

## Congolese Poverty versus Predestination: Evaluative Narrative from Amos Tutuola's *Ajaiyi and his Inherited Poverty*

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### Abstract

*The present literary (and qualitative) article is an evaluative narrative reading of Amos Tutuola's *Ajaiyi and his Inherited Poverty* in the light of the persistent and aggravated Congolese poverty observed over decades of slumping socio-politico-economical situations. Under postcolonial perspective, it answers the question regarding the majority of Congolese's poverty in a tremendously wealthy country. The text will document several approaches to the dilemma: to live under the poverty line of 1\$ a day in a country whose wealth feeds the world. As a matter of fact, the DRC's government ought to seek ways of empowering the marginalized population and this, in different sectors of national life. Coming closer to Amos Tutuola's protagonist, I wonder whether poverty in DRC is the matter of predestination, the laziness of population, or neglect of government leaders. The solution to overcome Congolese poverty is the change of mental structure that influences other economic structures and the struggle against tribalism, corruption, and embezzlement. Hence *Ajaiyi* overcome poverty and became wealthy.*

**Keywords:** *Congolese poverty – Predestination – Evaluative Narrative – Amos Tutuola – Inherited poverty*

### 0. Introduction

The chief goal of this study on Congolese poverty versus predestination is to demonstrate to readers that the problematic of poverty cannot right away be ascribed to predestination but it is to be discussed and studied at the level of economy, politics, and demography. Now, how come, in spite of the country's wealth, its large population still being in starvation and almost homeless except an iota of people is wealthy? This situation is the fact of paternalistic behavior inherited from colonialism and the lack of good governance by the Congolese leaders. However, colonialism is not a thing of the past, but continues today in a form of oppression and as such, must be opposed (Bressler, 2011, p.206).

The situation of poverty is also in great part due to the excessive belief in prayers which leads to religious deviations with the existence of numerous sects. Father Van Parys (1985) argues that sects in their religious deviations make the fervent believe that whatever a

man could do on earth, it could not change one's man destiny because it has already been decided by God (Van Parys, p.137). In other words, the rich people become richer and richer provided they adhere to "the church" (sect) and the poor are doomed to remain poor and die pauper in respect of the kingdom of God. However, the sects misinterpret biblical passages in Matthew and Job which urge poverty as the only way to heaven and to receive God's mercy. Here are biblical passages mostly used during the colonial period: "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven" (Matthew 19:21), or "Truly, I say to you, it will be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:23), and "Born nicked from my mother's womb, nicked I will go back" (Job 1: 20). This situation is maintained by the Congolese leaders by favoring the proliferation of sects in order to pauperize the poor and establish oppression.

Using post colonialism perspective, this article is evaluative narrative of Congolese poverty versus predestination from Tutuola's novel. It is going to show out how it is possible to get rid of poverty and be successful. After the commented summary of Amos Tutuola's *Ajaiyi* and his *Inherited Poverty*, this article will discuss different points comprised in methodology and key concepts, the results, and discussions and conclusion.

### **1. Commented summary of the book.**

This is the story of *Ajaiyi*, a man born into poverty who is determined to improve his situation. In the hope of finding the money he needs, he travels through unfamiliar lands filled with strange creatures. He meets the Spirit of Fire with its huge feathered head and flaming body, and receives assistance from a wizard and a unicorn. Yet, in the end, the answer to his woes is not far from home.

Once upon a time, in a small village in Nigeria, there was a family that had two children named *Ajaiyi*, a boy and *Aina*, a girl. This family was the poorest in the village despite its efforts to make fortune. The father owned large farms in which he worked harder than the rest of other villagers, but more he worked hard, more poverty became worse. At this time, *Ajaiyi*, the hero, is 15 and his junior sister *Aina* is 12. *Ajaiyi*'s father has a very big hunchback and so was his mother. For that, the villagers nicknamed them the "hunchback family". The hunchback made *Ajaiyi* think whether it was the cause of their continuous poverty. His father replied that a hunchback does not hinder someone's progress.

*Ajaiyi*'s mother was more industrious than the other women, but she was the poorest woman of the village. Although they were the poorest in the village, they were kind to their neighbours and strangers. "Remember the Day After Tomorrow, my son and daughter!" was the warning the father used to tell *Ajaiyi* and *Aina* when they offended someone who was older than they were.

After many years of hard work, their parents became so old and weary that they could not work anymore for the surviving of the family. Ajaiyi started to work in his father's farms. He thinks that his father has inherited poverty from his fore-father who might have died in poverty, and so he has to die in poverty as well. But Ajaiyi's father encouraging his children tells them that if one's father and mother die in poverty, it does not mean that their children will die in poverty too provided they continue working hard. They are not destined to poverty as the other people in the village think them to be; for anything can happen to a person who is born under this sun.

Their mother dies with sorrow leaving her children in poverty. Later after, their father dies too. After their father's funeral, Ajaiyi and Aina are kidnapped and sold as slaves to the slave-buyer, an Idol worshipper who wants to sacrifice them. In their flight, they fall into the trap of the Spirit of Fire. Thanks to the heavy rain, they are drawn to the Nymph, the goddess of river. This Queen of the river saves them from the Spirit of Fire.

Forced to leave their native land in escape of creditors, Ajaiyi and Aina settle down another village so that they would get money and go home. In this village, Ade, the traitor betrays Ajaiyi to the Cruel king. Ajaiyi is killed and woke up from dead by a terrible creature with the use of a "juju" (magic object). Having lost all the money he got, Ajaiyi decides to go home. He thinks he was created with poverty; otherwise Ade would not steal his money.

Back home, Aina gets married and with the money she gains from the kola-nuts, she helps Ajaiyi. But Babi, Aina's close friend, cuts the kola-nut tree by jealousy. Being unable to get money, Ajaiyi flees his numerous creditors.

