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THE QUEST FOR UTOPIA IN BLACK THEATRE: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF NGUGI WA THING'O'S THE BLACK HERMIT

A B S T R A C T

Utopia, the idea of a perfect society, has been a central theme in literature, philosophy, and art for centuries. The desire for utopia has inspired countless visionaries and reformers, who have sought to create a better world through various means, such as religion, ideology, science, or art. However, utopia has also been criticized and ridiculed as an impossible or even dangerous dream, that distracts us from the reality of our imperfect and flawed world.

Ngugi Wa Thing'o, a prominent Kenyan writer and activist, has addressed the theme of utopia in many of his works, including his play *The Black Hermit*. Written in the 1960s, at a time of great political and cultural upheaval in Africa and beyond, *The Black Hermit* offers a complex and nuanced exploration of the quest for utopia in the context of black theatre. Through the character of the Black Hermit, a revolutionary who withdraws from the world to live in solitude, Ngugi raises questions about the nature and meaning of utopia, and its relationship to the struggles and aspirations of black people.

The aim of this research is to deepen our understanding of Ngugi's work and thought by analysing *The Black Hermit* as a text that engages with the theme of utopia in a creative and thought-provoking way. It also examines how Ngugi uses the play to critique and challenge various utopia-building projects, and to propose his own vision of utopia as a process of becoming. The research also considers the relevance and significance of Ngugi's utopia to the contemporary world and the ways in which it speaks to universal human concerns.

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البحث عن المدينة الفاضلة في المسرح الأسود: دراسة تحليلية لمسرحية كوكي وا ثيانكو الزاهد الاسود

م. شيرين كمال احمد / جامعة صلاح الدين / كلية التربية

الخلاصة:

اليوتوبيا، فكرة المجتمع المثالي، كانت موضوعاً رئيسياً في الأدب والفن لعدة قرون. لقد ألهمت الرغبة في المدينة الفاضلة عدداً لا يحصى من أصحاب الرؤى والمصلحين، الذين سعوا إلى خلق عالم أفضل من خلال وسائل مختلفة، مثل الدين أو الأيديولوجية أو العلم أو الفن. ومع ذلك، فقد تم انتقاد اليوتوبيا أيضاً والسخرية منها باعتبارها حلمًا مستحيلًا أو حتى خطيرًا، يصرفنا عن واقع عالمنا الناقص والمعيب.

تناول نوكوجي وا تشك وهو كاتب وناشط كيني بارز، موضوع المدينة الفاضلة في العديد من أعماله، بما في ذلك مسرحيته الناسك الأسود التي كتبت في الستينيات في وقت الاضطرابات السياسية والثقافية الكبيرة في إفريقيا وخارجها، حيث يقدم استكشافاً معقداً ودقيقاً للبحث عن المدينة الفاضلة في سياق المسرح الأسود. من خلال شخصية الناسك الأسود، الثوري الذي ينسحب من العالم ليعيش في عزلة، يثير نوكوجي تساؤلات حول طبيعة ومعنى المدينة الفاضلة وعلاقتها بنضالات وتطلعات السود.

الهدف من هذا البحث هو تعميق فهمنا لعمل نوكوجي وفكره من خلال تحليل الناسك الاسود كنص يتعامل مع موضوع المدينة الفاضلة بطريقة إبداعية ومثيرة للتفكير. كما يدرس كيف يستخدم نوكوجي المسرحية لنقد وتحدي العديد من مشاريع بناء المدينة الفاضلة، واقتراح رؤيته الخاصة لليوتوبيا و يأخذ البحث أيضاً في الاعتبار أهمية مدينة نوكوجي الفاضلة للعالم المعاصر والطرق التي تتحدث بها عن الاهتمامات الإنسانية العالمية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: يوتوبيا ، عنصرية ، فقر ، نقد

1. Utopia

1.1. The Origin and Definition of Utopia

The word “utopia” refers to two Greek words; “u” which means “no” and “topia” which means “place”. Thus, this word refers to a fantasy place. Afterward, the term “utopia” is used to refer to a perfect place or society. Kessler (1995: 7) defines utopia as “a fictionalized society in the process of becoming better though not perfect”. Accordingly, this type of society refers to a society that focuses on improving the condition of people rather than referring to a perfect society. Another definition of utopia is taken from Moylan (2014: 1) when he suggests that “utopian writing is at heart, rooted in the unfulfilled needs and wants of specific classes, groups, and individuals in their unique historical contexts”. The majority of scholars suggest that utopia is not after perfection, but it views perfection as

impossible because looking after an ideal thing or society is subjective. Therefore, according to these definitions, one can depict utopia as a member of society that try hard to enhance their lives specifically and the community in general.

