Yéréké! Quel miracle! On comprend maintenant pourquoi nos fétiches, nos génies, nos dieux ne se manifestent plus. Une nouvelle puissance arrive qui les oblige à se terrorer. Le monde est en train de changer. Le Bwamu va connaître un nouveau soleil. (1962: 217)

Surprised! What a miracle! One now understands why our charms, our guiding spirits, our gods are no longer efficient. A new power is coming which allows them to be conquered. The world is about to experience change. The Bwamu will know a new dawn. (Our translation)

However, that new dawn eventually came and caused divisions among Africans and misgivings among a once united people. Fama inherited the position of a leader of this once great territory. He was in a world already turned upside-down, Fama had inherited an honour without the means to uphold it, like a vapour that soon varnishes.

Lui, Fama, né dans l'or, le manger, l'honneur et les femmes ! Éduqué pour préférer l'or à l'or, pour choisir le manger parmi d'autres, et coucher sa favorite parmi cent épouses ! Qu'était-il devenu? Un charognard... (LSDI, 1970:12)

He, Fama, born into affluence, good food, prestige and women! trained to appreciate affluence to choose between choiced gold, to make best choices of food and to sleep with the favourite women chosen among hundred wives! what has he become? A vulture... (Our translation)

Fama, a supposed honourable, suddenly turned himself to a “vulture” in the sight of his kinsmen when he lost the honour and prestige naturally endowed him as a Doumbouya Prince. This attitude of attending every traditional occasion and always scavenging for food at such outings made him lose his dignity. It is not said that a personality of his type cannot or should not associate himself with his people just like most politicians do today tagging themselves as “grassroot” politicians when the only thing they needed is to win the hearts of their perceived and unsuspecting electorates. Fama in *Les soleils des indépendences* rather over-embraced tradition without knowing the stand of his people who had married tradition with modernity leaving him in the past. This act of Fama’s kinsmen is referred to by Bhabha (1994:2) as hybridity where it is said that:

This process estranges any immediate access to an originary identity or a ‘received’ tradition. The borderline engagements of cultural different may as often be consensual as conflitual; they may confound our definitions of tradition and modernity.

He further queries that:

How can one avoid sinking into the mire of common sense, if not by becoming a stranger to one’s own country, language, sex and identity?

He is fairly a city dweller now, far removed from his home-town, unable to find his place in this complex new world. People still accord him respect for what he is, and yet he is obviously part of a world that has largely been lost.

Fama is married, but he and his wife Salimata, have not been able to have a child – meaning his lineage will die out with him. This is emphasising an African belief – that it is unexpected of couples not to reproduce their young ones to continue their lineage. The desperate Salimata also has a tragic history, as her initiation into womanhood (a brutal ritual) was botched, and she was then taken advantage of. *Mais Salimata ne savait pas; elle n’a jamais su. Elle ne savait pas si en vérité ce fut le génie qui la viola.* p.39 [But Salimata did not know; she has never known. She did

not know if truly it was the god that raped her. (Our translation)] She is now obsessed with becoming pregnant. She always tries to do well, be generous and devout, but goodness here is rarely rewarded.

The death of Fama's uncle, Lacina prompted his journey the second time back to Togobala. Though, Fama ruminates on the earlier prophecies concerning the Doumbouya's dynasty, he however did not heed warnings to prevent the evil repercussions but only fixed his gaze on the throne like someone having a thought like: "It's rather going to be a do or die affair". This paved way for most of the contradictions that eventually came to fulfilment during his lifetime without giving it a serious thought before the ultimate happened, that is, his death. This made him (Fama) an unsung hero.

Fama, the "sole remaining legitimate descendant" of the Doumbouyas, returns to his native land to assume his position after twenty years of imprisonment as a "prisoner of conscience". The countryside is different from the city, but life at Bindia had changed as well. Bindia is the country home of Salimata.

...prêt à dégainer pour sabrer, faucher et vilipender la bâtardise des politiciens et des soleils des Indépendances. On arrêta son élan. Le parti unique de la République interdisait aux villageois d'entendre ce que pourraient conter les arrivants de la capitale sur la politique. (LSDI, 1970:95)

He was prepared to unsheathe his tongue and lash out with a cut-and-thrust denunciation of the bastard politicians and Suns of independence. He was cut short. The republic's single party forbade villagers to listen to anything people from the capital city might say about politics. (Our translation)

Fama is a core traditionalist who believes, observes and attends all cultural ceremonies of his people. Though he never foresees a future of hopelessness and abandonment of their legitimate rights by his compatriots. Fama does not fit well in this changed world: his personality clashes with the post-independence expectations. People still make allowances for him (and what he stands for), but it is clear that he is a relic of antiquity.

Fama arrives in his native town of Togobala, a place of "seething passivity" with people worn out by the turmoil of the post-independence adjustments. Traditions

are upheld- the burial ceremony of his cousin Lacina, the previous chief is celebrated as elaborately as possible, nearly as in the olden days. Unfortunately, the world is not the same: *Vraiment les soleils des Indépendances sont impropres aux grandes choses; ils n'ont pas seulement dévirilisé mais aussi démystifié l'Afrique.* pp.143-144 [Truly the suns of Independences are unsuited to great things; they have not only made effeminate but also demystified Africa. (Our translation)]

That the world is not the same to the African means that the traditional way of doing things in Africa has been bastardised with the coming of *The Suns of Independences*: the burial ceremonies, the ancestral worship, type of governance and the practice of spiritism , all have changed.

Les Indépendances avaient supprimé la chefferie, détrôné le cousin de Fama, constituée au village un comité avec un président. Un sacrilège, une honte! Togobala était la chose des Doumbouya. (LSDI p.113)

Independence had cancelled the chieftaincy title, dethroned Fama's cousin, constituted a committee headed by a president to oversee the affairs of the village. An abomination, a shame! Togobala was the property of the Doumbouyas. (Our translation)

Ahmadou Kourouma through *the Suns of Independences* demonstrated the belief of his people in ancestral worship, magical realism as well as in reincarnation: "*Le Coran dit qu'un décédé est un appelé par Allah, un fini; et les coutumes malinké disent qu'un chef de famille couche dans la case patriarcal.*" p.105 [The Qu'ran says that a dead person is called by Allah, he is gone; and the Malinké customs say that a family head sleeps in the patriarchal home. (Our translation)] For a dead Malinké family head to keep on sleeping in the patriarchal home indicates that truly, the dead are not dead; they are really not far from their relatives.

Ho malheur ! Ho malheur ! Ho malheur ! Si l'on trouve une souris sur une peau de chat Ho malheur ! Ho malheur ! Ho malheur ! Tout le monde sait que la mort est un grand malheur. (LSDI, 1970:185)

Oh! Misfortune, Oh! Misfortune, Oh! Misfortune if one sees a rat climbing a cat Oh! Misfortune, Oh! Misfortune! Oh! Misfortune everyone knows that death is a great misfortune. (Our translation)

The above is a proverb usually song by the Malinkés whenever a misfortune looms around. This while returning home became a constant and repeated occurrence in Fama's spirit, signalling a bad omen. Moreover, the Malinké also worship and equally make sacrifices to their dead ancestors: "*Mais chez les Bambaras... le petit sacrifice qui éloigne esprits et mânes.*" p.105 [But with the Bambaras... a little sacrifice will appease the spirits and the invisibles. (Our translation)] Again: "*Louange au Tout-Puissant! Louange aux mânes des aïeux... Grâce aux sacrifices tués par nos aïeux.*" p.137 (Praise be to the most high! Praise to the invisible ancestors...thanks to the sacrifices made by our ancestors (Our translation). Finally, Fama, the protagonist does the best he knows how, but cannot adapt to the changed world, like Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* after his return from exile. He is jailed as a political prisoner, and years after, he regained his freedom: all of these remain incomprehensible to him. He tries to focus attention on his duty, on what he knows must be done to fulfil prophecies, but he largely fails and in the process lost his life thus signalling the end to the traditional chieftaincies. The death of Balla is also a sign that the end of an era has come as he (Balla) the soothsayer had promised Fama protection as long as he was alive.p.187

The theme of death featured prominently in the novel suggesting the end of an era. Death here is symbolic and metaphorical and this signifies the end of generation or failure in a pursuit. The death of Koné Ibrahima demonstrates the cultural background of the Africans in burial ceremonies as earlier pointed out. At the death of Koné Ibrahima who is also of a Malinké descent, with his action to attend his own funeral confirms the Africans' belief in reincarnation as revealed here:

Comme tout Malinké, quand la vie s'échappa de ses restes, son ombre se releva, grailonna, s'habilla et partit par le long chemin pour le lointain pays malinké natal pour y faire éclater la funeste nouvelle des obsèques. Sur des pistes perdues au plein de la brousse inhabitée, deux colporteurs malinké ont rencontré l'ombre et le reconnue. L'ombre marchait vite et n'a pas salué. Les colporteurs ne s'étaient pas mépris : « Ibrahima a fini », s'étaient-ils dits. Au village natal l'ombre a déplacé et arrangé ses biens. De derrière la case on a entendu les cantines du défunt claquer, ses calebasses se frotter ; même ses bêtes s'agitaient et bêlaient bizarrement. Personne ne s'était mépris. « Ibrahima Koné a fini, c'est son ombre », s'était-on dit. L'ombre était retournée dans la capitale près des restes

pour suivre les obsèques : aller et retour, plus de deux mille kilomètres. (LSDI, 1970:9)

Like all Malinkés, when a life gets away from others, his shadow will; wake up, smell of stale fat, dress and go through a long way to a distant malinké home country to burst a fatal news of the funerals. On the missing track full of inhabited bush, two malinké pedlers met the shadow and recognised him. The shadow walks faster and did not greet. The pedlers were not despising: «Ibrahima is gone», was their saying. At the country home, the shadow scattered and arranged his belongings. At the back of the house we hear the canteen of the dead slam, scrub his calabash; also his animals were agitating and sounding strangely. Nobody was despising. «Ibrahima Koné is gone, it is his shadow », was the saying. The shadow returned to the capital close to others to follow or take part in the funerals: going and coming, more than two kilometers. (Our translation)

The aforementioned action of the deceased Ibrahima Koné signifies that some dead persons can themselves herald their own passing away to their relations or friends in far-away places, either by appearing to them physically or in their dreams, most especially prior to the announcement of such dead persons by close and elderly kinsmen that reserves the right to do so. The death in succession of Fama's Uncle, Lacina (p.8), Balla (p.187) and of Fama himself is a signal that one's destiny cannot be easily decided.

Fama in his quest to scavenge for food after the great loss at the arrival of the Suns of Independences encountered an opposition from one of the praise singers (Griot) Bamba who humiliated him. It was at this scene that the dead Ibrahima took pity on Fama.

The pity the reincarnated Ibrahima Koné took on Fama made him to transmigrate by possessing his spirit; this is, therefore, in conjunction with the law of Karma which states that, after death the soul is capable of passing to another body. Social critics and revolutionaries do not usually want failure on their part in any struggle and for this reason; whenever they discover that they can no longer win or continue in a struggle, they prefer handing the baton over to the best available willing hand that they know is of the same opinion and ideology. Moreover, when Koné saw that Fama had lost the battle, died unceremoniously, his transmigrated spirit left the body of the dead Fama, met and inhabit a pregnant kinswoman who later gave birth to a Malinké baby.

...Elle a marché jusqu'au terroir Malinké ou elle ferait le bonheur d'une mère en reincarnant dans un bébé Malinké. (LSDI, 1970:10)

She walked up to a Malinké land where she would become the source of happiness to a mother by reincarnating into a Malinké baby. (Our translation)

This is also seen in LVD, where Martial handed the struggle to his daughter Chaïdana and after a while she too 'transferred' it to her children who finally completed the execution of the struggle. As soon as that happened, the highly esteemed and honourable Fama became hostile and temperamental even at the funeral where everybody ought to be in a state of mourning. No wonder, Fama became a changed person, to the extent that he could see in his dream what will happen to the government of the day in a very short distant time, which eventually led to his arrest and consequent imprisonment.

Comparatively, if Christians are Jesus' incarnate through the Holy Spirit power they receive, Fama on the other hand is also Koné's incarnate through his spirit that is dwelling in him by the contact he had with his shadow at the former's funeral at the seventh day ceremony of his burial. Any Christian who makes himself or herself available for God's use is a vessel unto honour. Therefore, Koné saw in Fama, a willing vessel unto honour that is zealous and determined to prosecute the agitation against the imperialists who had come to desecrate and dominate their ancestral land.