However, poverty Ajaiyi has inherited from his parents, forces him to visit the Creator. With Ojo and Alabi, Ajaiyi's poor friends, they visit the Creator's town in order to get money. Unfortunately, they return with empty hands. Having left the Creator's town, they reach the god of Iron's town. Ajaiyi, Ojo, and Alabi receive from the god of Iron the talking Iron lump weighing about one ton each one. The talking Iron lump is a burden they carry along with them and hinders their progress. In their journey, they arrive at Adeola's house. Adeola is the chairman of witches.

Having consulted the village wizard, they are taken to devil for money at one condition, to sacrifice one of their dear being. Ajaiyi refuses to sacrifice his lonely junior sister, Aina. He becomes servant to the Devil-Doctor. Deceived by the Devil-Doctor's youngest wife, Ajaiyi is chased with his terrible talking iron lump on his head. People advise him to get married. He pawns for money to two pawn-brokers.

As his poverty is going from bad to worse, his wife advises him not to be discouraged at all, but to carry on struggling until his poverty is conquered. Although he has inherited it, but he has to realize that everything is possible if one can endure the punishments of the world.

Ajaiyi consults the witch doctor of his village that he fights and takes at home the pot plenty of money. Out of the money he got from the witch doctor, Ajaiyi builds four churches and starts to worship the Almighty God. People from different places come to pray and throw away their gods. Each of them starts to help Ajaiyi with a little money as they could. Ajaiyi paid all his debts and he is free from his inherited poverty. It is like that Ajaiyi was entirely free from his inherited poverty at last but in a clear way.

## **2. Methodology and key concepts**

As a scientific work, this article adopts the postcolonial perspective. Like many schools of criticism, postcolonialism uses a variety of approaches to textual analysis in the circumstances the cultural studies. Bressler explains that “postcolonial theory moves beyond the bounds of traditional literary studies and investigates social, political, and economic concerns of the colonized and the colonizer” (Bressler, 2011, p.207).

Amos Tutuola being an African writer of the British colony writing in English, hence it is obvious to analyze his novel under postcolonial point of view. Furthermore, Homi K. Bhabha, one of the leading postcolonial theorists argues that “when two cultures commingle, the nature and the characteristics of the newly created culture changes each of the cultures. This dynamic, interactive, and tension packed process Bhabha names **hybridity**” (Bressler, p.205). However, postcolonialism, whose aim is to examine what has been missing from literary analyses by highlighting the interest of the colonized and the destructive forces of the colonizer’s hegemony as forced on the colonized, chiefly deals with literature that has been written by the colonized in colonized countries.

In this article, this point will attempt to discuss six key concepts below:

### **2.1. Predestination**

The concept “predestination” cannot be defined at random since it embodies a doctrinal thought shared differently among scholars.

*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (1978) defines predestination as “the belief that God has decided everything that will happen, and that no human effort can change things – Compare FREE WILL.

Similarly, *Collins Cobuild* (1996) says that “if you believe in predestination, you believe that people have no control over events because they have already been decided by God or by fate”. This way of seeing predestination tries to show that poor people and misfortune are doomed to poverty and failure all over their life, since God had decided so and yet God cannot decide evil or bad fate for some people.

*Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English’s* definition is close to *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* when it says: “predestination is the theory or belief that everything that happens has been decided in advance by God and that humans cannot change it.” Both dictionaries highlight the concepts *belief, God, decided in advance, and no change*.

However, John Calvin studied by Cadier (1967, p.52) defines predestination as “the eternal Counsel of God by which He has determined what He wanted to do for each man.” For God does not create all of them in similar conditions, but orders the ones to eternal life, the others to eternal damnation (Cadier, p.52). This predestination is not God’s prescience, in the knowledge of which there is nothing of past, nor of future, for all things are present to Him. Because to reduce predestination to prescience, is to make God the spectator of human things and not their Author, or their primary cause. In this way, Calvin tends to consider God an unjust as if he were like men. In this sense also, predestination cancels the responsibility of man, since man cannot be aware of his failure or his success.

Merril (1975, p.24) sustains this point that God knows because He has decreed. He must know for otherwise there would be deficiency in his eternal counsel. Saint Anselme of Canterbury (1988, p.187) writes that predestination seems to be identical to a pre-ordination or pre-determination, for this reason, while saying that God predestines, one understands that He orders in advance, i.e. states that something is future. In other words, the something God states as future seems to be future by necessity. It is not necessary that all that God predestines must be future. Saint Anselme seems to argue for predestination by supplying explanations.

After discussions of different scholars on the concept “predestination”, let us attempt to argue that if God predestines good things or events and evil which happen, so nothing happens by free choice or free will, but all happen by necessity. If He predestines only good events, so only good events are by necessity, and there is free choice only for evil things, that is too absurd. Hence, God does not predestine only good things. But, if free choice makes some good works, which justify themselves without predestination, God does not predestine all good works which justify themselves (Anselme, p.187).

It should be said also that as there is no prescience in God, there is no predestination as well since, nothing is before, or after, but all is present to Him at the same time (Anselme,

p.189). Therefore, neither predestination excludes free choice, nor free choice is opposed to predestination.

From discussions of all definitions on predestination, the key words one can notice are “determined, decided, wished, ordered, and stated.” Hence, a synthesis of the definitions should be: “predestination is the belief that God has determined, decided, wished, ordered in advance, or has stated that something is future, and nothing can change the fate.” But the use of each key word in definition depends upon the way one defines predestination according to one’s belief and cultural background.

In the western world, there is not a strong belief in predestination. That is to say, the idea of God as the developer of man’s suffering or happiness is not influential as such, because it is well known that man is responsible of his own fate. The scientific progress has helped the westerners understand that man can overpower natural phenomena which God set in the world for him.

