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The Poetics of African Divinatory Art in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow*

Youssoupha MANE*

Résumé

Cet article a pour objectif d'analyser la thématique de la divination dans le roman de Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Wizard of the Crow*. Bien que peu et mal étudiée dans les critiques négro-africaines, la divination, ce fond commun de croyance à l'heure actuelle que partagent toutes les couches de la population africaine allant des plus humbles aux plus nantis, est utilisée comme un leitmotiv obsessionnel dans les trames romanesques de *Wizard of the Crow*. Dans ce roman au souffle épique, les anachronies narratives se trouvent cloîtrées dans la divination. Cet aspect folklorique est artistiquement manié comme un moyen de redressement de la vie politique et sociale et une quête identitaire par l'usage de la catoptromancie mis en place par le protagoniste-devin.

Mots clés: divination, miroir, analepse, prolepse, roman, identité, harmonie politique et sociale, magie, épique.

Abstract

This paper aims at analyzing the theme of divination in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow*. Although it is not granted full and due reverence in Negro literary critics, divination, a common belief shared by all African people ranking from the affluent to the wretched, is handled as an obsessional leitmotiv in this narrative frameworks. In this contemporary epic novel, the narratives anachronies are cloistered in divination. This African folk aspect is artistically manipulated by Ngugi wa Thiong'o as a pure medium of social and political harmony and a quest for identity which is done by a rife use of catoptromancy by the main protagonist.

Keywords: divination, mirror, prolepse, analepse, novel, identity, social and political harmony, magic, epic.

Introduction

Being part and parcel of African oral tradition, divination is that gnomic, epistemological phenomenon, deeply entrenched in African imaginary. It enables the individuals to acquire foreknowledge about the upcoming events that structure their lifetime. Divination is on the odd occasion apprehended as a full and considerable

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leitmotiv in literary production. All the same, in Ngugi's wa Thiong'o's literary fiction, *Wizard of the Crow* (2006), most likely his longest novel ever written, jam-packed with oral footprints, satirical, magical, comical and epic, divination seems to predominate, to appropriate, from the beginning to the end the entire narrative framework of this novel. Chinua Achebe however used the theme of divination in his village novels: *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and *Arrow of God* (1964), when describing the philosophy, the moral foundation, the reestablishment of social order of the Ibo pre-colonial society, to the healing of people who labour under diseases as demonstrated in Elechi Amadi's *The Concubine* (1966). The representation of divinatory art in *Wizard of the Crow* in a modernist, urban society and the natural and high proclivity to prediction of the round characters unearth the idea that this folkloric aspect is shared by a great majority of people no matter how their religious affiliations. It entails that human being is naturally propelled at the discovery of everything that remains to him *incognito* or mythic.

This African way of knowing which pertains more or less to the Anthropological field, akin to other African cultural or religious practice, was not spared from prejudices. Some scholars wrongly branded this divinatory art as "only a game of chance" (Burnett Taylor, 1958:133) by using "haphazard methods" (Parrinder, 1976:122) with the entire sense of the diviner's wording which is vilified as "gibberish" (Middleton, 1971: 176) or completely derived, cleansed of logic. There is no doubt that these scholars who worked on African oral tradition have overlooked to put forward in their assertion the mystical aspect which is inherent, inbuilt to divination. And those researchers seem to be in no predisposition to glean the very essence of magic, mystic, and the African spirituality or responsiveness which do not require at all the appeal of the *logos* to be wholly grasped. Being sentient of the omnipresence of the racial daemon which is always standing by, ready to swallow and makes fade away for good this facet of the Negro's ways of knowing inaccessible things, Ngugi wa Thiong'o writes *Wizard of the Crow* to show with effectiveness the centrality of divination in Kenyan society in particular and the African one in the broadest sense. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how the African divinatory art is woven in the contemporary literary text.