Koné must have been a revolutionalist whose untimely death shattered his dream of liberating his people, but could not achieve his aim, that annoyance precipitated his deeds and actions to scatter his belongings as earlier discussed.

Donc c'est possible, d'ailleurs sûr, que l'ombre a bien marché jusqu'au village natal; elle est revenue aussi vite dans la capitale pour conduire les obsèques et un sorcier du cortège funèbre l'a vue, mélancolique, assise sur le cercueil. Des jours suivirent le jour des obsèques jusqu'au septième jour et les funérailles du septième jour se déroulèrent devant l'ombre, puis se succédèrent des semaines et arriva le quarantième jour, et les funérailles du quarantième jour ont été fêtées au pied de l'ombre accroupie, toujours invisible pour le Malinké commun. Puis l'ombre est repartie définitivement. (LSDI, 1970:10)

Therefore, it is possible, elsewhere certain that the shadow walked a bit as far as to his native village; she also hastily returned to the capital to conduct the funerals and an

accompany wizard of the dead saw him, melancholy, sat on the coffin. Days after the day of the funerals till the seventh day and the seventh day funeral took place in the presence of the shadow, then stayed for weeks and came back the fortieth day, and the fortieth day funeral ceremonies were done at the feet of the squatting shadow, still invisible to the common Malinké. Then the shadow left finally. (Our translation)

Fama's return to town is seen like a displacement of a man who is in pursuit of the voice of his destiny. (p.152) Honestly, Fama's sojourns tilted towards his death. Ahmadou Kourouma also demonstrated that animals also played important roles in the unfolding drama that trailed the death of Fama. It is, however, clear to us that animals have the instinct to see Spirits that cannot be seen with ordinary human eyes. The animals are the first to have a feeling of the impending tragedy about to occur.

De temps en temps on entendait le hurlement des chiens et le rugissement des fauves. Mais les charognards paraissaient avoir réintégré les feuillages des arbres. (LSDI, 1970:194)

From time to time, one heard the barking of dogs and the roaring of wild animals. But the vultures seemed to have regrouped in the leaves of trees. (Our translation)

Animals as described above are very sensitive to dangers as this was also witnessed during the Tsunami, when animals made great noise and fled to far-away Islands few hours before the tragic occurrences that devastated more than a million inhabitants.

Fama's failure is all encompassing. First, after his release from prison, his friend Bakary who went to welcome and encourage him to accept what has happened as his fate did not help matters as he further poisoned his mind with the unfaithful behaviours of the former's wives, Salimata and Mariam while Fama was away in prison. Bakary narrated that, as soon as Fama was arrested, they both moved for a replacement. Salimata consulted Abdoulaye. Unfortunately for Fama, the taxi driver conveying him and Bakary is the person having an affair with Mariam his other wife. This deed of Fama's wives has become a known issue in the town. This brought shame and depression to the already depressed and dejected Fama who could not utter a word in response to all he was told due to the heaviness of his heart.

Many thoughts ruminate in Fama's mind on how to regain the stool of his ancestors that *The Suns of independence* has submerged, the one time opposition to the strangers' domination of their territory and the non-conformist stance to change in their culture and tradition. Bakary confirmed the dead of the chieftaincies' titles when he declared to Fama:

Écoute, Fama! On ne part pas quand on a la possibilité d'avoir l'argent, d'avoir une situation, d'être quelqu'un d'être utile aux amis et aux parents. Que feras-tu à Togobala ? La chefferie est morte. Togobala est fini, c'est un village en ruine. Tu n'es pas une feuille d'arbre qui jaunit et tombe quand la saison change. (LSDI, 1970:181-182)

Listen, Fama! One does not leave when one has the opportunity of making money, to have a chance, to be somebody, to be useful to friends and parents. What do you want at Togobala? The chieftaincy is dead. Togobala is finished; it is village in ruins. You don't have a fallen yellow leaf when the season is changed. (Our translation)

In addition, another trait as exhibited in Fama's character was his ardent belief in the deeds and sayings of his ancestors. He would rather die for what he believes in than surrender to the enemy who according to him, "has come to divide and steal the dignity and morals of his people." In the text, Fama is a victim of age long tradition, which was suddenly conquered by *The Suns of independence* (referring to the White colonisers) due to the unchecked cowardice of his Malinké kinsmen.

Consequently, one cogent reason given for the surrender of Africans who abandoned their age long tradition is that the colonial masters were politically empowered. This is seen as follows:

Le thème des conversations fut: la « Force » des Blancs que les Bwawa considéraient comme de mauvais génies descendus du Ciel. La preuve, soulignaient-ils gravement, ce sont leurs amphores qu'aucune main humaine ne saurait façonner, et surtout leurs kâayâwa ou canons qui tonnent comme karavanni et crachent du feu comme le tonnerre. Leurs preinpreins –fusil Lebel – qui distribuent la mort a trois mille enjambée sà la ronde. Tout cela tient du Yéréké!, du miracle. Comment soutenir une guerre contre un ennemi si puissamment armé, qui vous tue de si loin, un ennemi surnaturel descendu du ciel ?(CDTA 1962 : 221)

The theme of conversations was: the power of the White men that the Bwawas considered like the evil guiding spirits who descended from heaven. The underlined evidence is grave. That is their amphora that no hand can ever fashion, and most times their weapons that booms like bomb and scatters fire like thunder. Their “preinprein” sound-Marked riffle - that distributes death at three thousand miles away. All of these serve as surprise! A miracle. How can one sustain a war against an enemy so heavily armed, that kills you from afar, a supernatural enemy who descended from heaven?(Our translation)

If the above reason is to be given a second thought, it could be said that it is an act of cowardice, but rather due to their belief in the supernatural powers of spirit beings. So, the colonised cannot be blamed for comparing the super power of the colonisers to those of their guiding spirits. This situation can be likened to the one in *Things Fall Apart* where the colonisers were said not to have toes and that is as a result of the socks and shoes they always put on, therefore they were considered to be spirits. Obierika confirmed this while narrating the story of what happened when Okonkwo was away in exile. He attests that: “And these white men, they say, have no toes.” p. 52

Finally, Fama like Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* of Chinua Achebe preferred to die like a hero even though there was nothing heroic in dying without achieving his aim of becoming the next Doumbouya of Togobala. When it eventually dawned on him that the battle he was fighting was a lost one, he said: «*Les gens de l'indépendance ne connaissent ni la vérité ni l'honneur.*» p.164 (CLSI, 1985:123) (The people of independence neither know the truth nor honour). (Our translation)

Further venting his anger, Fama observes that:

En politique le vrai et le mensonge portent le même pagne,
le juste et l'injuste marchent de pair, le bien et le mal
s'achètent ou se vendent au même prix. p. 164

In politics, truth and lie wear the same wrapper, the just
and the unjust walk together, the good and the bad are
bought or sold at the same price. (Our translation)

Fama's harrowing and dejected life experience culminate into the above outburst which shows his traumatic and psychological disturbance as well as those of his compatriots. Though, the physical psychology did not affect only Fama but also

Bamba, who twists his lips, turns his eyes and bites his nostrils. Also, Tiemoko in whose eyes the fire of violence is reflected.

In addition, the text also demonstrates a virile violence, which is human. It is at this juncture that Fama regretted how Africa, a once united and powerful continent, cheaply fell into the caprices of the colonial masters. It is, however, discovered that the phenomenon of violence took different dimensions in the text. The cultural violence is simply identified, the political violence and the violence of men is very evident. These violent situations were noticed under multiple aspects in the novel.

4.3 Sony Labou Tansi's *La Vie et demie* (1979), (Marcel Nisoni, with pseudonym Sony Labou Tansi), is a Congolese, born on July 5, 1947 in Kinivanza, Democratic Republic of Congo. He was the founder of the successful theatre group called Ricardo Zulu. Sony Labou Tansi unlike his mentor Wole Soyinka was a novelist, dramatist and a politician.

Notable among his works are; *La Vie et demie (Life and a Half)* (1979), *L'Etat honteux (Life of Shame)* (1981), *L'Anté-peuple (Anti-people)* (1983), *Les Sept solitudes de Lorsa Lopez (Seven Solitude of Lorsa Lopez)* (1985), *Les yeux du volcan (The Eyes of Volcan)* (1988) and *Au Commencement des douleurs (Commencement of Distress)* (1995). His novels are; *Conscience de tracteur (Conscience of Tractor)* (1979), *La Parenthèse de sang (The Bracket of Blood)* followed by *Je Soussigné cardiaque (I Undersigned Cardiac)* (1981). Sony Labou Tansi died prematurely on the 14 June, 1995 at Brazzaville after a brief illness.

Sony Labou Tansi's *La Vie et demie* (1979), is centred around a protagonist, Martial, a rebel leader who was against the oppressive government of Katamalanasie nation ruled by dictators, Guide Providentiel and his lineage.

Martial rejected the nature of death awaiting him and when he eventually died that death, his spirit refused to rest. His spirit's constant appearance to his daughter, Chaïdana and also to his killers especially at important functions seems to show that his spirit will not rest until his death is avenged.

Quand elle se réveilla, Chaïdana vit des lettres au noir de Martial sur la paume de son autre main: « il faut partir ».p.44

When she woke up, Chaidana saw letters written in black marks of Martial's ink in the palm of her other hand «Go! ».(Our translation)

La Vie et demie is the name of the hotel where Chaidana avenged the gruesome murder of her father. She married ninety-three government officials that she eliminated using various strategies. This act of vengeance is another theme that demonstrates the level of bitterness that the colonised used against the colonisers.

This act can be related to an Historical film titled; October 1, starring Sadiq Daba where two brilliant young men, Agbekoya and Aderopo, a Prince of Akote land in Oyo, old Western region of Nigeria would have been instruments of change, progress and development in independent Nigeria. However, through sheer callousness of a Sodomite Father Dowling, destroyed and changed the destinies of these two young men when they were in the elementary school under the authority of the colonial imperialists. While Agbekoya, now a successful Cocoa farmer in his revenge strategy decided never to neither have any contact with the whiteman nor do his children attend Western schools. Agbekoya pretends to neither hear nor speak the white man's language. Father Dowling pretends to be noble and dignified, yet, a betrayal of trust. Soyinka (1976:134) refers to this behaviour as an: "ideological stab in the back". Eventually through anger boiling in Agbekoya, years after those dastardly acts, which made him to drop out of school. His hatred for Father Dowling knew no bound. One day, the king of Akote invited Father Dowling specifically to appreciate and celebrate him.

Father Dowling was well received by the unsuspecting villagers on arrival, to them, he was qualified to be rewarded for the meritorious service done their community. The villagers were happy to witness the heroic honour to be done to a Reverend gentleman. He was given a rousing welcome on arrival, while waiting to be honoured the next day.

Meanwhile, in his bid to go and ask Father Dowling why he was made a victim of such acts of bestiality, end up suffocating him to death on his bed, the oldman struggled to free himself but to no avail. He later gave up the ghost. The news of his death came as a rude shock to the entire villagers who wish to witness that day

when a great man, invited from Lagos will be decorated. His death was not investigated because he has come of age.

Aderopo, now a University graduate, an heir to Akote throne on the other hand, was also maltreated like his friend and school mate Agbekoya. After his University education, he returned from Ibadan to his native land of Akote where he vexed his anger and vengeance on all virgins of the land of Akote by raping and eventually putting them to death in the forest and at hidden places. This act of ingenuity against his own kinsmen in revenge of the evil the White colonisers did to him demonstrates the fact that, vengeance could take many forms, either against oneself or against a perceived enemy.