## 2.2. Evaluative Narrative

*The Collins Cobuild Learner’s Dictionary* (1996) defines **evaluative** as something that is based on an assessment of the values, qualities, and significance of a particular person or thing; whereas **narrative** is defined as a story or an account of a series of events, or the description of a series of events, e.g. in a novel. From this definition, it can be inferred that **Evaluative/evaluation narrative** is an approach to assessing and describing a student’s learning that allows a far richer depiction of that learning that is possible through more traditional criterion – referenced assessment.

This approach will help us in reading and analyzing Amos Tutuola’s *Ajaiyi and his Inherited Poverty* for the situation of the Congolese poverty. We will investigate first the how the socio-politico-economic situation of Congo was before independence and nowadays; then we will have a critical glance at Ajaiyi’s progress to wealth. We will attempt to answer the question: how come in many sectors the Congolese are getting poorer than before? From this evaluative narrative process, a conclusion will be drawn as a resolution.

## 2.3. Amos Tutuola

Parrinder in his “Foreword” to *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* (9-11) and the *African Encyclopedia* (518) state that Amos Tutuola was a Nigerian novelist, born in Abeokuta (i.e. “under the rock”) on 20 June 1920 and died in Ibadan on 8 June 1997. He was a member of the large Yoruba tribe and was from Christian parents. He was a Nigerian writer famous for his books based in part on Yoruba folk-tales. After a few years at the Salvation Army School and later at Lagos High School, he became a coppersmith. He continued this trade in the Royal Air

Force in Nigeria for three years during the war. The son of a cocoa farmer, he attended several schools.

When his first books were published he was working as a government messenger in Lagos, and then he became a storekeeper with the Nigerian Broadcasting Service in Ibadan. Tutuola's writing is original and highly imaginative. His direct style, made more vivid by his use of English as it is spoken in West Africa, is not polished or sophisticated and gives his beginning of a new type of Afro-English literature. This is why Moore in Ulli Beier (186-7) says that many educated Nigerians are embarrassed by the 'mistakes' they find in Tutuola's English, which some of them seem to regard as an undeserved reflection on the African race in general.

Tutuola's most famous novel is his first, *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* (1952). Traditional myth and folk tale, horror and humor mixed together, and the rhythms of his prose are combined in this work. His other novels comprise *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* (1954), *Simbi and the Satyr of the Dark Jungle* (1955), *The Brave African Huntress* (1958), *Feather Woman of the Jungle* (1962), and *Ajaiyi and his Inherited Poverty* (1967) on which the present assignment is focused. It seems that years ago before his death, Tutuola had probably retired from writing. This is why there is no recent publications but if only essays by researchers on his works.

#### **2.4. Poverty and human values**

The value of a human being (man or woman) is when s/he is well considered in society. In black African countries, it is when s/he is married and has got children and belongings, i.e. a house, a farm, especially if s/he is respectful. But being poor is not a good state at all. At first, let us say that poverty is the state of being inferior; poor quality. Now, as the values of a person or group are the moral principles and beliefs that they think are important or usefulness, poverty does not rhyme with human values because of the lack of quality.

#### **2.5. Inherited poverty**

Can someone inherit poverty? If yes, from whom can s/he inherit poverty? For what I know, none can accept to inherit of a poor or an unfortunate person, because poverty means also misery. To inherit something such as a problem or attitude means to get it from the people who used to have it. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary says to inherit means: "to have features or qualities similar to those of an ancestor." Therefore, inherited poverty means to receive poverty as money or property as a result of the death of the previous owner. Yet, poverty being a state of extremely poor, so if someone inherits poverty it means s/he has unwillingly inherited trouble, problem, trials, and dilemmas. Did the Congolese inherit poverty from the

colonizers supposed to be their ancestors or directly from their ancestors? This issue is to be discussed within the following topic.

## 2.6. Congolese poverty

Congo is known all over the world as the “geological scandal” to cite the geologist Jules Cornier, and hence, it is painful to define Congolese poverty. This concept means that the country itself DR Congo is wealthy but the population, i.e. the Congolese is poor because of non-exploitation of the resources by natives. Congolese poverty also means laziness, corruption, embezzlement, and misappropriation of funds to the detriment of the marginalized population. But why a continuous poverty while the colonizers were wealthy?

## 3. Results

This point of the article focuses its attention on four findings that are to be exploited so that my readers may understand how Congolese poverty versus predestination is seen through Amos Tutuola’s *Ajaiyi* and his *Inherited Poverty*. The findings are going to show out how a literary work intervenes and explains a socio-politico-economic problem.

### 3.1. Ajaiyi’s family: reasons of its poverty

#### Non transformation: destiny and social predestination

The poorest family of the village in spite of its efforts to overcome poverty, Ajaiyi’s family is composed of four members: his father, mother, and his junior sister Aina. His father and mother had very big hunchbacks, so that the whole village nicknamed them “the hunchback family” (p.11). This situation made the hero think that their poverty was due to the big hunch on each of the parents’ back. For people who did not have any hunch were always rich and not poor like them. To this thought, however, his father replied that a hunchback does not either make a person poor or hinder the progress of the person who has it (p.16).

Ajaiyi’s father owned large farms in which he worked harder than the rest of other villagers; but more he worked hard, more poverty was becoming worse. His mother was also a hard working woman. She was more industrious than the rest women in the village, but she was the poorest (p.12).

After many years of hard work, his father and mother became so old and weary that they could not work any more for their living. Consequently, Ajaiyi started to work in his father’s farms to feed all the family. But what are exactly the reasons or causes of poverty in Ajaiyi’s family? The following hypothesis may be possible: whether Ajaiyi’s father had inherited poverty from his fore-father who might have died in poverty, or Ajaiyi’s family was from the

very beginning destined to poverty, hence they are doomed to suffering, failure, and poverty all their life (Tutuola, 13).