I. Divination: A narrative device

In this African novel, *Wizard of the Crow* appears a magic realism. It is a "kind of modern fiction in which fabulous and fantastic events are included in a narrative that otherwise maintains the 'reliable' tone of objective realistic report"

(Baldick, 1990:128). Such a literary artefact emerges in Amos Tutuola's *The Palm-wine drunkard, My life in the bush of ghosts* (1994) and in Ben Okri's *Songs of Enchantments* (1993). It comes into view that Ngugi wa Thiong'o has imaginatively attempted to set all the prolepses, the anticipations in the foretelling directly reported from the rumour mongers. The use of divination as a literary technique is noticeable when Rachael, the Ruler's lawful wife, committed the unwarrantable misdemeanour when she goaded, scolded the tyrannical ruler to stop sleeping with schoolgirls. Seeing that the tyrant is never ever in mood of unloading any chastisements about his ways of doing and seeing things which is obviously related to his megalomaniac outlook and his unbendable manner, he comes to the gloomy and dismal resolution to incarcerate his spouse because of the latter's whinges and moaning. In her secluded prison, not very far from the Ruler's Mansion, the detained lives a monotonous life where everything remained unchanged, ranging from her food to the programs of the television. It is from this broadcasting program that the first mark of divination, of biblical prophecy manifests itself through a song. In this regard, the narrator put it as follows:

Our Lord will come back one day
He will take us to his home above
I will then know how much he loves me
Whenever he comes back

And when he comes back
You the wicked will be left behind
Moaning your wicked deeds
Whenever our Lord comes back (8)

In this prophetic tirade, the alluded redeemer, the restorers of justice and equity are any other ones but the members of the Movement for Voice of the People led by the activists-characters namely Kamiti and Nyawira. What is more, in this hymn-prediction used as a prolepsis, the victimized Rachael is a mere synecdoche in which her name and the oppression and the cruelty perpetrated upon her are substitutable for the suffering and the torment of the whole Nation of Aburiria. The author's use of biblical prophecies implies that religion and social and political proceedings have always cohabited. Each important event that will make a turning point in people's lives is more often than not vaccinated by oracles, diviners or prophets who mainly used what social anthropologist labelled as "intuitive divination" or "wisdom divinational forms" (Zuess, 1987:376). The hymn that comes out as a warning for the Ruler is fulfilled in the literary fiction when the "wicked" symbolized here by the Ruler is overthrown at the end of the novel by the rebellious masses. But it seems

that he has absolutely misinterpreted and misunderstood the real meanings cloistered in these proleptic and divinatory lines in the sense that he considered himself as the saviour who will come for the second time as Jesus to deliver Rachael who must expiate her sins before. Here, the Ruler had found ugly meanings on behalf of beautiful and farsighted lines. Through this exegetic theory or art, Oscar Wild says as follows: “all art is at once surface and symbol. Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril” (Wild, 1998:8). Wandering in the land of pure ignorance and regarding his wife as the real malefactor, he “ had amplifiers placed at the four corners of the seven acre plantation” (9) because the repletion of this song that hides a counterfeit coming event pleased him.

Rachael, in the course of the novel is liberated not by him as he intended but by the committed women of Aburiria. According to Gerard Genette, in his *Figures III* this kind of narrative prolepsis that takes place within the narrative framework is labelled as a *partial* or *external* prolepsis. Such anticipatory narrative strategy which comes out through divination is also patent in the letter the Wizard of the Crow had addressed to Machokali, the Minister for Foreigners. The contents of the missive that appears through Arigaigai Gatherer’s reminiscences are prophetic and forewarning words: “And I just want to tell him...Take care of yourself” (607). Despite this caveat, the minister had mysteriously vanished which implies a certain death foreseen by the diviner and which occurs during the progress of the narration.

The Ruler’s divinatory conceits seem to be somewhat motivated by some traditional African metaphysical philosophy which perches itself on the idea that just after the investiture of the king the latter immediately transmuted in a superior being. Consequently, he is able to foretell all the events that will occur during his reign. But the nonexistence of the divinatory power that should dwell in Ngugi’s anti-hero can be explained by two main factors. On the one hand, the Ruler was not put in power to be a king, on the other hand even though he proclaimed himself a king who normally is seen as a representative of God in earth, the Ruler never acts as such. That is why all his predilections which appear at the beginning of the novel are deficient and go against his visions. Hence what he tells as possible proceeding is a counter-prolepsis.