Aderopo looked innocent and harmless. Though, after the Police intensified their investigations and interrogations of some suspects like Sumonu, a Palace guide after the murder of his hearthrobe Bisi Olateru and Usman Dangari, a stranger traversing the village that same night when Chidinma, the daughter of Okafor, an Igbo hunter was murdered in the same gruesome manner after been raped. The Igbo community in Akote village protested and demanded for immediate justice. Usman, a novice about the happenings in that village, arrived late at night seeking where to put up till the next day, found the necklace usually worn by Chidinma, he also saw the run-away culprit from whom the necklace dropped as narrated to Inspector Danladi Waziri who is in-charge of the murder case. Immediately that description was made, the Police Chief got a glimpse of the criminal's picture. Nevertheless, that clue from Usman's interrogation after severe torture cannot be a confession to be substantiated or established, especially as it involves a 'first class citizen', being a Prince of Akote village, respected, loved and revered by all. Therefore, the case had to be transferred to the court the next day. Since investigation is still ongoing, early in the morning, when the case is to be brought and presented in the Law Court, the bereaved Chidinma's father, hid himself behind the Police cell on a hill where the suspected but innocent traveler is to be conveyed to the Court for trial, as soon as he is helped into the waiting Van, to the chagrin of all. Suddenly, a matchet pierced through his heart and Chidinma's malicious father immediately surrendered himself for arrest to the Police because he did not have confidence in the Police Chief whom he suspects might not do justice to the case, he being the kinsman of the suspected killer of his

beloved daughter, thereby taking law into his hands. Chidinma's father turns himself to a prosecutor and the Judge.

Tayeb Salih in *Season of Migration to the North* (1969), confirms that, vengeance is a vital thematic thrust of postcolonial discourse. Salih depicts the violent history of colonialism as shaping the reality of contemporary Arab and African societies. A naively optimistic, British – educated Mustapha Sa'eed uses the power of racist stereotypes of Africans as hyper-sexual and Arabia's exotic appeal to Europeans to seduce, manipulate and deceitfully causes the wanton destruction of many innocent English women that fell to his pretentious love game, the women who for him stand in metonymic relationship to the British Empire, ruled over as it was in its hey-day by Queen Victoria. The novel also reveal an unprecedented murder-suicide shocks and enrages the villagers and unveils the violence of traditional patriarchy, likening it in kind to sexualised colonial violence.

The novel, *Season of Migration to the North* when compared with the film *October 1*, every reaction and action of these educated protagonists to avenge themselves of the colonisers is evident:

Mustapha Sa'eed, gentlemen of the jury, is a noble person whose mind was able to absorb Western civilisation but it broke his heart. These girls were not killed by Mustafa Sa'eed but by the germ of a deadly disease that assailed them a thousand years ago. It occurred to me that I should stand up and say to them: "This is untrue, a fabrication. It was I who killed them. I am the desert of thirst. I am no Othello. I am a lie. Why don't you sentence me to be hanged and so kill the lie?" (1969:26)

When this scenario is critically compared with the tragedy in the film titled; *October 1*, one will notice that there is resentment in the three characters; Agbekoya, Aderopo and Sa'eed which brought about the brutal revenge each of them exhibited. Contrarily, in contentment of these dastardly acts in the killing of innocent kinswomen by Aderopo and those of Englishwomen by Sa'eed who merely expressed their love affection towards him responds thus:

The white man, merely because he has ruled us for a period of our history, will for a long time continue to have for us that feeling of contempt the strong have for the weak. Mustafa Sa'eed said to them, 'I have come to you as a conqueror.' (1969:47)

Similarly, in Aderopo's outburst before he was finally gunned down by the Inspector who rescued his last victim. He made known his resentment and anger which he said every one must have a share from. This, he said in an emotion laden voice showing a remorse too late to right the wrongs. He fell from bullet shot and gave up the ghost.

Chaïdana's children (triplets) continued and completed the assignment after the death of their mother.

Chaïdana avait terminé sa distribution de mort au champagne à la grande majorité des membres les plus influents de la dictature katamalanasienne. p.49

Chaïdana had ended her distribution of death through champagne to a great number of the most influential of the dictatorship of Katamalanasia. (Our translation)

La Vie et demie (1979), suits the subject-matter of this discourse. It is one of Sony Labou Tansinovels that depicts despotic regimes in Africa, wanton and senseless destruction of life and corruption and belief in reincarnation. The novel is about a recently independent African nation, Katamalanasia which is under the rulership of a "providential guide". The brutality of this regime also meant zero-tolerance for opposition parties. Nowadays, it is evident that there is no nation that can be exonerated from all the aforementioned vices and the concept of reincarnation which is a core subject of concern to this study.

Sony Labou Tansi, a Congolese writer, like his Ivorian counterpart – Kourouma, writes to terrify his readers as he says: "*J'écris pour qu'il fasse peur en moi*". (Kom, 1989:597) [I write that they may be scared. (Our translation)]

Martial, is a courageous, fearless and dogged freedom fighter. In spite of threats and intimidations, he stood his ground to fight the government to a standstill. However, in the process he was arrested and gruesomely murdered. His daughter, Chaïdana, whom the father's spirit overwhelmed just as *The Holy Bible* says:

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (NIV Acts 1Verses 8)

Though, this study is not philosophically based, this is just to establish the fact that the existence of spirit is in every sphere of life. However she continued the struggle her father was unable to win against the generation of the despotic rulers (the providential guides) not only the particular one during whose regime Martial was assassinated, rather all of them in succession. As these generations of rulers take their turn in governance, they meet with stiff opposition from the lineage of Martial. What could be deduced from this is that resistance against oppression is a generational cause. This mystery of Chaïdana's act of vengeance can also be said to be how she was forced to feed on human flesh, which is abnormal and inhuman. Meanwhile, any person with this cruel experience is bound to be merciless and brutal.

Martial, before his murder, denounced and resisted vehemently the nature of his execution in the hands of his captors "*Je ne veux pas mourir cette mort*". p.13 [I do not want to die this death. (Our translation)]Martial was brutally murdered. This absurdity in the murder of her father prompted Chaïdana to seek revenge using her captivating beauty.

Meanwhile, Chaïdana suffered physically and emotionally after being inhumanly treated by the Providential Guide on whose orders she was forced to feed on human flesh, her been forced to eat human flesh could also have been a mystery, that is, such a person will never have human feeling; and Chaïdana's revenge is somehow possible through that wicked act meted on her, how her heart was hardened and the constant visit of her late father seeking revenge:

Elle était devenue cette loque humaine habitante de deux mondes: celui des morts et celui des «pas-tout-a-fait-vivants », comme elle disait elle-même. p.17

She became indifferent human dweller of two worlds: that of the dead and that of the "not-exact-alive", as she usually says herself. (Our translation)

Chaïdana is now more determined than ever before to avenge her father's death.

Consequently, there is a similar characteristic and attitude that existed in the generations of these providential guides; greed for wealth, love of women, an excessive drinking habit, wanton and brutal destruction of innocent lives, inhuman treatments and constant consultations with native doctors: *Le Guide Providentiel*

*parla de sa vie, des vins, des femmes, du football...*p.18 [The Providential Guide spoke about his life, wines, women, football (Our translation)] ... And how they derive so much joy in brutal killings. This nature of greed manifested in the first crop of Africa's post-independence leaders like: Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, Idi-Amin Dada (Uganda), Sekou Toure (Mali), Lansana Conte (Guinee Bissau), Houphouët Nana Boigny (Côte-d'Ivoire), Gnassingbe Eyadema (Togo), Mobotu Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu wa za Banga (A Leopard who leaves fire and destruction on its path as it goes) (Congo DR), Emperor Jean Bedel Bokassa (Central African Republic), Emperor Haile Selassie, Mengistu Halle Mariam (Ethiopia), Mohammed Said Barre (Somalia), Hussein Habre, Gukoni Weddey (Chad), Gafar Al- Nimeri, Omar Albashar (Sudan), Mohamar Gaddafi (Libya), Agostinho Neto, Eduardo Dos Santos (Angola), Robert Mugabe (Zimbabwe), Kamuzu Hasting Banda (Malawi), Paul Biya (Cameroun), Paul Kagame (Rwanda), Dennis Sassou Nguoso (Congo Brazaville), Ibrahim Babangida, Sani Abacha (Nigeria), Mathew Kerekou (Benin Republic), Gamal Abdel Nasser, Hosni Mubarak (Egypt), Samuel Kanyon Doe, Charles Taylor (Liberia), Blaise Campaore (Burkina Faso), and Yahya Jammeh (Gambia) to mention but a few.

However, it is confirmed in one of the conversations between an African and a White man in Tayed's *Season of Migration to the North*:

I heard Mansour say to Richard, 'You transmitted to us the disease of your capitalist economy. What did you give us except for a handful of capitalist companies that drew off our blood – and still do?' Richard said to him, 'All this shows that you cannot manage to live without us. You used to complain about colonialism and when we left you created the legend of neo-colonialism. It seems that our presence, in an open or undercover form, is as indispensable to you as air and water.'(SMN 1969:47-48)

The above is true because since the independence of most African countries that is ruled by their own people, no development as such could be noticed, except for high-Tech corruption cases and callous elimination of perceived opponents in the struggle for power. What else can one say than to accept that; African leaders are like: *L'Enfant paresseux qui ne veut rien faire seul de rejoice sur l'héritance de son père, le blanc*. Lazy children who do not want to do anything, except to rely on the inheritance of his father, the Whiteman.

These acts of wickedness later on became generational in the lineage of the Providential Guides as seen here:

N'en jetez rien, s'il vous plaît. Jules, l'aîné, ne mangeait pas. Le Guide Providentiel s'était levé, lui avait caressé le menton puis le front, il lui avait même souri gentiment. Alors, mon ange, tu le manges ton pâté ? Je n'ai pas faim. Mange quand même. Non. Le Guide Providentiel lui avait simplement planté son couteau de table dans la gorge. (LVD, 1979:18)

Please do not throw away anything. Jules the elder is not eating. The Providential Guide stood, caressed his chin then his forehead, he even gave him a loving smile. Here, my angel, aren't you eating your pie? I am not hungry. Eat all the same. No! The Providential Guide simply thrust his table-knife in his throat. (Our translation)

The allusions here are in conformity with a Yoruba maxim which states thus: "*Eni buru mo, o nwa eniti o ma sofun ni*" meaning to say, the wicked person knows he is wicked, he is only waiting for that fellow that will alert him. There is also an adage that, those who live in glass houses should not throw stones. It is also opined that, the cow is only enduring due to its helplessness; the knife is terrible on the throat. However, whoever has blood flowing in his veins will also exhibit fear and murderers usually do not want people with sword near them:

Le Guide Providentiel avait toujours son garde du corps à sa gauche, sans doute voulait-il observer la rigueur de la superstition selon laquelle la mort des grands vient toujours de la gauche. (LVD, 1979:18)

The Providential Guide is always with his presidential guards by his left, without doubt he wanted to verify the superstition that the death of great men always comes via the left. (Our translation)

This act of wickedness also manifested in the lives and deeds of post-independence African rulers. The superstar attitude that pervades the sensibilities of the Providential Guide is eroded by the constant appearance of the late Martial; this causes him momentary madness. He is talking to a spirit he is not sure of communicating with: - *Enfin, Martial! Combien de fois veux-tu que je te tue?* p.19 [Finally, Martial! How many times do you want me to kill you? (Our translation)] He is only trying to exhibit bravery when in actual fact, he is fearful.

Kassar Pueblo, the Guide's soothsayer recommended a solution to keep Martial off from coming:

Son Excellence doit partager son lit avec la fille de Martial pour chasser l'image du revenant. Mais son Excellence doit absolument éviter de faire la chose-là avec la fille de Martial. p.20

His Excellency has to share his bed with the daughter of Martial to drive away the image of the reincarnated, but his Excellency must absolutely avoid "doing that thing" with the daughter of Martial. (Our translation)

Meanwhile, the Providential Guide who cannot do without a woman tries to keep to the recommendation for only three years. After this, he violated the law, ate the forbidden fruit and after a short while, Martial revisited and set ablaze some of the fierce guards. This angered the Providential Guide who thundered at Chaïdana whom he woke from sleep: "*Ton père était là, dit le Guide Providentiel, la voix estompée par la rage. S'il revient, je te mettrai en morceaux.*" p.24 [Your father was there, says the Providential Guide, his voice blurred by anger. If he returns, I will cut you into pieces. (Our translation)]

Ideally, one would expect that the sacrifices prescribed by Kassar Pueblo and observed by the Providential Guide will put an end to the visit of Martial. All of these failed and this culminated in the events that brought about the untimely death of Kassar Pueblo in a gruesome manner:

Le Guide Providentiel lui sauta à la gorge, il serra tellement fort que les os se brisèrent, les yeux de Kassar Pueblo sortirent entièrement des orbites et pleuraient rouge. p.25

The Providential Guide pounced on his throat, twisted the neck so strongly that the bones cracked, Kassar Pueblo's eyes protruded out of the orbits weeping blood. (Our translation)

Aminata Sow Fall in *Le Revenant* (1976:124-125) also showcases African belief in reincarnation when all members of the family and Adja Yama the elder sister of Bakar who is supposedly considered dead, returned on the day of his funeral ceremony exclaims thus:

Agitation folle dans la chambre. On aurait voulu fuir, mais la frayeur les clouait tous là où ils étaient. Fanta se mit

alors à crier féroce­ment, à appeler au secours ; tante Ngoné s'évanouit ; le père Oussèye se mit à réciter des versets en tremblant, Bigué avait enfoui sa tête dans son écharpe et Yama, debout, suait à grosses gouttes. Pas un cri, pas un mot ne sortirent de sa bouche, mais ses grands yeux de chatte braquaient un regard fixe et sauvage sur Bakar qui s'avançait vers elle...Mais il est revenu, Bakar Diop! Bakar Diop est ressuscité ! Elle sortit de la chambre d'un pas régulier, comme si elle dansait, puis de la maison ; et dans les rues, dansa nuit noir, pied nus, elle déchirait ses habits en criant : Il est revenu – Wóoy il est revenu ! Bakar Diop dekki na!