In spite of the Ibo saying, “Like father, like son”, what may be made clear is that even if one’s father and mother die in poverty, it does not mean that their children will die poor as well provided they work hard (p.13). As a matter of fact, Ajaiyi refuses to die in poverty like his father. It is a great pain for him as he cannot find out what has caused his father’s poverty (Tutuola, 18).

The reasons of Ajaiyi’s family poverty might be seen in the dilemmas and burdens the hero faces in his journey in search of money (p.98). Although his family is more industrious than the rest of the village, it has got a burden which hinders them to make progress. Astonishingly enough, Ajaiyi is the strongest worshiper of all kinds of false gods and he is as well the wicked gentile (p.11). Fortunately, with the money he gets from the witch doctor, he builds four churches and starts worshipping God the Almighty. People from different places come to pray and throw away their gods. They start helping him with some money. He pays all his debts and then he is entirely free from his inherited poverty in a clean way.

Another reason of Ajaiyi’s family poverty can be pointed out in the abuse of possessive used by Tutuola, for instance when he says “our poverty, my poverty, his inherited poverty.” Psychoanalytically speaking, this makes them remain in the status of poverty for ever and ever, since they take it as theirs. They consider poverty as their natural inheritance. However, poverty being an undesirable status, we come to think that nobody should inherit a metaphysical problem that can embarrass him physically and mentally as well during his lifelong. Maybe Tutuola’s misuse of possessives is due to his Africanity, for in black African thinking, the whole or the community counts more than the individual. But he should not have written “my or his inherited poverty”.

Nevertheless, Ajaiyi’s family cannot easily be freed from poverty, firstly because of its strong belief in witchcraft and in other supernatural forces; and secondly because all the family clings too much to traditions and to customs as other Yoruba people. This is why, after his father’s death, he undertakes a journey in order to be initiated to maturation. This hero’s journey can be studied and explained with the help of Kunene (1985) in his theory: “The Journey as Metaphor in African Literature”.

Another trouble faced by Ajaiyi’s family is non-transformation on the basis of destiny and social predestination. By social predestination we understand the belief for the whole society that everything that happens to the community has been decided in advance somewhere either by God or by the ancestors that humans cannot change it except the priest or the witch doctor. Such belief is a supporter to non-transformation of society. However, one can note that

someone's non transformation is caused by his or her destiny. It is also due to the human being's neglect of hard work. There is no transformation without one's own will. By non-transformation, one can understand the fact that one's life has no improvement. That is to say, someone's life has no shift from poverty to wealth; but what is noted is either the opposite, i.e. from wealth to poverty, or from bad to worse, i.e. from poverty of misery.

This catastrophic situation is seen with sorrow in the study of Tutuola's Ajaiyi and his Inherited Poverty. Tutuola shows the process Ajaiyi comes to wealth: his determination to overcome poverty and his hard work, as says the Benedictine device: "Ora et Labora" (i.e. Pray and Work). Therefore, Ajaiyi's transformation should be achieved at one condition: hard work. Tutuola's hero is a member of a family and the family is in a community within the Yoruba society. Hence, Ajaiyi must get rid of his belief in predestination to save the community he belongs.

It follows however that, destiny and predestination cannot prevent someone's transformation as such if he or she is capable of rejecting, or rethinking these concepts as false conceptions, having no impact in man's own life. But if one confines in the strong belief of destiny and predestination, merely if one thinks to be under evil fate, psychologically and ontologically, his life would be affected. In other words, one way to be diverted from bad fate or wrong choice might be the perseverance in hard work with determination to success is supported by the rejection of the belief of witchcraft, magic, and what is similar to them.

This is why, with great conviction I still write that no one can be destined to poverty, Ajaiyi's mother says: "We are not destined with poverty at all as the rest people in the village had thought us to be" (Tutuola, 15). It is again at this purpose, Ajaiyi is advised by his father and mother as well as by his wife and other people to carry on working hard, not to be discouraged at all, but to struggle until poverty is conquered (Tutuola, 15 and 223).

To summarize what I was arguing so far, I could say that Ajaiyi's non-transformation meets destiny and predestination since this story is purely Yoruba. But according to Abimbola (1976) the Yoruba believe that those who have chosen good destinies and are aided by the supernatural powers will, if they work hard, become successful in life. As for those who have chosen bad destinies, there can be no hope of success in life, except if they can perform sufficient sacrifice to make good the defects in their bad heads (p.151).

Therefore, one could say that destiny and predestination interact in the transformation of man's life. They form a coherent whole, but destiny seems to be the act of supernatural powers (gods, ancestors, witches, and other enemies of man), and predestination is God's plan in advance. In both cases, it is believed that neither gods nor God can change a man's fate.

### 3.2. The impact of poverty in DRC

It is paradoxical to talk about poverty in DR Congo while the country has in superabundance the diverse kind of minerals such as cobalt, copper, Colombo tantalite, gold, diamond, etc. and large areas of arable and jejune lands including rivers and lakes full of fish. Therefore, the strong effect of poverty in DR Congo presents a weak impression of the country at the level of the world. It follows, however, that the impact of poverty in DR Congo has taken a high level especially in cities such as Mbuji Mayi, Lubumbashi, Kinshasa, the Eastern of the republic due to the lack of roads for agricultural service and the proliferation of homeless children nicknamed “Shege” in Lubumbashi. Shore Rebecca (2018) notes that water shortages also play an integral role in severe food shortages. The lacks of infrastructure in rural areas, as well as the collapse of infrastructure due to fighting, have left the majority of the Congolese without access to clean water sources. The DRC holds over half of the water reserves in Africa, and yet, in 2011, three-quarters of the population had no access to safe drinking water.