The use of divination as a literary technique in *Wizard of the Crow* appears also when the narrator sketched a scene in which diviners and medicinemen evolve. Basing the narration on the gossips which prove to be veridical, the elderly people of Aburiria who are profoundly concerned with the dictator’s everlasting bloodshed, decided to go and consult a diviner in order to get rid of him. But unfortunately the

mystical indication, which consisted in mixing the Ruler's hair "with grass, salt and magic potions and gave it to a bearded goat to swallow" (3) so that he may stop his carnage, botched. Being aware of the scheme, he captured the conspirators who were given over the crocodiles of the Red Rivers to assure eternal peace. To consolidate his reign and aggrandise his power, he clandestinely paid a visit to a diviner. In this sense the narrator tells:

Still he worried about the fact that the goat had a beard, and he secretly consulted an oracle in a neighbouring country, who assured him that only a bearded spirit could seriously threaten his rule. Though he read it as meaning that no human being could overthrow him, since they had no bodily form, spirit could never grow beards, he became sensitive to beards and then decreed what came to be known as the Law of the Beard, that all goats and humans must have their beards shaved off. There are some who dispute the story of the bearded he-goat and even argue that applied only to soldiers, policemen, civil servants, and politician, and that the herdsmen shaved their he-goats out of their own volition, shaving goats' beards then being the fashion about the Aburirian herdsmen. (6)

These burlesque, grotesque lines reveal the buffoonery of some African leaders like the Ruler who once more failed or was in no posture to decipher and grasp the real meaning of these divinations given by the oracle he had consulted. He ignored that Kamiti, the Wizard of the Crow was endowed with a natural gift, a supernatural power to depart from his body and to let his soul, his spirit strolls all over the places he wishes to be. For this reason, Kamiti heralds here the bearded bird divination which let ooze nothing but ill omens for the Ruler. Bird divination, being a common literary use in epic narration, seems to represent a specific technique of prolepsis pertaining to this genre.

Conversely to many epic narratives within which the judgment of a professional diviner is overruled or overlooked by the consulter, Ngugi wa Thiong'o obsessed the dictator with unawareness in order to let happen the inescapable which consists in taking the Ruler out of power and authority. The Ruler ignored that Kamiti the magician, the benefactor or the Marxist sorcerer will never hesitate to use his fabulous power for a dignified and gracious cause. He ignored also that Aburiria was deprived of a soul and that Kamiti the diviner will give it a new soul, will cleanse the fictional Republic of Aburiria of stains, of splashing. He did not take into account that his black magic and his endless human sacrifice will be completely shattered by Kamiti's powerful mirrors and esoteric knowledge. This is how Ngugi wa Thiong'o, using the channel of African divinatory art, anticipates the episodes. The use of divination to the detriment of dreams, revelations, visions that are sometimes used as prolepses in many European novels except, of course, in the Homeric universe,

can be justified by the fact that Ngugi wa Thiong'o really wants to offer *Wizard of the Crow* a local flavour which is directly hired from African folkloric literature, more precisely the oral epic literature. It is from the African attachment and belief to this system of thought through which prolepses and analepses related to divination about the fantastic impending of a hero are rife on, rampant. And it won't be useless to say that Ngugi's *Wizard of the Crow* is somewhat similar to an epic narration where divination as a literary technique remained obvious. Here the reader can clearly observe the divination taken as prolepses concerning the apparition of the bearded bird that will threaten the Ruler's throne is extended from the beginning to the outcome of the novel. This is what Genette calls *complete* or *internal* prolepses. Being unable to set proof of such a type of prolepses, Genette may be wrong when he says: "it seems that all prolepsis belong to the *partial* type (Genette, 1972:114) insofar as such an instance of prolepsis comes out in Ngugi's *Wizard of the Crow* and sets the very basis of the narration.