Restless madness filled the room. They felt like escaping, but great fear enveloped all of them where they were. Fanta was however made to shout ferociously, to call for help; Aunty Ngoné was unconscious; the father Oussèye was made to recite some verses trembling, Bigué buried her head in her scarf and Yama, standing, sweating profusely. Not a single sound, no word protrude out of her mouth, but her big catlike eyes pointed a fixed look and wild on Bakar who was moving towards her... But he returned, Bakar Diop! Bakar Diop resuscitated! She went out of the room majestically, as if she was dancing, then from the house: and in the streets, in the dark night, bare footed, she tore her dresses while screaming: He returned! Bakar Diop. (Our translation)

So far, it has been demonstrated that the belief in reincarnation as expressed in *La Vie et demie* is universal:

L'ancien mort avait quitté sa région pour une région lointaine du Nord, puis il avait intégré les Forces armées de la démocratie nationale et, grâce à ses dix-huit qualités d'ancien voleur de bétail, s'était fait un chemin louable dans la vie. (LVD, 1979:25-26)

The dead old man had left his region for a far away region in the North, then he joined the new democracy's national Armed forces, and thanks to his eighteen qualities as an old cattle rustler, he made a laudable achievement in life. (Our translation)

This quality of the dead while alive makes their living relations remember them in times of trouble. Martial's ghost commands his daughter to fight and avenge his killers: *Quand elle se réveilla, Chaïdana vit des lettres au noir de Martial sur la paume de son autre main: « il faut partir. »*p.44 [When she woke up, Chaïdana saw the letters written in black on the palm of her other hand: «Go! » (Our translation)]

After series of unheeded directives from Martial, his daughter who harbours fear and is slow in acting receives violent slaps from an angry father:

... Elle reçut une violente gifle de Martial qui semblait l'avoir attendue pendant des heures. La dernière image que Chaïdana perçut de son père avant... si bien qu'à son réveil elle pensa que les yeux étaient la parole des morts.p.48

...She received a violent slap from Martial who seemed to have waited for hours. The last image Chaïdana saw of her father before... so much that after she woke up she thought that eyes were the language of the dead. (Our translation)

However, shortly after this action of her father, she saw an indelible writing on her hand, and recalled a proverb her father was fond of: *Elle se rappela ce proverbe que son père citait souvent: « Les morts qui n'ont pas de vivants sont malheureux, aussi malheureux que les vivants qui n'ont pas de morts. »*p.49 [She remembered this proverb her father usually used: « the dead who have no living relations are unfortunate, as unfortunate as those living who have no dead. » (Our translation)]

Chaïdana, for the sake of her father's revenge mission, married ninety-three men at the echelon of government, each time bearing new names in order to eliminate them, she changed her name two hundred and forty times: « ...chez le Guide Providentiel qui lui avait confectionné une nouvelle identité, la quatre-vingt-treizième que Chaïdana portait de sa vie. »p.53(...With the Providential Guide who gave her a new identity, that makes it the ninety-third description that Chaïdana bears in her life). (Our translation)

Chanka Seylata's, alias Chaïdana (p.78) changing of names, taking up new identities to perpetrate her acts of killing by avenging her father's death among which are the following points to a wider meaning in postcolonial discourse:

- Chanka Ramidana p.27
- Mme Duento-Kansa de Lavampire p.50
- Mme Samananta p.50
- Mme Moushiesta p.50
- Mme Awi-Mourta p.50
- Mme Yoani Buenzo p.50
- Mme Anamarashi Mousheta p.50

- Mme Loupiazana Shio p.50
- Mme Augustano Masta p.50
- Mme Maria de Cabana p.50
- Mme Obaltana... p.53 etc.

The issue of taking up new identities by Chaïdana to hide her real self, is an act, Bhabha (1994:8) refers to as the concept of hybridity, ambivalence and mimicry.

En réalité, elle s'était rendue, dans le secret le plus complet, chez le Guide Providentiel qui lui avait confectionné une nouvelle identité, la quatre-vingt-treizième que Chaïdana portait de sa vie. p.53

Of a truth, she entered into a most complete secret with the Providential Guide that made her obtain a new identity, the ninety third that Chaïdana bore in her life. (Our translation)

This strategy of changing her identity at a point of entering into a new union with those at the corridors of power in Katalamanasie helped a great deal in avenging her brutally murdered father. This as well show that she has a mystical power that magical realism want to reveal as a single person used ninety-nine different identities without any of them (that is, her victims) detecting it. Though, at a point for instance, one of the Providential Guides suspected a foul play when Martial appeared to him in the room. It was at that period that he threatened to kill her when he woke her from sleep.

Le Guide Providentiel réveilla Chaïdana en lui tirant les oreilles comme on les tire à un enfant réfractaire. Au réveil, elle avait toujours cet air étourdi d'un ange et criait toujours le nom de sa mère : Abaït-chianko !p.24

The Providential Guide woke Chaidana by drawing her ears as one draws that of a stubborn child. When awake, she has this absent-minded attitude of always sounding like an Angel and shouting her mother's name: Abaït-chianko! (Our translation)

Then, he sounded a note of warning as he threatened, informing her that: "*Ton père était là...S'il revient, je te mettrai en morceaux.*"p.24 [Your father was here...If he returns, I will cut you into pieces. (Our translation)]

As earlier mentioned, the past life of the dead also manifested in their actions at death which makes their living relations to either feel their absence or not. Martial also demonstrated this behavior to show that the dead are also jealous: “*En entrant dans la chambre de son nouveau mari, vers les premières heures du matin, Chaïdana rencontra Martial qui la gifla.*” p.53 [While entering her new husband’s room, in the early hours of the morning, Chaïdana met Martial who slapped her. (Our translation)]

The protagonist Martial is such a character that monitors all jobs assigned to the daughter, Chaïdana. As soon as the jobs are perfected, he shows his delight:

A la mort du Guide Providentiel, Martial était venu lui dire adieu et l’avait veillé...et avait déposé une gerbe portant ces inscriptions : « Pour Cypriano Ramoussa, de la part de Martial. » On avait enlevé la gerbe injurieuse soixante-douze fois et soixante-douze fois elle était revenue sur la tombe du Guide Providentiel.p.85

When the Providential Guide died, Martial came to say farewell and to keep watch over him...and dropped a bouquet with the inscriptions: “For Cypriano Ramoussa, from Martial.”They removed the insulting bouquet seventy-two times and seventy-two times it returned on the tomb of the Providential Guide. (Our translation)

This aspect also shows that, nothing is hidden from the dead who though invisible, were in the knowledge of everything happening on earth. This exceptional quality of the dead is now envied by many living human beings:

Nombreux étaient maintenant ceux qui voulaient mourir la mort de Martial pour avoir l’occasion de repasser dans la vie après la mort. Beaucoup enviaient les étudiants et tous ceux que les guides faisaient fusiller. (LVD, 1979:86-87)

Now, many wanted to die like Martial to have the opportunity of coming back to the world after death. So many envied the students and all those the Guides ordered to be shot. (Our translation)

University students who protest against the government’s obnoxious policies recorded the death of three thousand and ninety two of them on the orders of the guide Henri-au Coeur-Tendre. This students’ death became a turning point for courageous deeds among the populace. This violent act of killing protesting undergraduates could make others timid, as an average human being may not want to pay the supreme price but this incidence instead embolden others to continue with the struggle for liberation.

Le jour où l'université de Yourma protesta contre les « politisations inconditionnelles de diplômés, le guide Henri-au-cœur-Tendre donna l'ordre de tirer, les trois mille quatre-vingt-douze morts entrèrent tous dans la mort de Martial, puisque le soir du 20 décembre, on les vit marcher dans les rues, brandissant des drapeaux de sang, avec leurs blessures qui saignaient toujours. Nombreux étaient ceux qui voulaient mourir la mort de Martial pour avoir l'occasion de repasser dans la vie après la mort. Beaucoup enviaient les étudiants et tous ceux que les guides faisaient fusiller. (LVD, 1979:86-87)

The day Yourma University protested against unconditional polarisation of certificates, the Guide Henri-tender-heart gave shooting orders, and three thousand and ninety two died the kind of Martial's death, since the evening of 20th December, they were seen marching round the Streets, waving flags containing blood, with their wounds still bleeding. Many were those who wanted to die Martial's death to have the privilege of reincarnating after death. A lot envied the Students and all those massacred by the Guides. (Our translation)

Meanwhile, as the death of Chaïdana was approaching, the ghost of the father raped her to make her have children who will continue with the struggle because he was not ready to drop the fight. He reincarnated in his Triplet grand-children of two boys and a girl; Chanka Chaïdana, Martial le Petit and Layisho. Magical realism was made manifest in the acts of Martial and Chaïdana. They possess mystical powers. Before the birth of these Triplets, Chaïdana took ill and she was taken care of by Martial who is always by her side.

Elle avait une violente fièvre qui la faisait grelotter de toute sa chair. A huit heures, Martial alla lui chercher un café, à midi elle but le café... Martial la réveilla, la lava comme quand elle avait trois ans, lui fit boire son café. p.62

She had a terrible fever which made her whole body shiver. At eight o'clock, Martial went to get her coffee, at noon she drank the coffee... Martial woke her up, bathed her like when she was three years old, helped her drink her coffee. (Our translation)

This benevolent act of Martial shows the dead truly do not leave their loved ones to suffer. When Martial saw that the daughter was recovering fast, he stopped coming but some weeping dead whose death is not as ugly as that of Martial, pay Chaïdana constant visits. When she was not as fast as the father had wanted to escape by running away from the dictator; this sluggishness angered the father who brutalised

and eventually raped her: *Martial entra dans une telle colère qu'il battit sa fille comme une bête et coucha avec elle...*p.69 [Martial became sore angry that he beats his daughter like an animal and raped her... (Our translation)]

Martial's reincarnation in the Triplets made him to stop coming probably because he is convinced that the grand daughter, Chanka Chaïdana will win the battle he lost which was half won by his daughter, Seylata Chaïdana. « *Peut-être-était-il mort de sa vraie mort par la naissance des petits.* »p.76 [Probably she died naturally by the birth of her children. (Our translation)]

After Martial's reincarnation in the Triplets: Layisho, Chanka Chaïdana and Little Martial (Martial le Petit), the Providential Guide still remembers Martial when he said concerning Layisho after the latter's arrest: *Non! Je ne veux pas te tuer. Je ne veux pas te donner « l'existence de Martial ».* *Parce que vous êtes tous les mêmes.* p. 80. [No! I am not going to kill you. I am not going to give you « Martial's existence ». Because all of you are the same. (Our translation)] Unfortunately, Layisho was killed and left outside uncared for. Martial kept vigil watching over the corpse and driving away mosquitoes and killing Ants for nine days and nine nights that the Guide, Jean-Oscar-Coeur-de-Père left him outside: *Martial veilla son cadavre pendant les neuf jours et les neuf nuits que le guide Jean-Oscar-Cœur-de-Père le laissa dehors. Il chassait les mouches et tuait les fourmis.* p.135 [Martial held vigil over his corpse during the nine days and nine nights that the guide Jean-Oscar-Cœur-de-Père left him outside. He drove Mosquitoes and killed the Ants. (Our translation)]

Awolalu and Dopamu (1979:273) explain that:

The main point about reincarnation is that the genius (i.e. the guardian spirit) of the family never dies. This means that something of the genius and character of the family continues to appear from one generation to another to the effect that the family is perpetuated.