Poverty is widespread and unchecked across the 26 provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Despite being the second-largest country in Africa, with an approximate area of 2.3 million square kilometers (890,000 sq. mi), and being endowed with rich natural resources, the DRC is the second-poorest country in the world (Gregson 2018). Sen Nag (2018) adds that the average annual income is only \$785 US dollars. In 2016, the United Nations (UN) Human Development Index (HDI) ranked the DRC as the 176th least-developed country out of 188 countries with an HDI of 0.435. More than 80% of Congolese people live on less than \$1.25 a day, defined as the threshold for extreme poverty (UNDP 2018).

The United Nations Development Programme reports that instability from years of war and political upheaval is one of the most significant causes of poverty in the DRC, while poverty and youth unemployment has ignited conflicts. The DRC is home to raw mineral ores worth an estimated US\$24 trillion, which has been the driving force for one of the world’s most devastating conflicts since World War II. The war over raw materials in the Congo kills an estimated 10,000 civilians a month. The precious metals mined in the Congo are used in the manufacturing of smartphones, lightbulbs, computers, and jewelry. Furthermore, Bafilemba, et al (Retrieved on 28 June 2018) adds that the corruption in the mining industry has become a lucrative trade for militia groups who, before 2010, generated yearly revenues estimated around \$185 million indirectly from foreign investors. Although the passage of the Dodd–Frank Act in the US substantially reduced the market for illegal minerals, and the majority of mines are now under civilian control, militia groups continue to fund themselves from gold mining. Foreign companies investing in the armed groups that control mineral resources have resulted in the loss of over \$1 billion in tax revenue. In addition, the Congolese government's awarding of mining

assets to foreign countries at one-sixth their value have cost the Congolese people about \$1.35 billion.

To paraphrase Baynes (2018), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) was very poor before the most recent outbreak of civil war in the 1990s. According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the data is sparse, but nevertheless it has concluded that armed conflicts have caused deterioration in living standards in most of the provinces". Households in war-torn areas spend less money per person for daily expenses than those in peaceful areas, a sign that the war has negatively affected their economic conditions.

Lee (2018) finds that disease is another central cause of poverty in the DRC. Major diseases such as cholera, hepatitis A, malaria, polio, measles and typhoid fever continue to run rampant. 1.2% of the Congolese are affected by HIV/AIDS. In the DRC, malaria is the primary cause of morbidity and mortality. The DRC has the second-highest number of reported cases of malaria worldwide. Children are especially susceptible to malaria, and the disease is responsible for the deaths of 19 percent of children under the age of five. Tuberculosis is another leading cause of death. Infectious diseases have reduced the life expectancy of the Congolese to only 48 years, while one in seven children dies before the age of five.

According to the Food Security Portal, nearly 70 percent of the DRC population has little to no access to an adequate food supply contributing to the malnourishment of one out of every four children. Malnutrition in children is especially high in war-torn provinces that rely on the mining industry. The principal contributing factor to food shortages is population displacement. Due to the ongoing violence the United Nations estimates that approximately 2.3 million persons are displaced in the DRC. The conflicts in mining provinces have disrupted harvesting activities resulting in three million people being at risk of starvation.

To my analysis, there is a ‘hunchback’ carried by the DRC that is on the basis of the continuous poverty of the Congolese as was the case of Ajaiyi’s parents. This ‘hunchback’ could be undoubtedly the political instability which originates the socio-economic instability in many sectors of the Congolese life. Hence, as far as the DRC government has not yet got rid of this ‘hunchback’, Congo cannot be freed from poverty.

### **3.3. The Congolese leaders’ consideration of the poor**

In many countries is often impossible to build up a social system of equality as Karl Marx proposed it in his utopian ideas. I mean impossible because for ever and ever, there are wealthy people and the poor. This is the law of nature. Therefore, the opposition of rich to poor can be seen as some social injustice.

However, to be poor is not good at all and no one would wish it. The poor constitutes also a brake to the development of the country. They are a great burden for society. This is why, it should be important first to state what a poor is and secondly to know who is really poor and who is not. In other words, who deserves to be considered as such and be helped if necessary? However, Everett (1982) argues that the status of being poor cannot only be ascribed to insufficiency of financial and material means; it can be said also at the level of mental structure; for, if the mental structure is not developed enough, the other economic structures depending upon it cannot develop either (Everett, 23).

The Congolese leaders should take into consideration all these elements. They should as well promote gratuitousness of education at all levels and for the whole community, create humanitarian aids in which wealthy people by means of consciousness raising would help the poor, establish yearly the statistical data of some miserable families in order to know who needs the help, promote productive work such as agriculture. All these elements would contribute to integrate the poor in society without any idea of alienation.

The Congolese leaders must work for the eradication of poverty in the country. Their job is to guide the poor towards wealth, or towards “becoming one’s own man”, i.e. personality. There is a move forward in developmental process: from darkness to light, from blindness to sight, from unknown to knowledge, from poverty to wealth. Therefore, the Congolese leaders have to consider the poor like their partners so that the dialogue can be possible. It is to be noticed with sorrow how the Congolese leaders, i.e. politicians (members of parliaments, senate, etc.) consider the poor people as their political springboard or rather as diving-board that they need and come to them only for the purpose of elections. Once elected as representative, or appointed as minister, they turn their backs against the poor population and give them up to their sad fate: poverty, no tared roads, no health, briefly they are pauperized. Furthermore, the Congolese leaders are tricksters because they make people enrolled into socio-cultural association of tribes such as “DIVAR, SEMPYA, LWANZO LWA MIKUBA, BULUBA I BUKATA, KIBASO, KULIVA, etc.” in which they get interests for political positions but nothing for the poor population if only the promises and maybe a T-shirt, a glass of salt, or rice. This way of ruling the poor is not helpful.