It is worth nothing that in many African traditional and contemporary societies, divination is not only related to the supernatural power of predicting future events. It is also linked with the diviner's predisposition to unearth all past information that concern the consulter. For instance, when a given consulter is sick, the diviner's appears to be similar to the modern doctor who does not need to know what will happen to his patient but what happened to the later for medical prescriptions or sacrifices. For that reason, divinatory art is unavoidably correlated to the other constituent of *narrative anachronies*, the literary contortion of analepses. In Ngugi's *Wizard of the Crow*, the protagonist's divinatory art had greatly contributed to fill the gaps of the narration which manifests itself by a temporary omission of information about a given character. It is this kind of prolepsis that Genette had named as *completive analepses*. It is in this literary fiction through divination that the reader was informed that Tajirika and his wife Vinjina were always concealing inferiority complex in their inner thought; that they disgust everything that is related to the black colour. Divination also goes along with visions and perceptions of the past.

II. Divination: A medium of social and political reestablishment

In *Wizard of the Crow*, diviner rush is by and large enthused, stirred by an immoral competition to accumulation, to greed as the diviner has clearly observed it: "my divinations were an appetite for evils" (207). And the diviner's function is to look after the good functioning and implementation of humanity wrapped up in a

shimmering loincloth of morality. In the realm of Aburirian government and in many non-fictional African countries, civil servants, ministers, policemen evolve with the everlasting thought or fear of having indistinguishable enemies mystically armed to harm them. That's the main reason why a high-qualified diviner in a rural or urban area is doomed to be the philosopher's stone; the Ariane's thread opens to extirpate men from the abyssal area of uncertainty and vagueness.

The first character that experiments and benefits from Kamiti's divination is Constable Arigaigai Gather. He is traumatised by "his desperate need for a cure against the ill designs of his invisible enemies" (117). The patient's needs are met insofar as he was promoted to a new professional rank. And his only unknown enemy has puzzlingly passed away in a car crash which does not mean the Wizard of the Crow is fully involved in this tragedy because it appears that he was just pulling the patient's leg, passing himself off as "a make-believe Wizard of the Crow" (125). Kamiti was unconscious that his words contain genuineness that shall come true. As in all divination scenes, prescriptions and proscriptions are made as a means of sacrifice so that the request of the consulter may be performed wittingly. What is liable to strike the reader's mind at this point is that the diviner is in contrast and disparity with traditional practice. He did not stipulate the sacrificial and ritual acts of shedding animals' blood ranking from chickens to cows to appease or please the spirits, of distributing kola nuts to particular individuals, burying talismans mingled with magic potions to the denoted spot. Kamiti the diviner only ordered his patient to give more reverence and consideration to the wretched of the earth, to the oppressed and strangled people who were labouring under teething problems of well-being, if the consulter really wants his needs to come across his expectations. In this vein, Kamiti the Wizard of the Crow, the Marxist-diviner comes out as a person who longs for socio-political harmony, justice and stability. From the divination that shows that knowledge in this oracular literature is a real power, Kamiti directed the policeman in these mild and altruist tone terms that hint the establishment of a new jurisprudence in this imaginary Republic of Aburiria:

From today on, never molest a beggar, a diviner, a healer, a wizard, or a witch.
If you ever do any harm to the helpless, this magic will turn against you.
Everything that you have, including peace of mind, will be taken away. Go now
your actions will be the mirror of your soul. Look always to the mirror of your
soul. (118)

An unforeseen visit of an underprivileged elderly man who suffers from serious stomach-aches and who did not possess financial means to go to hospital coerced Kamiti to accept the destiny designed for him. As the narrator put it: "the unexpected

twists and turn of his life were becoming ominous’’ (130). His denial to acknowledge his healing and divinational potential is that such work was never part of his project and prospect. But there is something that seems a little bit incongruous or even contradictory. If Kamiti did not really yearn for the divination and the healing occupation why did he go to India for the purpose of learning the secrets and the virtue of plants? In any case the image of Nyawira, who picked him up in the streets of Eldares and gave him food and shelter while he was roaming like a desperate ghost, crossed his mind. Rebuffing the detrimental mind-set of the proverbial donkey that always shows gratitude by kicking his benefactor, Kamiti dumped the decision to run away to the prairies and came to the rescue of the afflicted old man. In this respect, through an overlapping of narratives voices, the leniency and the philanthropical conduct of the diviner gifted with appollian artefact become manifest:

Kamiti let him in, gave him the leaves and the roots, and instructed him to boil them and drink the liquid at regular intervals.

“And make sure to drink the extraction with food.” Kamiti told him.