In literature, authors build an imaginary society that fulfills the needs of its population. Authors deal with realities, but they illustrate this reality within their vision of utopia. Utopia is created through the conflict between society and its members, and it is mainly concerned with society rather than social members, i.e., social perfection. Accordingly, utopia is connected with optimism, futurity, and reform.

Some scholars suggest that the idea of utopia emerges in the progressive era in America, but historians have another word and say that it dates back to 1890 – 1920. Diner (1990: 3) argues that the progressive period is significant with middle-class people in America “looking to government to do something about the wrenching changes in America” resulting from urbanization and materialism. According to Gould (1996 :3):

The origins of the progressive era can be extended back into the 1880s, but the outlines of what would become the reform campaign began to appear about 1890. In a number of areas, Americans identified major social problems, called for an expanded role for the state, and pursued a more active regulatory government.

Consequently, scholars suggest that the progressive period is featured by the changing ideologies of citizens concerning the responsibilities of the government. Diner (1990: 13) argues that “settlement house residents and citizen groups initiated a variety of reform movements in 1890”. During this era, the citizen seeks to reform society by urging people to help poor families and requesting the government to do as much as it can to reform the community.

The type of utopia that is mainly concerned with people’s lives and tries to change their condition for the better is called revolutionary utopia. It is concerned with reforming equality and parity in society. Thus, it mainly addresses the world, not individuals. Reform, according to Sanchez (2008: 4) was “a crucial component of nineteenth-century life in the United States”. Despite the calls for reforming

gender, race, class, and other social issues nevertheless, citizens participate in reforming other issues such as temperance, suffrage, and abolition. As for the goals of the reformer, Shor (1997: 183) also argues that:

Their goals constitute a critique of the dominant order and a radicalization of certain common ideals such as liberty and equality. The struggle for the realization of those ideals becomes invested with utopianism. Utopianism, therefore, achieves a historical resonance at those exact moments when agents engaged in a willed transformation of reality that seeks to redress the imbalance between what is lacking and what they desire.

Utopists seek to figure out the defects in their society and try to find out suitable improvements for such defects. Utopists also adopt fiction so as to identify their goals. Concerning the utopist writings, Sanchez (2008: 5) suggests that; “they are explicit attempts to alter the institutions, systems, and processes that order our lives, and to alter them profoundly, in the here and now”.

Thus, the aim of utopists is to illustrate the movement of society on the way towards idealism by addressing the readers to help in constructing such an ideal world. They also focus on a better world for the people to live in by shedding light on the transformation of society. Aldridge (2007:423) argues that “progressives believed that humans were innately good and kind and that social reform, not revolution or a complete overhaul of society, was the best means to improve the American society”. So according to this statement, the writer requests the utopists to go back to the progressive period when they want to improve the negative features of society and seek prosperity in the American culture. But according to the utopists, they are after positive amendments that exist in certain social groups which extend to the whole community. These amendments arise basically from the womb of the hardship which citizens suffer from.

So, from a utopist's point of view, 20th-century society still has limitations, but they seek to create a perfect society for people. Utopian narrators try to make a combination between society members and the surrounding environment and culture to find out the best ways to enhance the elements of society.

Levitas' *The Concept of Utopia* (1990) is a seminal work on the notion of utopia in which she claimed that utopia has at least three functions: transformation, critique, and recompense. The book has particularly useful points of view to understand the social psychology of utopian thinking. According to Levitas, Utopias can serve as sources of social transformation and inspiration. This is due to the fact that utopian visions can become targets for which people work so as to bring their society closer to their ideal. Accordingly, behavioral or cognitive strivings are both possible because an individual or group action for social change can be taken in a variety of ways including institutionalized political engagement such as membership in political parties, lobbying, and voting. It also includes activist behaviors such as marches, rallies, and revolutionary activities.