As states the Chinese proverb: “If you give me a fish I will eat today, if you train me to fish I will eat everyday”, the Congolese leaders must avoid paternalistic attitude because this cannot help the poor for the formation of their personal responsibility.

In the novel the analysis is concerned Ajaiyi struggles alone here and there. He is advised how to come to wealthy position. Being a hard working boy, he pawns himself to two pawnbrokers for money. He has never discouraged, with the hope that he will overcome poverty.

Although he has inherited it from his father, everything is possible if one can endure the punishments of this world (Tutuola, pp.219-235).

However, Tutuola (p.171) notes how leaders of Ajaiyi's village represented in the novel by the village wizard, took Ajaiyi to Devil for money. The wizard cannot be seen only as a man who has magic powers, but especially in this context as someone who is very good at doing a particular thing for instances a financial deed. In addition to the wizard's deed, some elders of his village suggest him to do jobs and to find ways of getting rich. They consider Ajaiyi's so-called inherited poverty not as an individual problem but as a collective one, i.e. for the whole community since he is a member of this Yoruba society.

By means of a saying, Tutuola then argues this point that "one who relies on a legacy is on the road to poverty. No one claims relationship with a poor man; but when he is rich, everyone becomes his relative" (p.171). At first glance, one should not rely on money or property which someone left to him when he dies, this would lead to poverty. The truth to this saying is readable in Ajaiyi's process to wealth. When finally he becomes rich, he is surrounded by thousands of people (Tutuola, pp.134-5).

Additionally, Tutuola presents the dialogue between the wizard and Ajaiyi. The wizard is available to hear his problem. This is why he says; "yes, Ajaiyi, will you tell me now what exactly you want me to do for you" (p.179). Then, Ajaiyi introducing himself, confines openly to the wizard. He recounts shamelessly all his life in order to find a solution to his burden. Finally, Ajaiyi tells the wizard; "I had inherited this poverty from my father and mother. So my own poverty is a chronic one. (...) for this reason I come to you to take me to Devil to give me sufficient money which will set me free from my inherited poverty!" (p.179)

This is to show that the Congolese leaders or any country leaders' considerations of the poor might keep the relationship of courteous rather than that of master and slave. This must be done in order to set harmony in society and to appease class struggle.

In the novel, rich consider poor people as "men" like they are with all the merits that society gives to each of them. All men are considered as members of society despite one's social position (poor or rich). The pawnbrokers, who lend Ajaiyi money, want to see him make fortune, get married, and become really a man. Therefore, the poor have also high values in society as states the following saying: "none is so poor he has nothing to give, none is so rich he has nothing to receive".

Senghor (Everett, p.33) suggests the civilization of "donner et recevoir" (i.e. give and receive). This civilization wants the share of wealth among people. This is why Ajaiyi is not

rejected by the community he belongs in spite of his “Inherited poverty”. The Congolese leaders ought to see the poor with much consideration and grant them equal chance.

### **3.4. DRC’s agricultural and mining provinces versus predestination**

At first, this is a historical sketch. In its colonial administration, Belgium had taken into account the diversity of social structures and specific requirements of large plantations and of mining concessions. During the 1930s, Belgium had utilized the policy of “paternalistic”, first in the powerful “Union Minière du Haut-Katanga” (i.e. U.M.H.K.) to stabilize the labor and second to compensate for difficulties of recruitment that was copied by other mining and agricultural companies of the Belgium-Congo.

During this colonial period, DRC was a wealthy country via agricultural and mining provinces. The provinces of Kasai and Katanga for example were nicknamed “agricultural attics” because they could feed all the country. The policy of the colonialist was to force the population to deal with agriculture, but mining was the matter of “Union Minière du Haut-Katanga” (i.e. U.M.H.K.) and some other companies like Kilo-Moto in Kivu.

After independence, the country abandoned agriculture but the second republic with president Mobutu’s government ordered agriculture as priority of priority in order to persuade the population to agriculture and eradicate famine. But, with the advent of mining companies after the reversal of Mobutu by L.D. Kabila with AFDL, the population abandoned again agriculture and devoted to mining (artisanal mining) and mining companies hired young people. The situation moved from bad to worse, because the provinces of Kasai and Katanga depend upon Zambia for maize flour, the basic food for the population.

As a result of one’s weakness or lack of courage, lack of endurance to pain, one is compelled to suffer. To show that poverty is not the fact of predestination, Amos Tutuola describing how Ajaiyi’s father advises his son, writes: “I believe one thing, that you or your own sons may be free from this our poverty provided you or your own sons continue to work hard” (AIP, 14).

It follows, however that when the DRC’s leaders urge the population to work hard by returning to agriculture, when they stop looking for “easy money” in mining, the country will develop and hence, predestination will be a vain word. No one can argue to be destined to poverty. Tutuola argues then by a proverb that: “A tortoise’s shell is a house of the poverty and if the tortoise is taken to the wealthy town, it will still be living in its house of poverty” (p.98), i.e. although Ajaiyi reached the town of the Creator, he returned as poor as he went, owing to his sins. If he repents and purifies himself, he will receive God’s mercy. That is what happens to

Ajaiyi when he starts worshipping God the Almighty; he is entirely free from his inherited poverty in a clean way rather than worshipping gods and serving witch doctors.

In order to illustrate the idea of predestination, Tutuola (Ajaiyi... 15) mentions the malediction that a Joker said to Ajaiyi's family that: "A sheep never change its skin until it dies! So I believe, you too will not be free from your poverty until you will die! Will you?" These words are taken as malediction by Ajaiyi's family which was thinking of how to be free from poverty. They are certainly disheartened, but they are hopeful that one fine day poverty will be overcome.

According to Wande Abimbola (113), when human effort cannot be ruled out for success or failure, the greater part of it can be ascribed to predestination. Therefore, the DRC's agricultural and mining provinces cannot ascribe the failure or success to social predestination. It is up to the leaders of the provinces to work hard in order to booster the economic situation. For that, they must avoid anti-values such as embezzlement, misappropriation of the state companies, corruption, and tribalism.