“Food? Did you say food? You think I have not eaten for days? If the medicine depends on food, then it is not good to me.”

Kamiti went into the kitchen and quickly scrambled some eggs with tomatoes and gave the food to the old man, adding a glass of milk. He was sure that Nyawira would not mind his being so generous with her provisions. He handed him a leaf and a piece of bark to chew. Then suddenly an idea struck him: to renounce his role as he Wizard of the Crow, he had to dispense with the income derived from it. And what better way to achieve this than an act of than of kindness? So he dug into his bag and took out the entire bundle of notes and gave it to the old man as part of the medicinal treatment. (131)

This Marxist-diviner’s moral obligation toward other people who are in extreme need for help seems to be accommodated in the very social philosophy of the Gikiyu which springs up from a proverbial warning and guidance. The proverb ethically disallowed the human being from eating alone at the jeopardy of dying alone.

The use of Kamiti’s divination and healing to the service of the neglected unearths the idea that the protagonist aimed at showing that the moral obligation of solidarity was no longer a common tradition in Aburiria where the concern for man is swapped over by the interest for money. Those gluttonous and insatiable ministers of the government of Aburiria had disregarded the fact that the ideology of not-eating-alone has always been one of the pillars upon which human societies have built themselves. They forgot that solidarity is the ferment of social and political

relationships between the individuals, the group and the successive generations. It is obvious that Kamiti had used money taken from some iniquitous consultants eager for power to empower the Movement for the Voice of the People which constructively contributed to the destitution of the Ruler. By the same token, the diviner's political commitment became out-and-out again when the Ruler was severely anguishing from a "self-induced disease" (410) whose clinical symptoms expressed themselves by a gradual and an awkward swelling of the body.

It turned out that Kamiti could use his mirror to make a diagnosis or even to heal the disease that "beats all scientific logic" (686) as Dr. Clarkwell from USA had frantically and desperately put it. It implies that modern, world medicine had no upper hand upon such illness. Nevertheless Kamiti's occult power could remedy to it but the diviner restrained himself from giving the vital helping hand to the Ruler who never felt sorry for the glumness and dejection of the Aburirian population who lived in dire straits, a real hell of a life. Through the incapability or the limitedness of western medicine to heal the Ruler, Ngugi wa Thiong'o aimed at bestowing full credit to African divination, to the African traditional medical prowess and others healing practice that go along with it. In this perspective, he put the practical idea that snubs all sorts of therapeutic hegemony in the mouth of his protagonist who uttered in front of a nameless character-consulter that "divining is a science" (151).

Still, with his divinatory power "that is an articulator, not merely an articulation of norms but also of societies (Shaw, 1991:137), Kamiti, the "guardian of life" (365) could reveal to the policemen, under government order and who tempted him with an important amount of money, the whereabouts of Nyawira the head of protester movement that spoil the anniversary of the authoritarian. But his add-on and attachment to the survival of the individuals, who might recover at any cost the bonfire smothered by a puppet-like-president and by foreign capitalists, morally prohibited the diviner to set his divinatory mirror in a vicious path. What is more, those emissaries did not know that the diviner was smarmily indoctrinated by the Buddhist philosophy that showed contempt and desolation upon human beings whose unique preoccupation appeared to be the unwanted search for possessions, passions and properties. These kinds of persons turned out to be symbolized in this literary fiction by the proverbial child who licks honey from the blade of knife and while tasting the sweetness he risks damaging his tongue (211). For the construal of this picturesque Chinese proverb uttered by the diviner himself, "damage tongue" goes beyond its outward understanding to signify inwardly the dreadful collapse of the individual inner peace and the dimming of his soul.

The use of Kamiti's divination in a righteous way as he had enthusiastically given voice to his feeling in this delighted tone perceptibly dispossessed of the psychological encumber of blameworthiness and remorse: "I was proud that I never once dispensed magic that could harm anyone; and I never really lied to my clients. I never employed conjuring tricks to mesmerize" (207). Such imposture emerges in the character of Tiecoura in *Les soleils des indépendances*. He never gets weary of uttering some numbo jumbo, jumbled speeches to enthrall Salimata who desperately suffered from barrenness (Kourouma, 1990:34).