As a result, utopian views may encourage thought, dispute, and investigation. Utopias can serve as goals for self-regulatory actions by making images of a desirable possible world available. Karau and Williams (1993: 681) suggest that individuals are more inclined to put out effort toward a common goal if the objective is desired and the individual's effort and behavior are perceived as critical to accomplishing it. If achieving a utopian vision is desirable, then an individual is likely to be motivated to engage in social change behaviors that are perceived as necessary for achieving the desired utopia. This line of reasoning argues that activating utopias' change function should increase the incentive so as to engage in behavior that promotes social change. Furthermore, since utopian ideas define the upper bounds of people's envisioned future worlds, so they can serve as benchmarks against which existing reality can be judged and criticized. In this situation, the bigger the gap between the utopian ideal and actual reality, the more pessimistic one's assessment of current reality becomes. So, this shows that activating the utopia's criticism function would reduce people's satisfaction with their current society and their willingness to justify it.

Although there is no direct empirical evidence in the social psychology of collective self-regulation for this prediction, however, there is similar evidence in the individual self-regulation literature. The self-discrepancy theory of Higgins (1987: 319-340) and related empirical studies have revealed that the gap between people's ideal and actual selves is linked to negative feelings. There is also some evidence that the actual-ideal difference in one's social group is linked to lower collective self-esteem (Bizman & Yinon, 2004) and negative emotions (Petrocelli

& Smith, 2005) which imply that these self-regulatory mechanisms are not limited to individuals.

Thus, while utopias' criticism and change functions indicate greater public engagement, utopian thinking has the ability to stifle societal engagement as Levitas (1990) indicated when she focuses on the utopias that might serve a compensatory function. Thus, people can escape the flaws of their current society by withdrawing into the dream of a desired utopia without critically examining the actual reality or any chance of change. But their dreams cannot help them to accomplish anything as the evidence demonstrates that good imaginations lessen an individual's desire to achieve a goal and reduce the likelihood of attaining the objective within the individual self-regulatory process. This line of logic argues that activating the practical function leads to escapism, which is defined as an emotion-focused coping method involving daydreaming and fantasizing, as well as avoiding practices in depression or other mental health literature. Escapism and avoidance have both been demonstrated to be inadequate coping mechanisms, as well as being linked to negative mental health outcomes.

2.2. Black Utopia

Gruesser (2000: 1) says that in the 20th century Afro-American writers wrote about Africa for two reasons: the first one is for political issues and the second is for African-descendant people who lived in the United States. Moreover, the history of black writings whether fiction or non-fiction has referred to Africa only as a geographical place and not as a utopian one, a metaphysical place. For Afro-Americans, Africa is not only their homeland and a place for their ancestors but also a place of dignity and wellness. Moylan (2000: xv-xvi) argues that utopia can be recognized as an autonomous part and can be explained within fictional writings. For black people, utopia creates not only a temporal but also a spiritual substitution that can fade away the craziness in the real world. Ahmad (2009: 6-25) argues that in the past, utopia proposes that the community will be enhanced under technology. But one can notice that the fictional utopia shows African Americans fond of the old times rather than the coming, as the past represents their homeland heritage.

Sexuality and gender and family union in modern life make them eager to retrieve their past time as their life is affected by American slavery. Some writers coin a

new term so-called ‘Astro-Blackness’. Anderson and Rollins (2015: 1) suggest that “Astro-Blackness is an Afro futuristic concept in which a black person’s state of consciousness, released from the confining and crippling slave mentality, becomes aware of the multitude and varied possibilities and probabilities within the universe”. The concept of slavery captures the attention of Afro-futurist writings. Accordingly, black people started seeking liberation and freedom.

Moses (1998: 237) states that “the Afrocentric tradition is related to utopian ideas of progress because it promises a glorious destiny for African people in the future. Ironically, however, it looks backward to a utopia in the past when Africans were the most advanced people on earth”. Sharpe (2010: 28) suggests that:

Slavery provides both a time and space (real and fantastic) where to commit incest or amalgamation is to break the same law and the imminent rupture and onset of forgetting that break around which some cultural or national formation has taken hold.

African Americans consider incest as a result of slavery against black people and black families. Black families suffer a lot from slavery and wish that they could get back to old times when they used to live a normal life. Kassanoff (1996: 172) argues that the “black maternal body functioned as a site of significant new Negro intervention”. It suggests that black women are dominated by white men.