The recent research of January 21, 2021 concludes that the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is endowed with natural resources to the extent that it could be one of the richest countries in the world. Nonetheless, this country is one of the poorest (in the world) with more than 70% of its population living in abject poverty. Economists, political scientists and sociologists have all been puzzled by how a country that is so rich in resources can be so abysmally underdeveloped and conflict stricken. Is a scramble for the country's resources to blame for the conflict; or are incipient inequalities and economic injustice the primary cause; or perhaps the two are related in some way? Slants such as "greed versus grievance" or "the paradox of plenty" have animated the literature and caught the public's imagination. This study argues that the lack of ethics in this country is the reason why all attempts to stop the organized plunder of Congolese riches and to address the economic and political crises in order to alleviate the hopeless situation always fail. A thorough consideration of the country's history reveals the depth of this problem. Christian ethics can lead to sustainable liberation of the entire Congolese society. As such, the Christian tradition and biblical revelation should be the primary source that is tapped during the process of building new Congolese citizenship and leadership. Christian principles aiming at peaceful living and working together remain the answer to sustainable salvation of people and the social transformation of this country.

Therefore, the DRC government should encourage people by financing agricultural sector in which the population has to work hard as is the case of Ajaiyi's parents who owned large farms. Predestination is opposite to DRC's agricultural and mining provinces because if the provinces work hard, they cannot be doomed to poverty. The provinces are not predestined to

continuous poverty even those known as having no minerals such as Haut-Lomami (Kamina), Lomami (Kabinda), etc.

#### **4. Discussions and conclusion**

##### **4.1. Power and the Congolese government**

At first glance, one should think that there is a polemic between power and the Congolese government. The two concepts join together for building harmony in society; since there is no power without government and vice versa. Furthermore, it is the government which possesses power and uses it for the good of the whole community.

However, power and the Congolese government, i.e. those who exercise power, ought to work with great respect for human values. In other terms, power and the Congolese government are at work for the betterment of people. This is why political administrative authorities need to encourage people to work hard, to promote gratuitousness of education, agriculture, fishing, and other productive works. This could facilitate the struggle against poverty and the raise of man in society. The Congolese government should empower its marginalized population and avoid misuse of its power.

Paulo Freire (1980, p.32) using his method of consciousness raising, argues that education should be a practical way for the liberation of society. That is to say, it is through education, designed from people, by people, and for people that governors find means to avoid exploitation and domination. The purpose of this kind of education, also named pedagogy of liberation, is not only to teach something to people, but to seek with them means of transforming the world in which they live (Freire, p.9). In other words, power and the Congolese government are to help people transform their social life. This process might be done 'mutatis mutandis' (i.e. by changing what has to be changed) with regards to human values.

It is obvious to note that people in DRC are in need of liberation for their development. The liberation will be possible only in a democratic country in which power and government consider all men as being equal. It is my view that imperialists hinder power and the Congolese government to raise human values in the Congolese society. The imperialists provoke the suffering of men by was at the Eastern side of the DRC, and they pretend to bring false peace and assistance through NGOs. From this difficulty, the poor Congolese have a large number of creditors as is the case of Tutuola's Ajaiyi. When it becomes hard to pay de debts, the people are doomed to failure and uncountable suffering. Therefore, power and the Congolese government should be aware of the westerners' strategy of ruling poor Congolese.

##### **4.2. Psychological barriers to wealth**

It is known, every man aspires to fortune in life. No one wishes to be poor or to die pauper either. Even the nuns and monks, who pronounce the vows of poverty, do not live in miserable condition. They have rather what is required for the surviving, though they have renounced freely properties owing to their religious status. This is simply a spiritual poverty. Physically and mentally, nuns and monks are indeed, capable of owning beautiful things.

Conversely to this type of people who have accepted poverty as a mode of life for Jesus and heaven's sake, there is another category of men and women in need of getting to wealth but they are hindered. Sometimes neither society, nor evil supernatural powers would prevent them from making progress. But there is a terrible problem to solve in their life. It is at this level one could state of psychological barriers to wealth.

Some scholars such as sociologists, anthropologists, philosophers, and psychologists have tried to puzzle the problem and came to accurate results, identifying the fact by means of observation. This point of the article attempts to discuss spiritual barriers of Ajaiyi's progress to wealth. It has been pointed out that there are evil supernatural powers (e.g. witches, wizards, and devils) that work against man's interest in the invisible world and prevent something good to happen or to be achieved.

However, psychological barriers to a progress such as to wealth may be of different kinds. Everett (1982: 35) has presented some of them as follows: the first one which might be listed is the "vicious circle". This psychological vice hinders one's man progress to wealth and it has to be fought. For instance, "one is sick because one does not eat enough, one does not eat enough because one is sick". That is to say when an individual lives confined in a vicious circle like this, the development of the whole community is affected. The community must urge such a person to struggle and to leave out of this evil status. When Tutuola presents Ajaiyi claiming to be created with poverty, this seems to be a vicious circle since Ajaiyi is disheartened whenever he fails (p.83).

The second psychological barrier is referred to in French as "peur du qu'en dira-t-on" (i.e. fear of what would people say or human respect). The individual is confined into fear of the other people, fear of what they would say or think about one's fortune. This is a dangerous barrier to development since it creates inferiority complex within the individual's psychic. Sometimes, a person is able to make considerable fortune, but because he is afraid of other people of his milieu, he decreases psychologically and ontologically too. He thinks within himself the others could say I am a robber, or I get money from devil, or from prostitution. So let me live in poverty provided to be respected. Such a person needs surely a psychological help: the encouragement to hard and productive work.