Some African diviners like the Aro oracle who had intensely chipped in "the enslavement of many Igbo people (Orij,2009:968), would never dither to selfishly and greedily mishandle their mystic and occult power to open up Pandora's box, expanding thus evils upon innocent and blameless people. But Isanusi the diviner in Thomas Mofolo's *Chaka: an historical romance* did not restrain himself from giving "power that contains evils" (Mofolo, 1971:50) as did Kamiti when the other policemen who heard of the good adventure and the favours Arigaigai Gathere took from the oracle, rushed to Kamiti's shrine so that the latter might do for them "exactly the same magic he did for A.G" (132). Unfortunately for them, their claims were declined by the diviner. From this negative response may spring up one interesting question. Why did the diviner grant his benevolence to A.G to the disadvantage of the other policemen? It is because Kamiti had the natural predisposition of sensorial divination form by scenting every kinds of loathing impurity ranging from rotten money to ailing souls. That is why the narrator named him a "physician of wounded souls" (210). Kamiti the diviner had almost certainly smelt, through what Derek Collins names "extispicy or the reading of entrails" (Collins, 2002:20) that these puppet-security men, Elijah Njoya and Peter Kahiga who worked for a so called social order and who were motivated by greed did not deserve his magic. And that their souls were not redeemable, deliverable from malice and cupidity and chameleon's double standards contrary to A.G.who appears to possess a good *karma*. It means the individual's own potentiality to spread out humanistic deeds or demoniacal acts. Such decent form of knowledge which enables the individual to distinguish the good from the evil and adjust life in society, implies that:

Divination is clearly one of the tools bestowed by God upon man so that he may be better fitted to cope with the practical problems of life on earth. But these includes also the problem of handling successfully all the transcendental tools. And just because divination is such a twofold "prerequisite" and is basically indispensable its presence is simply taken for granted (Nadel, 1991:38)

Furthermore, in *Wizard of the Crow*, it becomes obvious that Kamiti had also resorted to nature, to animals' intuitions. Animals are known to possess a considerable perceptiveness or insightfulness to nose at all kind of imminent and looming danger by way of what can be labelled as survival instincts. Every human being who is granted with the wisdom to listen and apprehend animals' attitudes can be successful in predicting pending proceedings like the inhabitants of Togobola in Ahmadou Kourouma's *Les soleils des indépendances*. They had recourse to an aged hyena and a snake as an oracle and whose cries and successive movements in the hills and in the river are submitted under interpretations which are straight away tagged along by offerings and sacrifices (Kourouma, 1990:34). Kamiti the diviner is among those atypical individuals who providentially benefited from it.

Referring to animals' cries, the Wizard of the Crow had a foreboding that the plot-demonstration the Movement for the Voice of the People was hatching against the inauguration of Marching to Heaven's site, would not end up without blood shedding. In this vein, the diviner who instinctively follows the movement of some natural elements, warned Nyawira of the gravity of the situation in these divinatory terms full of worries and moroseness: "when I look to the distance of time I only see a kind of darkness, a mist, smoke, nothing clear. Nyawira, I smell tears and blood [...] however, on my part I don't feel ready for the task. I still want to hear what the animals, the plants have to tell me. (212). Notwithstanding his shrewdness based on abstruse commutation and which consisted in preventing loss of human lives, Kamiti could not do anything about it. In any case, what is important is just the reverence he has, the love he manifests as a diviner for human lives and dignity.

Marching to Heaven is probably Ngugi wa Thiong'o's diatribe, invective against Kenyan former President, Daniel Arap Moi's phenomenal and nonsensical project of erecting the biggest Tour in Africa, a sixty-two stories skyscraper in the middle of Nairobi's largest park. This environmental destruction would have cost 200 million dollars borrowed from foreign banks while his population was in the pangs of desperation and ecological issues.

Still in the process of social and political adjustment, Kamiti is comparable to the diviner Mugo wa Kibiro, in Ngugi's *The River Between*. This seer buckled down to warn the antagonist villages of Kameno and Makuyu of the forthcoming arrival of white missionaries. Even though no one heeded on his prophecies, he has, at least, like Kamiti the revolutionary diviner bluntly assume his sentinel function, looking after the protection, the unity and the moral values of their societies passing through his divinatory art.