Zamalin (2019 :3) suggests that “in common usage, (utopia) names anything that seems too realistic. Utopia is, in other words, something that is embraced at youth but abandoned at maturity”. But Levitas (1990:2-5) argues that: “utopia is not escapist nonsense but a significant part of human culture ... utopias are not impossible at all but derived from their significance from the fact that they are realistic”.

The other issue that should trigger utopia is race. This issue seems to be missing from the picture of utopia because a better community should be clear of racism. One can notice some popular works from More to Gilman lack discussion on racism. Some writers deny such issues among humans. Lovchik (2018: intro) says that:

Racism takes its name from race. There is really no such thing as race, or races of humans. There has never been. It is a myth ... used to justify treating people as inferior. Race did not lead to racism; it was simply a convenient justification for this ranking of human beings that has come to be called racism.

But the reality is that racism is not a myth as utopia wants to get over racism and makes a perfect society raceless. Ventura (2019: 35) justifies that by saying that; “this desire to just get over, to have racism just be done, is part of typical race talk in large segments of US society where it is assumed that those who talk about race are the so-called real racists”. Accordingly, the aim of utopia is not to create a non-racist society but an anti-racist one. Levitas (1990: 5) argues that if one can seek a better future and society by using the ideology of anti-racism, one has a great opportunity to think of colored people who face inequality. Ventura (2019: 29) suggests that “utopia, as a social dreaming, offers a powerful way to confront racism by presenting new spaces for questioning and new prospects for inventing society rather than merely adjusting to what exists”. Ventura (2019: 41) adds that :

Bringing race and utopia together is not an attempt to paper over racism but an attempt to root utopia-as-resistance to the everyday where race and racism reside. To see utopia as part of the everyday is not to undercut the need for radical, structural, revolutionary transformation but to see that struggle evidenced not only in the sometimes fantastic worlds of utopias but also as imminent in everyday life where race is defined and racism flourishes.

Ahmad (2009: 131) argues that black utopia has avoided some serious issues, and little is written on the relationship between utopia and racism. Some of the books and articles are published in 2019 and 2020 focus on utopia and racism such as "Black Utopia" by Zamalin "Race, Utopia Desire in American Literature and Society" by Ventura, and "Chan and African Americans Utopia" by Sargent. Sargent (2020: 25) argues that the majority of utopian writings are authored by black female writers. This is due to the fact that black women writers are more sensitive and subject to racism than males.

2. Utopia in Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *The Black Hermit*

Ngugi is a Kenyan playwright who writes largely in Gikuyu. His works range from literary and social critique to children's literature and include novels, plays, short tales, and essays. Mtiri, a Gikuyu-language journal, is his own creation and he is its editor too. Ngugi became a well-known writer with the translation of his short story *The Upright Revolution: Or Why Humans Walk Upright* into 94 different languages.

Ngugi is highly appreciated as a dramatist by many critics. Fontenrose and Steinbeck (1963: 55) note that Ngugi's drama is similar to that of other African dramatists "of the dawn of the revolution, combine the lessons learned from literature engage with the vitality of the American novel of the twenties and thirties in their attempt to undermine the colonialist hegemony in its political structure".

This research adopts a qualitative and descriptive approach in analyzing Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's drama *The Black Hermit*. The analysis is based on postcolonial theory, that defined by Hamadi (2014: 39) as being:

... mainly based on what said considers the false image of the Orient fabricated by Western thinkers as the primitive "other" in contrast with the civilized West. He believes that the consequences of colonialism are still persisting in the form of chaos, coups, corruption, civil wars, and bloodshed, which permeates many ex-colonies. The powerful colonizer has imposed a language and a culture, whereas those of the Oriental peoples have been ignored or distorted.

In *The Black Hermit*, Remi is the protagonist. He is a young man who is the first of his clan to attend university. Remi struggles with feelings of tribalism and nationalism in a politically divided society, and this conflict becomes deeply personal as it affects the relationships of his marriage, his family, and his sense of responsibility to his people and country. As a result of these challenges, Remi becomes a "dark hermit".