After the incomplete burial of Layisho, Martial monitored closely his death. On the day he was to be buried, they only dropped the corpse and they sprinkled little sand to cover it while his legs were left outside. Martial gave Layisho a befitting burial:

Martial recommença l'enterrement. Il mit une couronne sur la tombe et une croix de pierre merveilleusement polie. La couronne portait l'inscription suivante: « A Layisho Okabrinta, de la part de Martial.» p.137

Martial started the burial afresh. He placed a wreath on the tomb and a cross of marvellously polished stone. The wreath has the following inscription: « For Layisho Okabrinta, from Martial. » (Our translation)

Martial, in *La Vie et demie* is a focused protagonist who will not abandon a nationalist struggle half-way, giving credence to the saying that; Spirits have a superior power to display above and over human beings. This is made manifest in his constant visits to both his daughter, Chaïdana and the Providential Guide whom he torments day and night wherever he chooses to disgrace them before eventually causing their death.

Fundamentally, one will agree that the dead are all around, seeing everything that is hidden from the “common” ordinary eyes: *Ces yeux-là, vous comprenez, voient plus que le monde.* p.171. [Those eyes, you understand, sees beyond the world.(Our translation)] Those eyes refer to those of the invisibles.

However, Chanka Chaïdana, the grand-daughter of Martial who took over the unfinished fight after the death of her mother Seylata Chaïdana threatened when she met her to-be new friend-Kapahacheu in the forest promised to continue and intensify the struggle which both her grandfather and her mother could not win. This becomes to her; “the hard way, the only way” with an optimistic hope to succeed. This is made known in her discussion with Kapahacheu thus:

Mon grand-père avait perdu la guerre. Il avait perdu une guerre. J'en inventerai une autre. Pas celle que ma mère avait perdue. Si je ne gagne pas, la Terre tombera. Ces choses me viennent comme si elles m'avaient habitée longtemps avant ma naissance. Mon sang le crie. Va vaincre ! Sans penser. Car penser est défendu. Vaincre - respirer, le plus fortement du monde. (LVD, 1979:99-100)

My grandfather had lost the battle. He had lost a battle. I will launch another. Not that which my mother lost. If I do not win, heaven will fall. Those things occur to me as if they had long occupied me before my birth. My blood is crying. Go and conquer! Without hesitation. For hesitation is forbidden. Conquer – Breathe the most encouraged in the world. (Our translation)

Finally, Martial used all the machineries, that is, his daughter, Chaïdana and his grand-children, the rebel children of the Providential Guides to accomplish the task he could not finish to eliminate the last of the oppressors and the oppressive regimes in Katalamanasie.

4.4 Malick Fall's *La Plaie* (1967), Malick Fall is a Senegalese novelist, born December 13, 1920 in Saint Louis, a school director and teacher, he is the cultural counsellor of a renowned poet, Leopold Sedar Senghor. His novel *La Plaie* [The Wound] translated (1973) by Clive Wake is one of the earliest francophone African novels of post-independence disillusionment. It was described by an early critic as the first African “existentialist” novel, its fragmented narrative draws on poetic symbolism, burlesque comedy, and philosophical reflection to portray a vagrant protagonist Magamou Seck. Malick Fall according to testimonies is a man of humour. Among his works are: *Temps présent* (Theatre) and *Réliefs* (Poems). He died in 1994 at the age of 74 years.

Malick Fall is a writer whose works uses tradition to distill the components of religious culture and permeates social milieu with its essence. His allegorical novel *La plaie* is quasi – mystical in nature. It is a parable of human identity, a search for self, a transcendence of the limitations of mortality tied to the all too human craving for the basic security of mortal acceptance, narrated against the background of colonial cultural oppression.

La plaie is a novel that diagnosed without compromising the evils that pervaded the Senegalese society. The story is inconsistent as it goes to and fro. The novel is about a protagonist, Magamou Seck, who at the arrival of the colonisers left his home village of Seck with an enthusiasm to achieve better living in the city. Unfortunately, like Fama in *Les soleils des indépendances* is disillusioned as he encountered misfortune on his way in search of fortune, in the city, he was arrested on no account of wrong doing by the colonial Police, imprisoned, shot and wounded in the leg and later after sometime was released as he had nobody to bail him. After his release, he became “a-good-for-nothing” fellow. The mother, Yaye Aïda’s negative prayers could be said to have come to pass in the life of his son who disobeyed her counsel. He turns out to be a scavenger in the Market with a wound that turns people

away from him, his only companions were the animals found in the market place.

Magamou regrets his life thus:

Je me dégoûtais de plus en plus de moi-même. Avoir quitté mon village dans l'espoir de m'accomplir et en être réduit à vivoter, attentif aux seuls instincts animaux ! Avoir entrouvert les portes du paradis ! Me voici voué au dessèchement et à la flétrissure. (LP, 1967:49)

I am most disgusted of myself. After living my village with the hope of accomplishment and was reduced to struggle along, paying attention to only animals' instincts! While paradise doors are wide opened! See me nursing a feeling of dryness and blackness. (Our translation)

Living the village to the city could mean living Africa his native land to the Whiteman's land. Invariably, not all who go there achieve great things. Some are confronted with misfortunes and are wounded in their thoughts and perspectives about life along the way. In a fascinating way, the novel reveals that, to actually understand the society where one lives, one has to align with "the neglected" or "the abandoned". The novel treatises, hunger, urban-rural migration, misery, anger, establishment/ affirmation of traditional values and so on to identify the society.

La Plaie is the title of the novel which is in itself worthy of analysis. Wound here is metaphorical, metaphor of a decayed society. *La plaie* is the wound inflicted on Magamou the protagonist. Magamou Seck after a shattered dream of leaving his native village of Gaya to a city centre of N'Dar in search of a greener pasture met with disappointments. His disappointment knew no bounds as his dream of becoming somebody in life and transforming his society in particular met with a brick wall right from the onset. The cover page of the translated version "*The Wound*" by Clive Wake is informative enough through the picture of a leg covered with wounds and a Cat representing one of the close allies and companions of Magamou Seck – the man referred to as L'homme-à- la plaie [The man with wound (Our translation)]

In the novel, Magamou can be referred to as a dreamer. For instance, in Africa, an average African's dream is to be fulfilled immediately he or she lives his local village to an urban city where life is considered better due to the amenities provided by the government, whose seat of governance is usually located in such areas. Magamou represent the shining 'Sun' of his people on whom lots of hope is placed for their liberation from the colonial oppression and suppression. It is however not

surprising to imagine the extent of disappointment and degradation this failure might have caused. Another disappointing feature is that of his compatriot Cheikh Sar who is the interpreter of Doctor Bernardy and later became a tool in the hands of the colonisers against his people.

Mais, docteur, ses papier, il les aura perdus; avec toutes les aventures qu'il a vécués, tu sais, ce n'est pas facile...La ferme, toi ! Pour défendre tes compatriotes, la, tu es imbattable. Pour le reste, zéro pointé. Oublie ton racisme pour un moment. (LP, 1967:227)

But, Doctor, his papers might be missing; with all the stress he has encountered, you know, it is not easy... You shut up there! To defend your compatriots there, you are unbeatable. For the others, zero dotted. Forget your racism for a moment. (Our translation)

The above is one of the numerous biases of the colonial masters to disallow fellow Africans from rendering assistance to one another thereby causing a sharp division and a wide gap between them.

Entre dire et faire, il y a place pour l'intervention divine. En attendant, tu moisiss entre quatre murs. Toi, je ne te louperai pas. Sale griot. Esclave des Blancs. Quand viendra le moment de régler nos comptes, je t'en prie, ne rétracte pas tes paroles. Moi, esclave de... ? Heureusement que nous parlons sénégalais. S'il avait entendu... (LP, 1967:114)

Between saying and deed, there is a room for divine intervention. While waiting, you stagnate between four walls. You, I will not miss you. Dirty praise singer. Slave to the Whitemen. When will the time come to settle our accounts, please, do not retract on your words? Me, slave of...? Fortunately let's speak our dialect. If he were to understand... (Our translation)

Meanwhile, this trust-betraying attitude of few blacks against majority of blacks either to be good servant to their White masters or to receive one favour or the other from them to the detriment of their co-citizens. This outcry is widespread in all the postcolonial novels. This also aided the unabated sufferings of the colonised in the hands of their colonisers.

Fall seems to make use of Magamou in his novel, reported the disparity and arrogance of the imperialists over their captives through molestation, degradation and coercion of their victims with the assistance of their black collaborators. As soon as

Magamou Seck was wounded and this wound became an eye sour that separated him from the midst of other human beings as a result of the unpleasant odour oozing out through the unkept wound that changed the identity of a once; bubbling young man, full of energy and hope of carving a niche for himself. Magamou's home is now found in the Market place, feeding on the droppings from Marchandise. Moreover, spirits and animals became his friends. Life became unbearable for him as he became a fool to every other creature.

C'était la nuit surtout, quand le marché s'était vidé et que nulle présence humaine ne se manifestait, que je rassemblais tous ces petits riens que des personnes avaient touchés, possédés, aimés. Ces objets devenaient des êtres, traits d'union entre les autres et moi-même ; je leur conférais une signification particulière, sacramentelle. (LP, 1967:51)

It was absolutely dark, when the market was emptied and that no human presence was seen, that I gathered all the little droppings that fell from people's handlings, possessed, liked. Those objects became living beings, form groups between others and myself; I conferred them a particular important sacrament. (Our translation)

One day, Doctor Bernardy with the assistance of the Police took Magamou to the hospital with the aim of amputating his leg in order to give him necessary treatment that will ensure the speedy healing of his wounds. Fortunately for Magamou and unfortunately for Doctor Bernardy, Magamou escaped from the hospital. After this experience, he met Sérigne Massall who directed him to Khar, a reputable aged native spiritual doctor in whom Magamou's confidence of receiving healing seems assured when he (Magamou Seck) professes thus:

Pardonne-moi...Je tiens à garder ma jambe...Pardon, mais, vois-tu, je cherche une solution médiane qui m'ôte l'ulcère sans me priver d'une jambe. Difficile ? Je ne sais. La science ne m'est pas bénéfique. Les charlatans sont des farceurs, pour la plupart. Toi, tu es dépositaire de notre commun héritage. (LP, 1967: 157)

Forgive me...I want to have my leg...Please, but look, I need a healing solution that will exempt me from experiencing pain without amputating my leg. Difficult? I don't think. Science is not beneficial to me. Quacks are most times practical jokers. You, you are a repository of our common heritage. (Our translation)

With the belief in the efficacy of African traditional power of healing as viewed by Magamou Seck to have his leg intact without amputation, yet healed. Khar responds this way:

C'est bien. Écoute attentivement...Tout les matins, tu plongeras ta jambe malade dans l'eau salée, dans la mer. Je dis: tous les matins...C'est compris?...J'ai dit: tous les matins. Ta plaie se désinfectera peu à peu...Tu appliqueras sur la plaie la poudre «Damel-Samba-Laobé». La voici. Comme pansement, une feuille de «paftane». (LP, 1967:157-158)

It's good. Listen attentively...Every morning; you will dip your wounded leg in salty water, in the sea. I said: every morning...Do you understand?...I said every morning. Your wound will be disinfected little by little...You will apply this powder «Damel-Samba-Laobe» on the wound. See it. Like a pounded paftane leaf. (Our translation)

Returning to *La plaie*, Magamou, following the prescription of the aged spiritualist, Khar, was healed within a very short time. This confirmed the efficacy of the African trado-medical treatment far better than the modern technology. This healing of the wound and transformation of Magamou made him unrecognisable to his friends who refer to him as a reincarnated being. Though along the line he was presumed dead, however, Magamou himself admits:

J'étais le fou. Magamou. Regarde cette cicatrice. Alors ? J'étais le mort, me voici vivant. Alors ? Alors ? Quelle impossibilité? Me voici en chair et en os. Tâte ce biceps... ce mollet... Et ici, plus bas... la plaie... disparue. Alors? (LP, 1967:168)

I was the fool. Magamou. Look at this mark. Then? I was the dead, see me alive. Then? What impossibility? See me in flesh and blood. Feel these biceps... this soft spot... And here, deep down... the wound... disappeared. Then? (Our translation)

Moreover, if the above have some elements of doubt, then another episode ensued from his one time best friends – that is, the dogs and cats deserted him (animals are known to have very strong instincts), therefore Magamou is seen by those animals as a reincarnated being:

Selon son habitude, il siffla pour appeler ses bêtes. Elles ne répondirent pas. Ce fut la voix familière qu'il entendit... Elles ne te reconnaissent plus pour maître. Tu les as trahies.