III. Mirror scrying in divination: A quest for identity

Mirror scrying in divination also known as crystallo-mancy or catoptromancy was on practice in Ngugi's fiction. Kamiti the diviner in *Wizard of the Crow* had used it as a medium on a purpose peering into the mystic future or revealing the concealed and devilish thought of some of the characters in the literary text. Mirror scrying is, at the outset of the novel, used as a significant quest for identity and self-consciousness. When Aigaigai Gatherer came to the shrine of Kamiti for divination, the latter asked the patient if he was used to mirror himself. But the consulter provides him with a negative response. By putting forward these questions, the diviner metaphorically intended to let him know that self-mirroring is nothing but a mere matter of passing an overview upon one's previous life by the means of which a human being can ponder over his deeds, cross-examine his private consciousness to make out whether his endeavours are praiseworthy or illaudable. In other words, it is the individual's own moral mirror image. And it is only from this estimation he can really have a pure idea about himself, and see clearly the direction he wants to take, of course, if only he desires to give a real sense on his life. It is a kind of self-awareness without which "we might as well be folkloric creatures without souls, such as vampires, who cast no reflections" (de Waal, 1996:32). The implication of mirror can also be found in the life the Argentinian writer, Jorge Luis Borges, who, during his childhood, feared these crystals. But later on he managed to seize intellectually, in his *The Book of Imaginary Beings*, the figurative essence of mirrors through an auto-contemplation so as to straighten out unyielding guiding lines on one's own life. It is a psychological overview which always reminds a person of his humanity and "what is his place in the universe" (Anderson, 2007:15)

Strange, those are dreams that are mirrors.
Strange that the ordinary, worn-out ways
Of every day encompass the imagined
And endless universe woven by reflections. (Borges, 2006:95)

To help the policeman grasp the factual sense of mirroring, its epistemological functionality, the diviner resorts to a metaphor of a vehicle deprived of mirrors. Here, it is obviously clear that such locomotive poses solemn threats both for the driver himself and for the many others passengers and pedestrians insofar as it is cursed and doomed to accidents. In this vein, the pedagogue-diviner depicts the instructions shrouded in these disquieting and precautions terms: "How can he drive without mirrors? A driver of a vehicle without mirrors is a menace to his own life and that of others. Even a broken mirror is a danger" (116).

Beside the allegorical analysis of self-divination which definitely shows the way to self-knowledge, there is as well in Ngugi's *Wizard of the Crow*, the more or less concrete use of mirror by the diviner to hollow out inhumed realities. In the narrative, Tajirika, head of Eldares Modern Construction and Real Estate was appointed by the Ruler as chairman of Marching to Heaven. A while subsequent to his ascension to a new political status, he starts receiving bribes from myriad and bulimic businessmen who long for taking their share of the national cake. The unconceivable amount of money which appears here as a nuisance has brought about Tajirika and his wife's health deterioration whose perceptible symptom is a biased dumbness with utterances that begin with *ifs* which never come to an end. To puzzle out such incongruous illness, "a severe case of whiteness" (180), Tajirika was taken to the Wizard of the Crow thanks to Nyawira who acts as a go between. In the narrative, the healing episode is presented as follows:

The voice of the Wizard of the Crow now seemed to issue from inside the mirror:
"Vomit the words, the good and the bad!"
"If..." Tajirika said and paused.
"Now", urged the Wizard of the Crow.
"My..." Tajirika added, and then got stuck.
"More."
"Skin..."
"Keep going."
"Were not..."
"Good, good..."
"Black."
Tajirika paused as if to take breath before climbing another mountain. From inside the mirror came the same commanding voice.
"Complete the thought. The good and the bad. Complete the thought!"
"If only"
"Yes!"
"My skin..."
"Don't stop now!"
"Were...white...like a ...white man's ...skin..." Tajirika said, enunciating each word like one learning how to read.
"There! You have voiced the treacherous thought!" The Wizard of the Crow said in congratulation, removing the mirror from the windows. (178-179.)