Every character in the play is searching for their own utopic world. The concept of utopia can be vividly recognized in the speech of the main characters such as:

(to herself)

Of a truth,

This world is really bad

Not the same as the old

When sons still gave respect to parents,

Honoring the claims of motherhood (Nyobi:2)

In this quote, Nyobi, who is the main character, is not fully satisfied with the world around her. She believes that the world has changed in terms of morals, people's attitudes, and feelings. She condemns the disrespect of parents by their sons because they are careless, aimless, and immoral. For her, the utopian world is the old one where parents still had control over their children and treated them with respect, but now everything has changed. She is searching for a world that is full of respect for parents like the old one.

Thoni, another main character, wishes for a utopian life where she:

... can't do without a husband,

Without a man to warm my bed,

A man to ask me for a meal in the evening,

A man to make me wash his clothes;

And a child of my own,

A child to call me mother,

To make me feel a new self (Thoni: 3)

In this quote, Thoni clarifies her anger about being alone and a slave. She does not want to sell herself for others to get money. She is tired of being alone. Her utopic world means having a family, living with a husband, and having a little child to call her mom. She likes to do her household chores. Thoni's vision of the utopic life is mainly concerned with family life as supported by Nyobi's quote:

An independence has no meaning,

*Other than the one I knew yesterday;
I have tasted the pains of beating,
The pangs of birth and death's blows.
One lesson only have I learnt:
A women's joy is scolding her children.
It lies in seeing their smile and cries ...
But I've also learned that
To be kicked and humiliated follows this joy
When the children grow. (Nyobi: 3-4)*

This quote shows the difference between the utopian world and the bitter reality. The Utopic world for women is her family, especially her children. She finds joy and happiness when she scolds her children and sees their happiness and sadness. But the utopian image of women is destroyed by the bitter reality that, after their children grow, they will be humiliated, neglected, and left behind because they search for their own independent lives and do not care about their parents.

The other negative characteristic that people condemn is envy which prevents people from wishing good luck for others as they are haunted by egotism. Elder criticizes that in his society by focusing on his neighbors:

*You know what our neighbors are?
The tribes that surround us
Don't want to see us rise.
Who knows?
You are there.
I, your neighbor, here
Can't I use black magic
To turn your mind against the tribe and this hearth? (Elder: 9)*

Elder's quote reflects one of the negative issues that community members suffer from, which is envy. Elder wants a life without the existence of envy. This sickness

in society is also criticized by Nyobi, who suffers a lot from her neighbors who do not want to see her and her family rise and get a better status. This problem is so serious that she wishes to use black magic to get rid of it.

In searching for a utopic world, people often consider the discrimination between black and white people, which is an important issue in this play. Black people want their world to be without racism in order to live peacefully. The Leader's quoted speech below is considered a sign of an anti-racist figure:

I am not making a speech. But a word, one word I must share with you. We elders of Marua love our soil. Because we love that soil, we, years ago, agreed to fight the white man and drive him away from the land. (Leader: 13)

The Leader's speech focuses on loving the land, patriotism, and citizenship. The white man is criticized as a symbol of invaders and intruders and is also connected with racism and discrimination. The Leader wants their utopian world to be free of racism, discrimination, and slavery. He wants to educate the young generation about the sufferings of the old ones in the past because of the white man. So by teaching them such life lessons, they will realize the importance of rejecting such things and also make them recognize how difficult the past was.

The character of the pastor plays an important role in the play as he gives the readers a background about Remi:

*When he went to this University –
Ah! I always said Satan was clever:
Involved him in politics
And other wordly pleasure and power –
He became – Ah – well –
That Africanist Party: was he not a member? (Pastor: 18)*

The pastor condemns politics as a demonic deed and justifies his involvement in a political party by saying that the devil made him do it. The utopian world for them

should be clear of dirty politics, as it brings nothing but destruction, corruption, and false promises. As for Remi who hates tribes and racism, he suggests rejecting opposition that creates chaos and is based on arbitrariness. His speech is quoted here:

...but can't we outgrow the opposition mentality and help to build? Some people feel that they must go on opposing the government at every point. And it is more terrible when the opposition – like that of the Democratic Union – is based simply on tribe and religion. I hate this. Even at college I hated the many small political and social organizations based on tribe and race. (Remi: 30)

Remi believes that the utopian world should focus on building the country rather than destroying everything. The utopian world cannot be based on tribes and racism because they have destructive power, therefore he prefers opposition that has positive attitudes towards building the country instead of organizations that are based on tribes and racism. He also wishes that the utopian world would be clear of colonial slavery, which is strengthened by tribal loyalties. He says that : “Never! Never! Has our nationalist fervor that gave us faith and hope in days of suffering and colonial slavery been torn to shreds by such tribal loyalties? All my life I believed in the creation of a nation .” (Remi: 41)