Elles courent jour et nuit, à la recherche de l'homme-a-la-plaie. (LP, 1967:170)

As his attitude, he whistled to call his pets. They did not answer. The voice they heard seem familiar...They no longer recognise you as their boss. You have betrayed them. They run day and night in search of the man with wound. (Our translation)

Magamou Seck after been proclaimed dead twice and also came back to life twice. This was confirmed by Cheikh Sar when he affirms:

Magamou-la-plaie; le fou qui avait été écroué et qui s'était évadé. Mort une première fois et découvert près du Lazaret, mort une deuxième fois et redécouvert près de la prison, le voici qui revient à la vie. (LP, 1967:197)

Magamou-the-wound, the fool that was imprisoned and he was an escapee. Died the first time and was found near isolated ward, died a second time and was again found near the prison, look at him coming back to life. (Our translation)

These striking revelations made us understand; the oppression, detention and maltreatment of Africans who dare to oppose or call off the bluff of the colonial masters in their native land. Like Fama in *Les soleils des indépendances* and Martial in *La Vie et demie*, they suffered the same fate as Magamou in *La plaie*.

C'est moi qui m'ahuris ! S'affola Bouna. Et s'étant frotté les yeux, les ayant écarquillés, il cria : « A moi ! à moi ! Vôye! Je suis mort! Mort en enterré! A moi! Un revenant, un revenant! Vouye! Je deviens fou! Vôye! Ma mère! Au secours! Un fantôme en plein marché! Vôye! Ma mère! Des diables, partout! » (LP, 1967: 168)

It is me that was stunned! frightened Bouna. And he rubbed his eyes, opened them wide, he shouted: "To me! To me! Voye! I was dead! Died and buried! To me! A reincarnated, a reincarnated! Vouye! I became a fool! Voye! My mother! (Our translation)

Meanwhile, looking at the excesses of the colonial masters against Africans and on the African soil is a source of concern as it cuts across every strata of the African society.

A les entendre, les Blancs n'étaient pas étrangers au rapt. Ces «Oreilles rouges» ne manquaient aucune occasion de troubler la paix des Noirs. Tout leur était prétexte à humiliation. Ainsi, était-il interdit de s'ébattre au tam-tam,

de chanter ou de palabrer après minuit ; d'obstruer les rues si bien concues pour les réunions consacrées aux discussions d'affaires indigènes ; interdit d'implanter des quartiers neufs làoù les Noirs auraient aimé vivre leur vie, en pleine souveraineté ; interdit d'enterrer les morts, de contracter mariage, de baptiser les nouveau-nés sans déclaration préalable, en bonne et due forme, à la mairie. C'était vraiment insupportable. (LP, 1967:17)

In our understanding the Whites were not strangers by abduction. Those <<red ears>> do not miss any occasion to disturb the peace of the blacks. All these constitute humiliation. Then, it becomes outlawed to beat drum, to sing or to discuss endlessly after midnight; barricade the streets especially when it is evident that meetings bothering on indigenes' welfare are held; outlaw the development of new sites there where the blacks would have loved to live their lives, with full right; outlaw burial of the dead, to give out in marriage, to baptize the new borns without obtaining due permission and following due process, at the court. It is honestly unacceptable. (Our translation)

Given a deep thought however, it is highly incredible when a stranger begins to dictate: what to do, how to live, where to go and when to sleep to the owner of the house and making arbitrary arrest of whoever opposes them, then it calls for serious attention. These domineering attitudes of the Whites is seen as an aberration as of those exerted on captives in a kidnapper's den. Moreover, this extended to the level that the people could no longer speak their mother tongue: *Le plus fort, disait un épicer, c'est que mon fils n'a pas le droit de parler notre langue.* p.17 [The high point, said a spicer, is that my son has no right to speak our language. (Our translation)]

To corroborate the above saying in the view of Ayeleru (2001:3) citing an anonymous voice in a manuscript, *La Coutume d'être fou* (1979) where he observes that:

Nos enfants ne sont plus nos enfants! Le Blanc a réussi son coup : C'est maintenant que la colonisation commence. Nos propre entrailles nous trahissent : ils mangent blanc, boivent blanc et pensent blanc : le drame est qu'ils n'auront jamais les moyens de ces gens –là.

Our children are no more our children! The Whiteman has succeeded in his bid: colonisation has just commenced. Our own people betray us: They eat like White, drink like White and think like White: the drama is that they will never have the means of those people. (Our translation)

Their children were taught in the education of the colonisers using their language to the extent that the people began to doubt their own traditional values:

J'en arrive presque à douter de nos valeurs traditionnelles.
Ils nous ont pris le pays; ils nous ont troublé la tête;
maintenant, ils s'attaquent à notre âme. Incroyable. (LP,
1967:17)

I came to almost doubting our traditional values. They
have overtaken our country; they have given us headache;
now, they are attacking our soul. Incredible! (Our
translation)

This strategy of the colonisers to impose their language on the natives is to allow them have easy understanding of any opposing view their captors might want to share. Ashcroft et al (2002:7) expresses Campbell's view on language thus:

One of the main features of imperial oppression is control over language. The imperial education system installs a 'standard' version of the metropolitan language as the norm, and marginalises all 'variants' as impurities. As a character in Mrs Campbell Praed's nineteenth-century Australian novel *Policy and Passion* puts it, 'To be colonial is to talk Australian slang; to be... everything that is abominable' (Campbell Praed 1881:154)

This can again be seen in these deeds; *Une ruée indescriptible. Les chalands, les marchands. On se bousculait, on se piétinait, on se menaçait, on se renversait.* p. 168 [An indescribable rush ; the regular customers, the marketers. We were made to fall on each other, we were trampled, we were threatened, and we were overturned. (Our translation)] These unfortunate incidences paved way to this unwholesome conversation:

Que s'est-il passé? Encore une injustice? Qu'est-il arrivé ?
Un passe-droit ? Qu'est-ce que c'est? Un excès est-il
commis? Paix! Les Blancs encore? Paix! Les polices?
Paix! Un arrêt du ciel? Qui a jamais vu ceci? La pirogue
d'un fou n'atterit point! Le monde n'est que vanité! Qui
meurt perd son souffle! Un scandale de plus! (LP,
1967:168-169)

What happened? Injustice again? What is it? A right order?
What is this? Was an excess committed? Peace! These
Whites again? Peace! The Police? Peace! A sky at a
standstill? Who has ever seen this? A fool's canoe never
docks. The world is only vanity! He who died lost his
breath! A known scandal! (Our translation)

The act of injustice is also one of the attitudes of the colonisers to mete out punishment on their host community; this is seen in all the novels studied. Evidence of the presence of the reincarnated beings is however widespread:

Son ombre était là, devant moi. Et l'ombre m'a parlé. Vôye, ma mère! Je suis mort et enterré! Ah! la diabolique apparition! Vôye! se lamentait le boucher. (1967:169)

His ghost was there, before me. And the ghost spoke to me. Vôye, my mother! I was dead and buried! Ah! Diabolic appearance! Vôye! The butcher lamented. (Our translation)

The non-realisation of Magamou Seck's dream and the contractual agonies, demeaning his personality, among other negative incidences, constitute the realities of the novel.

Vengeance could be directed toward a perceived enemy or against oneself if angered by his inability to achieve a target goal.

Magamou renâcla, fier de sa création. Ainsi se vengeait-il des offenses, celles qui l'avaient chagriné comme celles qui avaient écorché son peuple. Il fut tendre pour ce peuple qui, lui aussi, lui surtout, dressait sur son chemin de pauvre malheureux, les embûches les plus sordides. Cependant, Magamou ne mettait pas toujours l'accent sur les impairs commis par ses compatriotes. Certes, il en voulait à des individus déterminés, dont il fustigeait avec vigueur le comportement qu'il jugeait veule, insouciant, terne ou même inadmissible. Au vrai, rares étaient ses critiques globales, tant il souffrait des injustices et des traitements déshonorants qui hérissaient ses frères. (LP, 1967:57)

Magamou showed reluctance, proud of his being. That's how he avenged offences, those that bothered him like those that made his people hypertensive. He strived for his people that, he also; he above all, stood up on his native unfortunate poor country road, very solid traps. However, Magamou do not always lay emphasis on the evil committed by his compactriots. Admittedly, he wanted determined individuals, whom he castigates with vigour the comportment he judges weak, carefree, dull or intolerable. Truly, his criticisms were globally exceptional; much he suffered injustices and dishonoured treatment that hackles his brothers. (Our translation)

Finally, Magamou's failure to achieve his aim of living a pleasant, progressive and setting his people free from the shackles of colonial domination of the Suns (soleils) aggravated his resolve to violently end his life as a vengeance by committing

suicide (suicide vengeance). Magamou eventually committed suicide after he had left his destiny been decided by others. Anybody who wants to live an independent life that will determine his or her success should not allow others dictate his living.

Magamou piaffait. Il était démonté. Decrochant le premier coutelas à sa portée, il s'acharna à taper rageusement sur sa cheville droite qu'il transforma en charpie. Le sang, en filigrane, brodait des auréoles vermeilles autour de flaques qui se coagulaient, pêle-mêle. (LP, 1967:251)

Magamou is impatient. He was stormy. Landed the first cutlass within his reach; he perseveres to hit furiously on his right ankle which he tore to shreds. Blood, in water form, clustered the rings bright red round the puddles that coagulated, higgledy-piggledy. (Our translation)

Concerning morals; patience and endurance are attributes that can help one to get over depression and anger because if not managed, can lead to negative consequences as was at last experienced in the case of Magamou Seck who like Fama is of noble descent. «*Je suis de sang noble! S'insurgea Magamou. On faisait cas de ma présence.*» p.175 [I am of a noble blood! rebelled Magamou. They made case of my presence. (Our translation)]

Avant de s'effondrer, Magamou avait prononcé quelques paroles confuses. C'est à peine si l'on avait pu discerner deux mots, l'un très doux: cher ou Cheikh; l'autre, en dents de scie: Bernardy; peut-être, paradis. (LP, 1967:252)

Before he collapsed, Magamou had pronounced certain confusing words. It is of no use if one had been able to understand two words, one very sweet: Cher or Cheikh; the other, within jigsaw teeth: Bernardy; may be, paradise. (Our translation)

Malick Fall in *La plaie*, through Magamou, the protagonist demonstrates that every human being must take his destiny in his hands and should not allow anyone to decide his future. What others say about a personality does not count as much as what the personality himself or herself says about self. A Yoruba parlance in respect of the above goes thus: “*Oun ti onigba ba pe igba re niwon nba pee.*” [Whatever name the owner of a calabash calls it, which is what others will as well call it. (Our translation)]

The above school of thought probably is what inspires Aire (2005:7) when he submits that:

C'est sur ces entrefaites que le héros contemple le suicide et se dit : « seul contre tous, je gagnerai la dernière bataille. Je rendrai le souffle qui m'avait été confié. »

It is at that moment that the hero contemplates suicide and he said: "only against all odds, I will win the last battle. I shall return the breath that was put in my charge. (Our translation)

Magamou at a certain point in his mysterious journey through life regretted his condition as well as that of Africa as he opines:

Je pensais avoir échappé à la mort. J'ai eu raison de ma plaie, raison du cabanon, de Cheikh Sar et de Bernardy. J'ai eu raison de la solitude et de la misère. J'ai conscience d'être un homme, comme tout le monde. Et me voici plus près de la mort que jamais... A moins que mon analyse...Mais comment voir clair en moi ? Toujours cette voix-ci et cette autre en conflit permanent. Je suis déchiré. Je ne sais plus où donner de la tête. Ah! si j'avais su ! (LP, 1967:177)

I thought of escaping death. I have reason for my wound, reason for my shed, of Cheikh Sar and of Bernardy. I have reason for my loneliness and the misery. I have conscience of been a man, like everybody. And see me very close to death than never... Short of my analysis...But how transparent does one see me? Always this same voice and others in a constant struggle. I am torn. I no longer know where to submit my head. Ah! Had I known! (Our translation)

This above opinion however reflects the regret of a man whose life and world have been lost due to the arrival of the colonial masters. Their coming, to him was seen as a curse, because he could not achieve his aim as a full fledge man in a sovereign state. However, the next chapter will explain how ancestors and spirits form parts of the features of reincarnation and nationalist struggles using also a postcolonial francophone African novel as a case study.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The study has examined a number of literary texts written by African writers extensively of francophone Africa with a few Anglophone writers. We delved into the theme of reincarnation and nationalist struggles for freedom after the concept has been made explicit using some world religions that have religious belief of the concept of reincarnation.