The third psychological barrier to wealth which may be considered in this paper is fear of witchcraft. This is a special African problem. It has already been said on predestination and destiny that sometimes an individual may come to failure in affairs, when s/he has a strong belief in witchcraft. In other words, when a person is afraid of curses or of evil supernatural forces, the result is that s/he gives power to the incantations pronounced against him/her. Therefore, such a person is doomed to failure, since fear developed in his inner creates a barrier to progress either in business or in any other affairs. It is observed how a person under fear of witchcraft, cannot neither build a huge and beautiful house, nor wear costly clothes in spite of one's wealthy position. When such a person stops to make progress for fear of being bewitched, hence his/her wealth stops and decreases as well.

Stéphano Kaoze (1979, pp.20-21) as for him makes a list of Bantu psychological features which are worth to be regarded carefully as psychological barriers to wealth. Here are some psychological characteristics selected for Bantu:

- (i) Passivity of intelligence, the little worry of clarity, of coherence, of explanation. More issues or questions raised by beliefs remain without answers and the black men do not take care of them.
- (ii) Passivity of will, the lack of worry of material progress. When one has what is necessary to survive, why can one look for something else. It is a useless waste of energy.
- (iii) Weakness of will in front of moral obligations. But this is generally common to all people in the world.
- (iv) Lack of firmness in resolutions. Hence, fear of "hat would people say". The black man is very influential.

One can ask whether it is about natural characteristics, congenital, or psychological features due to conditions of life and capable of change. But Kaoze notes the evolution as a result of changes of conditions.

To put it clear, we could say that there are ways helping to cross psychological barriers. The individual must have conviction that progress is possible, and therefore s/he can attempt to leave the world of fear. S/he must struggle against fatalistic and superstitions mentalities which attribute misfortunes or failures to supernatural causes. These mentalities encourage laziness and stagnation. Furthermore, one must believe that a situation may change from worse straightly to good because it is said: "Change your thought and you will change your world". Therefore, a situation can change and one can change it for oneself and for the others.

In applying this thinking to Congolese poverty and to Tutuola's central character, we could state that Ajaiyi should change his thought upon "his inherited poverty", so that he would make fortune and come to wealth. To be clear, Ajaiyi should skewer psychological barriers to

wealth as soon as he could. This is possible for Ajaiyi as for any person, but with the assistance of the whole community (Tutuola, pp.167-171).

Here appears the great job of psychologists, psychoanalysts, social workers, teachers, and clergy in society: the guidance of people, especially young boys and girls, to the success of life. In sum, the poor need to be taught how to break the chain of fear which hinders them to get to wealth.

### 4.3. Ideology, power and wealth

The objective of the present section is to seek to draw the relationship between ideology, power and wealth. Thus, the critic of literature should be enabled to examine carefully how a given ideology could, in some circumstances, influence Tutuola's novel in analysis.

However, Collins Cobuild (1996) says that ideology is a set of beliefs, especially the political beliefs on which people, political parties, or countries base their actions. Therefore, there are a great number of ideologies in the world, but the two big ones which have dominated the world years ago and have taken the influence on power and wealth are capitalism and socialism.

The capitalism can be defined as an economic and political system in which property, business, and industry are owned by private individuals and not by the state. As the state possesses the political power, it controls the economic activities of the private individuals. On the other hand, socialism is a set of left-wing political principles whose general aim is to create a system in which everyone has an equal opportunity to benefit from a country's wealth. Under socialism, the country's main industries are usually owned by the state which controls totally or partially economic activities (Bremond, 1986, p.46).

To conclude, both capitalism and socialism, the state, i.e. power is present and in control of the country's wealth. But, in capitalism there is a development of egocentric attitude within the individual so that one hears the slogan: "Chacun pour soi, Dieu pour tous" (i.e. 'Everyone for oneself, God for everybody'). This egotistic slogan proper to capitalism is not favorable in black African countries. Furthermore, capitalism develops the exploitation of the poor by the rich who possesses power and wealth. There is no respect of human values in such a power. It should be mentioned that most of themes in African novels do not waste time treating capitalism.

However, socialism handles the opposition to imperialism and colonialism. This is why politically and economically, a significant number of African countries have chosen the socialist path to development. It is interesting to note how committed African writers such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Sembene Ousmane, embody socialism in their works (Ngara, 1985). The

same author then adds that: “the influence of socialism is growing and can also be seen from the fact that universities such as the National University of Lesotho are prescribing courses on literature and socialism” (Ngara, p.viii).

In addition to the problem of literature, one can say that the preference of socialism to capitalism in Africa, lays on the fact that “everyone has an equal opportunity to benefit from a country’s wealth.” Therefore, since an African is sociable, he shares misfortunes and fortunes with the whole community. This is why in the speech of an African; one can note the use of “We” instead of egotistic “I”. Similarly, when Tutuola’s Ajaiyi says: “Our poverty” it means poverty which experience all the family without the exception of any member even if it is one person who suffers.

Ngara sees ideology from two angles: “the dominant ideology or competing ideologies of a society at a particular point in history, and the ideological stance of the writer” (p.vii), i.e. the two ideologies interact in a novel to show their impact to power and wealth in the society.

It should be taken for granted that ideology is close to power, because it is political power that designs ideology and sets it out in order to fix firmly the roots of government. Therefore, power should choose and build up an ideology favorable to people. As it has been said, power, a democratic power, is at work of people. But a dictatorial power does not take into consideration human values. This is why; the ideology of a political power ought to make clear the use and administration of wealth. All the country’s wealth must benefit to all provinces and at least to everybody: in gratuitousness of education, health, security, agriculture, commerce, and in other social activities.

The respect of this principle would lead to harmony and democracy in the country. Unfortunately, the Congolese leaders seem to give up democratic norms. This must be avoided in the forthcoming government.

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