In this catoptromancy, the fragmented, disjointed thoughts of the patient perplexed by a crisis of identity are both gathered in a consistent and sensible reasoning by the magic power of the word and by that of the mirror. To unburden the mind of this contemptuous contractor and to loosen his tongue, the diviner undertook a psychiatric journey, a therapy which is "a process of constructing a narrative, of

reconstructing a history and essentially, of *re-externalizing the event*” (Felman and Laub, 1992: 69). In other words, it is about a psychological dialogue escorted by the mystery of the crystal. It has enabled the reader to discover that Tajirika was infatuated by the daemon of whiteness. And that his profound lament and grievance were to be born black. At the time he was in ownership of the bags of *Buris*, the unique item that distinguished him from the Westerns, symbols of wealth and power was his excessive rate of melanin. In this point of view, he said: “I longed for the power of whiteness, political power, military power, the power to rule” (345). In a whole, his sickness was considered here by Ngugi wa Thiong’o as the result of his sinful consideration, his denial and insult addressed to blackness, to black community.

Tajirika perceived blackness as a colour of damnation and malediction; a colour bestowed only to the powerless. What is more, the catoptromncy did not only disclose the patient’s inner and vile desires but it has also, through the psychotherapeutic divinatory conversion, given back to Tajirika his power of speech which is facilitated by an exorcism of the white evil spirit. The patient’s wife, Vinjina was unfortunately contaminated by Tajirika. As her husband verbally abused, Vinjina vilified the entire black women whom she qualified as dirty Negroes who are always in a complete ignorance of good-manners. She goes up to say, by a way of revenge for Tajirika, guided by a serious pathology of disaffection that “if her skin were not black would her husband have thought of marrying her” (185). All these diseases due to the vice of alienations are unveiled and cured by the diviner’s mirror and psychiatric method of verbal dialogue.

Kamiti’s mirror which offers a way of teaching and curing behind appearances to another source of knowledge is here a “psychological pills, water injections” (Tuma, 1993:34) as Yibabe Yitbarek put it. He is a character in Hama Tuma’s collection of short stories entitled *The Case of the Socialist Witchdoctor and Other Stories*. The African mystical practices, the belief on the power of the occult, the use of magic to fight a dictatorial regime, and the last episode of Ngugi’s *Wizard of the Crow* which ends up with the capture of the protagonist and his trail in a public place, all these plots appear to be drawn out of Tuma’s literary output. A literary fiction in which Ngugi wa Thiong’o was confided with the privilege to write down the introduction. Therefore, what the guest did is to artistically re-write and re-contextualize the plot, the space fiction in contemporary Kenyan political and social situation. It is in this context of transcendence of literary text that Eileen Julien defines intertextuality as “the continuous dialogue of works.” (Julien, 1992:26)

Conclusion

Ngugi wa Thiong'o's portrayal of the African divination in *Wizard of the Crow* is one among other means of combating artistically the supremacy of European Cartesian thought and the stereotypes articulated against this ancient way of knowing; careworn from African oral tradition. In this wonderful novel that is also the celebration of magic, the Kenyan author has hitched himself up to represent the imaginary and esoteric cognition unerringly as Okot p'Bitek recommended: "African scholars must endeavour to present the institutions of African peoples as they really are" (p'Bitek, 1970:7). In this narrative full of magic of African orature, Ngugi's Marxist fondness became noticeable when he used divination as a sophisticated warhead, a weapon against the authoritarian power of the national leaders. By the means of the fees collected during the divinatory scenes, Kamiti the protagonist had on the one hand undermined and shaken the dictatorial State by setting jarring among them. He had extracted from them the robbed money which will serve on the other hand to supply the Movement for the Voice of the People with a benevolent energy, a survival power in order to free the masses from exploitation and oppression. The practice of mirror, the still form of water, has been transcendently handled by the diviner so as to heal physically a sufferer like Tajirika or metaphorically like A.G. Mirror scrying symbolizes a self-awareness-examination. Anyway, divination in this literary context has been used as an AK 47 against the oppressors; a psychotherapy for the acutely assimilated; a divination to serve the people, a divination which settles itself at the depth of Marxist and altruistic and ethical discourse.

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