The chosen francophone African writers have shown that the multiple of serious problems confront Africa in the postcolonial era which include the question of reincarnation, ancestors, spirits and sacrifices of offerings to their gods. Our study has shown that literary commitment in the area of study is not only by francophone African writers such as Ahmadou Kourouma, Sony Labou Tansi, Malick Fall, Seydou Badian Kouyaté, Franz Fanon, Amadou Koné, Birago Diop, Sembène Ousmane, Boni Nazi, Tahar Ben Jelloun, Sassine Williams, Aminata Sow Fall, among the most popular, but also by Anglophone African writers like; Chinua Achebe, Ngugi Wa Thiong’O, John Pepper Clark and Wole Soyinka, just to mention but a few.

The study discovered that African traditional culture and practices have been made to play vital roles in the various texts employed for this research work. This study has also shown that the theme of reincarnation – spirits which is a universally accepted concept has rightly found itself not only as a belief system into certain religions but it has also found its way into literary perspectives. We showed how the theme of reincarnation has been used in protagonists’ spirits to enter into the author’s world and its effect on the postcolonial societies. Besides, apart from our analysis of the antiquity of reincarnation, we also discussed the essence and implications or otherwise neglect of the living dead. Reincarnation has been variously defined as “*Metempsychosis*”, “*palingenesis*”, “*Metempsychosis*”, “*rebirth*”, and “*transmigration*” (Wayne:1991).

The significance of our study lies mainly in the use of the thematic approach that placed the protagonists and Spirits at vantage positions, analyse their actions as

reflected in literary texts. The themes of reincarnation and nationalist struggles have been examined in an adventurous manner in several novels.

However, we have focused on different novels of three different authors from three countries in Africa and the novels are: *Les soleils des indépendances* (*The Suns of Independence*), which centred on the critical inhuman treatment meted on Africans by postcolonial governments in Africa. *Monnè, outrages et défis*, (*Monnè, outrages and defiance*), a history of a century of colonialism, *En attendant le vote des bêtes sauvages* (*Waiting for the Wild Beast to vote*), this novel, a satire of postcolonial Africa where a praise singer (griot) recounts the story of a tribal hunter's transformation into a dictator, is inspired by President Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo. All of these by Ahmadou Kourouma, Sony Labou Tansi in *La Vie et demie* (*Life and a Half*), depicts despotic regimes and denounces wasteful and senseless killings of helpless people in Africa in the postcolonial era where fierce opposition was mounted, until an end was put to these generation of rulers. *L'Etat honteux* (*Life of Shame*) nonetheless showcase the shameless behaviours exhibited by leaders who ridiculed their selves before the populace. *L'Etat honteux* is another tragic story of a dictator, Martillini Lopez, son of Maman Nationale, commandant of his "hernia". His mother encouraged and helped in the molestation and oppression of their people whom they both exploited to the least. Martillini did not only institutionalise prostitution, he also made prey his victims. Martillini considered prostitution a legal trade which he practices at will. The theme of death is a general phenomenon in Labou's works and *L'Anté-peuple* (*Anti-people*) demonstrates the self-centredness of leaders, who care less about the people and can go to any length to satisfy their own curiosity at the expense of the masses. All of these novels were written by Sony Labou Tansi. *La plaie* (*The Wound*), *Temps présent* and *Reliefs* were authored by Malick Fall and *Noces sacrées* and *Sous l'orage suivi de la mort de Chaka*, both novels by Seydou Badian Kouyaté, these novels showcase the belief in African traditional religion which proofs the efficacy of African magical realism, orthodox medicine, ancestral power, sacrifices made to the gods and the belief in the presence of Spirits. A close examination of their works reveals a deep-seated belief of Africans in the discourse on the theme of re-incarnation, possession of enhanced power of reincarnated beings and Spirits.

As we have discussed, most literary works done in francophone African literature have usually focused on one major issue in all of these novels. For instance, they have the theme of reincarnation and political oppression. The arrival of Western civilisation, made most Africans do away with their indigenous traditions, ancient cultures, languages and norms much to her detriment.

Though critical analyses of the three major texts mentioned above had been done, in the study, focus has been shifted from the religious/cultural belief of African philosophies of certain tribes to African literature and most importantly on postcolonial Francophone African literature. This however is done through the theoretical application of postcolonialism and magical realist theories to x-ray *Les soleils des indépendances*, *La Vie et demie* and *La plaie*.

Meanwhile, if the already highlighted definitions on reincarnation are in accordance with the Yoruba belief of the concept, then, the idea of paradox, confusion, or contradiction will not have arisen. The fact remains that, the traditional African belief generally sees a human being as a composite of matter consisting of a soul, body, and spirit. Fundamentally, any belief in the theme of reincarnation, ‘partial’ or ‘full’/‘whole’, must undoubtedly confirm the belief in the continuous survival of the soul as such.

In agreement with Majeed (2012:142) where he opines that: “The thesis of ‘partial reincarnation’ is the idea that a baby identified as the incarnation of a living-dead might possess certain traceable features of the latter but not the soul of the latter.” Though, the belief of the continuum in the existence of the living-dead residing in the spirit world is true and cannot be underestimated, what however makes it misty, is the Yoruba maxim that: “*Bi a ba pe oku ni popo, alaye eniyan ni ndaun*” [If we invoke the spirit of the dead, a living soul answers (Our translation)]

On the other hand, when we take a close look at the complete denial of reincarnation, the above analogy could be a factor why Onyewuenyi (2014) argues that reincarnation is an impossible concept in the framework of African Ontology. His argument is that, unlike the original sense of the doctrine, it will be difficult to maintain in the African context that the soul of a living-dead inhabit another body for another cycle of living.

Fama in *Les soleils des indépendances* while psychologically traumatised is also physically dejected with the report of what his wives had become in his absence. He was already an ordinary walking corpse who could not identify with the reality of his time. This psychological trauma is what Nicolas (1985) in *Comprendre: Les soleils des indépendances* refers to as: “*violence physique*”.

Fama’s death signalled the end of an era as well as that of the chieftaincies in Horo- dougou. The traditions which he fought to keep eventually died with him as all the honour given to the dead Doumbouya both on the seventh and fortieth day was not even observed for him. This is as a result of a change of government. Prominent among the themes in the novel is the theme of death. Fama was not happy with the way his compatriots surrendered to the Europeans thereby losing their morals, communal strength and African religious beliefs. Koné after death transmigrated in Fama, then later re-incarnated as a Malinké baby.

Postcolonialism as a potent theory conforms to these francophone writers desire that Africans ought to be encouraged to, like Fama, fight to retain and to return to their ancestral roots by maintaining communication and harmonious relationship with those beings that had direct impact on their forefathers.

This study explores the possibility of a global acceptance or a more positive stance as regards the concept of reincarnation and nationalist struggles for freedom. In Sony Labou Tansi’s *La Vie et demie* for instance, Martial re-incarnated and his spirit transmigrated through his daughter, Chaïdana and his three grand-children to avenge his killers.

La Vie et demie, is about the highest order of decadence in Katamalanasié, which represents most African nations. Martial’s revolutionary stance brought about his brutal and gruesome murder by the Providential Guides after he had been captured, though murdered, refused to “die that death” when he denounced vehemently the kind of death awaiting him when he said: “*Je ne veux pas mourir cette mort*” p.13 [(I do not want to die this death) (Our Translation)]

Martial is a courageous, fearless and dogged freedom fighter. In spite of threats and intimidations, he stood his ground to fight the government to a standstill. However, in the process he was arrested, fed with his own flesh and eventually

gruesomely murdered. As these generations of rulers take their turn in governance, unknown to them, they meet with stiff opposition from Martial and his lineage that they felt had been eradicated.

Moreover, after his death, Martial re-incarnated and re-ignited the battle through his daughter - Chaïdana who continued the nationalist struggles for freedom which her father was unable to accomplish while alive. After so many years of struggle and wasting of the lives of successive despotic rulers under different names, Chaïdana herself died but before her eventual death, she handed the unfinished fight without end in sight to her Triplets. They also fought to avenge the murder of their grand-father Martial whose spirit refuse to rest until the last in the lineage of the Providential Guides was killed.

Meanwhile, as earlier stated in the study that whenever a person die prematurely or unaccomplished such an individual will reincarnate and until the spirit of such an individual begins to seek vengeance until it accomplishes the God-destined purpose or any task he/she wishes. Martial was able to have a respite only when he had successfully monitored the execution of all his enemies by his remaining grandchildren.

Sony Labou Tansi, in *La Vie et demie* uses the reincarnated being as a political weapon to exert vendetta. Martial appeared to the Providential Guides many times to drive home his anger against; misrule, oppression, wanton killings and corruption by government officials in Katalamanasie and also demanded for freedom for his compatriots. Malick Fall's *La plaie* through Magamou Seck also demonstrated a similar experience; in addition, he cautions on the danger of allowing any other person decide one's destiny. It is also expedient to note that, to really understand a society, one has to align or reckon with the excluded, otherwise referred to as the dregs of the society.

In addition, Badian in *Noces sacrées* showcases that African religion among other places is found in Shrines, Sacred places and religious objects. He employs magical realism to reinforce the fight against imperialism where expatriates had culturally and traditionally undermined Africa. A certain M. Jules masterminded the theft of the statue - N'Tomo which resulted into the gods rising up in defense of their

honour. Badian's *Noces sacrées* depicts the apparition of N'Tomo that disappeared when stolen from Africa and transported to far away Europe and eventually made miserable and thereafter killed all who dared it. The great N'Tomo is the protagonist in *Noces sacrées*, it manifests the animist reality of the African traditional belief in their gods and ancestors that must not be taken for granted. Miss Besnier attested to the metaphysical power of the African gods at the disappearance of N'Tomo in France when she exclaimed Ah! This Africa. This incident clearly underscores the supremacy of the African belief system that N'Tomo was not a mere sculptural item.

Badian's *Noces sacrées* also shows that African traditional belief system has been peacefully managed before the arrival of Europeans. It again demonstrated the efficacy of the traditional medicine over and above the modern medicine which seems to be lacking in curing certain sicknesses and diseases. The traditional medicine has the power to cure ailments without undergoing any surgical operation performed but only with the assistance of the ancestors.

Furthermore, Kourouma in *Les soleils des indépendances*, shows the import of the death of Fama. It demonstrates and re-echoes the change in the new world order due to the socio-political development that caused divisions among the people along ethnic and religious lines.

The study further notes that the three texts when critically compared have the same view point on the adverse effect of colonialism on the political, cultural and religious background of Africans and this poses a devastating effect on the life of the colonised people. For instance, in *Les soleils des indépendances*, the protagonist, Fama, a Doumbouya Prince is reduced to a nonentity who no longer commands respect before his own people, exposing his feebleness in the name of being an ardent believer in the custom and tradition of his ancestors. Fama also stood against the government of one party system which led to his imprisonment and eventual death. In a similar vein, *La Vie et demie*, shows the protest Martial led against the despotic Provisional Government to stop the wanton killing of his compatriots, this opposition led to his initial arrest and finally gruesomely murdered. His heroic death gave most of his supporters the courage to fight on till the last of the Provisional Government is eliminated by the charming elegance of his daughter Chaïdana and her Triplets before his spirit could have a respite. Magamou Seck in *La plaie* also reminded us that Africa

has values and cultural heritage that nobody can rubbish in the guise of civilisation or modernisation. In *Noces sacrées*, it is also shown that African tradition has a value which must be acknowledged when N'Tomo that was considered an ordinary wooden statue was stolen and taken outside the shores of Africa but it is soon discovered that N'Tomo disappeared, came back home and eventually caused the mysterious death and made miserable the life of all those involved in its theft. All of these conspiracies are postcolonial gimmicks to paint a picture of their dominance against the “weak-mindedness” of their colonies. It is also evident that Africa has a cure for the various ailments orthodox medicine could not find solution to and most of these cures are proffered by consultations made to the ancestors whom they believe sees beyond science and inventions.

The use of postcolonial and magical realism theories in analysing the three chosen texts shows that, the study has filled the gaps and silences of the notion that there is nothing such as; reincarnated beings possessing enhanced power, ancestors and spirits. These themes among others feature prominently in almost all the postcolonial African writers' works, attesting to their existence in African tradition.

The findings of this study, according to Meade and Zimmermann (1996:5), are that: “By understanding the religion of other people, we can learn to respect their beliefs even if we do not worship in the same way. It is only by understanding and respect that men can live happily together.”

The novels of Kourouma, Labou and Fall convincingly support the concept of reincarnation as the theme of reincarnation shows the reality with the evidence that cuts across their works. Each of the chosen works of these authors also gives an undisputable genuine account of their claims. This is because each of the writers has unique messages on postcolonial activities as well as on the traditional African culture and morality. That uniqueness made them to see what they individually wrote on with common eyes and understanding of the African religion. They also elucidate the actions of the colonisers and the reactions of the colonised. Their ultimate aim was to establish the conditions for happiness here on earth.

Bulber (1999:2), citing Diderot's opinion states that:

There is only one duty to make one happy; accordingly, the right laws as well as the right political institutions are only those which contribute to the happiness of the individuals. On this point, all the “Philosophers” agree, in spite of several contradictory trends among them.

The trauma experienced by the protagonists, Martial who was brutally murdered, Fama, a prince who died like a commoner and Magamou Seck also of noble descent that was inflicted with a wound which changed his destiny and identity as represented in the texts of our study. This demonstrates to us a form of political oppression under which they all strive for justice as once said in a speech by United States President Obama (2009) where he opines and cited by Fasinu (2010:137) that: *“Oppression will always be with us but we can strive for justice”*. The major points of convergence in this study are the agreed position that: reincarnation exist, the reincarnated beings possess enhanced power and that the dawn of a new era brought about by postcolonialism, created a division like a broken wall between once united entities.

Therefore, like its colonial predecessor, postcolonial identity owes its existence to force. The gap in this study, it is discovered that; after the triumph of every reincarnated protagonist, and the justice they strive for is achieved, there ceases every agitation in that society. That is to say, a reincarnated protagonist will never quit a struggle as a failure. Does that now mean that a reincarnated because of an enhanced power is always needed for liberation from oppression and nothing else? In the Yoruba sense of it, only those who die prematurely without fulfilling their God-given destiny or brutally murdered reincarnates and not just anybody.

According to NA’ Allah (1996), African artists should explore African history and culture only from progressive and functional paradigms. To situate this research work in NA’ Allah’s opinion, the past should not be regarded as the sole repository of tradition. We do not, therefore, romanticize in the museum of ancestral memory. Rather the study re-evaluates tradition and socio-political conditions through the chosen texts. Our discovery is that reincarnation actually exists generally and especially in Africa as demonstrated through the theme of reincarnation and magical realism in the chosen texts, and man is portrayed as a central pillar of life.

Wright (2010:335-336) citing Palcu as she responds to an interview from a public policy scholar, Fassil Demissie on why she is very concerned with the history of Black people, posits thus:

It is important because our culture, African culture, was based on an oral tradition. It is very new that we write, and now we are making films and things like that. It is very important that we retrace our heritage and put it in film, put it in writing, put it in books, and everything. Because you know that memory disappears so quickly. It is very fragile. This means that it is so easy for somebody to tell your grandchild later on, that something did not exist, that something is not true, etc. Thank God we are developing our own literary tradition to explore our own history and experiences. This is very important for me because at school I was never taught my history. Everything I learnt was from my mother and my grandparents and my own searching.

If we try now to give an appraisal of these writers in the light of our present conditions, we might describe them as still significant in several respects as follows:

1. they have provided a lasting pattern and example for militant literature and philosophy.
2. what they wrote still has a strong appeal for us today. This had paved way for the fight for democracy in many countries (colonies, semi-colonies and fascist dictatorships).
3. in our present day, their works are still thought provoking and inspiring, due to the creative boldness of their approach to the problems created by the advent of colonialism.

In this respect, it seems relevant to employ and quote Lenin's appraisal of the 18th century philosophers to the chosen African writers as quoted by Bulber (1999:8):

The fervent, lively, shrewd and witty writings of the old XVIIIth century atheists, who did not fear to openly attack the ruling priesthood, will often turn out to be a thousand times more capable of awakening people from their religious sleep than the mere repetitions of Marxism...
(*The range of militant Marxism*, 1922)

This study is not just an effort at widening the general discourse on reincarnation, rather on nationalist struggles by reincarnated beings using enhanced powers. We modestly aver that it contributes to the much needed knowledge on the

topic from a literary point of view. Lastly, the trio view reincarnation and nationalist struggles in selected postcolonial francophone African novels as a means of reviving and bringing the African tradition to the fore, using its belief in enhanced power of the reincarnated beings in the struggle against oppression and domination for freedom, therefore paving way for another literary resource for knowledge of the past.

The entire novels advance an overtly postcolonial as well as magical stance through revolt and rebellion by the protagonists. Therefore, in Africa, there are certain phenomena that are inexplicable, except through the wisdom of the sage. These phenomena of the reincarnated beings possessing enhanced powers clearly demonstrate that, Africa is indeed a land of wonders where the never heard, of, never seen, never thought, never experienced and never thought deeds are prevalent. It is therefore recommended that researchers could delve more into African tradition and culture to avoid the extinction to which most African languages and histories are going into presently. This study has also answered all the research questions raised at the beginning of the work.

In conclusion, Slemon Stephen, (1988:24) opines that:

This process, they tell us, can transmute the “shreds and fragments” of colonial violence and otherness into new “codes of recognition” in which the dispossessed, the silenced, and the marginalised of our own dominating system can again find voice, and enter into the dialectic continuity of on-going community and place that is our “real” cultural heritage.

In the summary of *La Vie et demie*, Sylvie Broide et al in “Notre Librairie” No. 82, 1986 cited by Ayeleru (2001:56) thus:

Nous sommes en Katamalanasia. Le guide providential regne en maitre absolu, sur le pays. Seul, Martial lui resiste. Mais de quelle facon. Un couteau de cuisine, un revolver, deux chargeurs de P.M, un sabre, divers poisons meles a du Champagne ne parviendront pas a en finir avec lui, car Martial ne veut pas mourir cette mort. Des lors, son ombre restera, au dela du corps, et marquera les choses et les etres de son empreinte indelebile. De generation a generation de guide Providentiel sa fille, Chaïdana, poursuivra la lutte en se prostituant avec les dignitaires du regime, les tuant les uns apres les autres...

We are in Katamalanasia. The Providential Guide reigns as a supreme ruler. Only Martial could resist him. But, by

what means: A kitchen knife, a revolver, two cartridges (loader), of P.M, a cutlass, various poisons mixed with champagne could not get rid of him, for Martial “does not want to die (this death)”. Since then, his ghost (shadow) remains beyond the body and marks things and begins with its indelible imprint. From generation to generation of Providential Guide, Chaïdana, Martial’s daughter pursues the struggle by prostituting with the dignitaries of the regime, killing them one after the other.

The three Francophone African novels of our study substantiate the universal belief in the reincarnated beings deploying enhanced powers as a veritable tool in the struggle for freedom. The demonstration of the three protagonists forms the basis for nationalist struggles in a postcolonial Francophone Africa.

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APPENDIX I

ORAL INTERVIEW WITH MR. JULIUS I. OGUNRANTI, A LECTURER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF YORUBA, ADEYEMI COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, ONDO ON THE 11TH APRIL, 2014. 10AM IN HIS OFFICE.

- Researcher:** Good morning Sir, my name is Mr. Gabriel Olusegun FASINU, a postgraduate student in the Department of European Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan.
- Mr. Ogunranti:** You are welcome, please have your seat and how may I help you Sir?
- Researcher:** Thank you Sir, as I have earlier said, I am a postgraduate student running an M.Phil programme at the above mentioned premier University. I am here to have an oral interview with you in furtherance of the research on my topic: “Reincarnation and Nationalist struggles in selected Postcolonial Francophone African Novels”. Sir, reading through some scholars’ works on the topic, I understood that there is both African and universal belief in the concept of reincarnation. Sir, will you please substantiate this fact if true?
- Mr. Ogunranti:** Yes of course, there is a strong belief in reincarnation as a belief system all over the world. Though, there may be differences in the way these different people belief in it but the fact remains that, it is existent. However, there is no controversy about that.
- Researcher:** O.k Sir, as you have rightly pointed out that the existence of reincarnation is real and not a fallacy. How can you convince people who are in doubt of this concept?
- Mr. Ogunranti:** Well, everybody is entitled to his/her opinion about life, haven said that, anyone in doubt of this concept especially if such persons or group of people remember that, we have children when given birth to shortly after the demise of their grandfather or grandmother are called names such as: Babatunde, Iyabode etc to demonstrate the return of their loved ones. Then, the have

no reason to doubt the concept, the only thing they can do is to say that their faith is against it.

Researcher: Sir, can you remember any true life story or stories that support these claims?

Mr. Ogunranti: (Laughs). My son, as you are aware from your earlier readings in African literature that Africa is a land full of mysteries and wonders. You will also agree with me that, Yoruba people attach great importance to their dead relatives whom they believe are not far away from them as described by Awolalu, Dopamu, Mbiti, Abimbola and others and so believe in reincarnation. There are varieties of stories on the concept told by our elders in the past and presently, instances of such true life stories still exist particularly in known places in Yorubaland and other African countries.

Researcher: Sorry, I hope I am not taking too much of your time Sir?

Mr. Ogunranti: Not at all. Do not bother; I have already devoted this time to attend to you, more so when you had booked an appointment with me. I love research myself and seeing someone outside my field showing interest in what should be the concern of all African scholars to keep African culture alive. You see, your area of research is an interesting one which will help upcoming generation of researchers know more and have more materials on this field of discourse and about the inherent supernatural powers of the reincarnated beings. There is very scanty if any previous study at all on this topic.

Researcher: With all these views you have shared with me, can you please go further to tell me one or two true life stories?

Mr. Ogunranti: Yes, with all pleasure. Firstly, there are night Markets where the reincarnated beings do buy and sell at Iseyin and Igbeti, both in Oyo State and Itoku in Abeokuta, Ogun State. These Markets are known and popular for their activities of the reincarnated beings. Most times when the living beings visit such Market places, there is the likelihood of meeting with a well known person who had died sometime ago. However, one

thing is worthy of note here, the reincarnated beings have an instinct such that when any living being recognized them, before too long they will either disappear or cease coming to that very market. Secondly, there was a particular known story of a dead man from Saki in Oke-Ogun of Oyo State. Many years after his death, reincarnated and lived in Abeokuta, he became wealthy, built a house, married and had children. Inquisitively, the wife and the children continually insist on being taken home to know their relatives with an assurance of taking them home one day. One fateful morning, during vacation when the children were out of school, he asked his driver to drive them to Saki his home town. As soon as they got there, a few meters from his family there, compound, he stopped the driver, pointed to the house in a very large compound and told them to go and introduce themselves to whoever they meet, then told the driver to take them there while the drops to greet neighbours before joining them. It took the wife and children two whole days after his non-appearance before the astonished elders who had understood what really transpired to calm the family of the reincarnated being and took them to his tomb in front of an unaccomplished abandoned house project he was building before his demise during his first life. That was the last that was hard of him. Gentlemen, I can go on narrating instances of such happenings that had been testified to by many elders in Yorùbáland and elsewhere in Africa.

Researcher:

Thank you sir, I am very grateful for your wealth of wisdom and readiness to enlighten me on the concept of reincarnation. This has given me great confidence that I am really not working in a vacuum as it concerns my area of study. I hope when next I come to bother you, you will be available to assist me as usual.

Mr. Ogunranti: Why not, you are always welcome. People's opinion on the topic might want to differ along religious beliefs but the fact remains that reincarnation is neither a myth nor fallacy but real.

Researcher: Thank you Sir, I am grateful.