Remi is after creating a nation for all people that is clear of slavery, false loyalties, and all types of suffering. A world that has patriotism, kindness, compassion, friendliness, and equality. Remi also condemns and rejects the bad tribal traditions he brings up with as he says that :

*I have been too long a hermit
In the City.
I'd thought I'd escape
From things that were me –
That were part of my life.*

*I must now rise and go to the country.
For I must serve our people,
Save them from traditions and bad customs,
Free them from tribal manacles. (Remi: 45).*

When these types of traditions dominate a society, ignorance prevails because they are like chains that hinder progress. As Remi finishes college, he is determined to free his society from the shackles of tribes and their unfair traditions. The utopian place for them is a place where false tribal traditions and customs do not exist. He wants to free his people from slavery and the shackles of his tribal customs. Remi continues to explain the sufferings he has experienced under the rule of tribes and colonialism:

To your tribalism and colonialism, the tyranny of the tribe and the settler are an abstraction. To me they are real. I have felt their shaft here. Yes, they have made wound here. To you, African nationalism and what it means to us who suffered under the colonial rule for sixty years can only be an intellectual abstraction. But to me, my whole being – I am involved it. (Remi: 47)

Remi clarifies that for other settlers who are not black, the rule of colonialism and tribes are just mental images and not a reality. For him, it is the suffering, torture, tyranny, and hell he lives in. Accordingly, he wants to free his people from the domination of tribal traditions. He wants to educate them in order to face these intruding customs. Foreigners do not experience such acts; for them, such acts are just imagination. Remi focuses on the persecution and slavery that black people suffer from. In the utopian world, there is no place for slavery and persecution. Jane clarifies for Remi that she and her family are different when she says:

My father left South Africa because he could not bear a racial regime. For all people are the same everywhere. What matters is not race, creed, or custom, but whether individuals ;can meet and understand one another. Just

*now you are betraying the ideals you used to mirror before my eyes. Hm.
And you criticize Verwoerd! (Jane: 48)*

She explains that her father fled to another country because of the prosecution that black people suffered under South Africa's regime. For her, people should not be judged based on their creed, race, or traditions, but rather the main point is to meet and get to know each other. The utopic world for her is one of equality and justice, not the other way around. Another aspect of the utopic world is education therefore Remi is chosen because he is:

*... a chosen vessel of God.
I know this once long ago
When Remi came to my Sunday school.
He would listen to me attentively.
My heart was filled with great joy.
To see the young soul
So hearken to the small voice of God.
Again meeting in the big city,
I saw the same child,
Listening (oh ow my heart leapt)
To the small voice. (Pastor: 57-58)*

The pastor focuses on the importance of education in an ignorant tribe. The tribe pushes Remi to be an educated person in order to lead them. Education is a weapon against illiteracy and ignorance. People gather around educated people as they represent leaders to them. Education is not only a weapon against illiteracy and ignorance but also against invaders and colonists. An educated and cultivated country cannot be defeated by the plans of colonists and can rise up at any time. The utopic world for them is also the search for education and the elimination of illiteracy.

The reappearance of the hermit has something else to tell. He symbolizes something significant for his people, who are waiting for a savior who can rescue

them from tyranny and slavery. His return is rejoiced and provoked by people in such away:

... hear the drums.

They carry branches.

And sing old songs of war

When we, Marua, used to be a tribe,

Before the white-man came.

Now they sing of another coming.

After the going of the white-man.

They sing of a new man,

To restore the tribe to its land,

To its old ways.

No more taxation.

There will be freedom. (1st neighbor: 59)

The return of Remi has an impact on the citizens, who are waiting for him to save them from prosecution and slavery. For them, he is their salvation. Before colonialism, they used to sing, dance, and be happy and free, but after colonialism, everything stopped. After the colonists have gone and the new man has arrived, they start singing and dancing again. They are happy with his return and the possibility of being freed from the shackles and false loyalty to the invaders. They hope that the situation will return to the way it was before, with no taxes and freedom. They are searching for a utopia, a place where they can laugh, dance, live freely, and love each other. The first neighbor continues to glorify the coming of Remi, saying that :

Your son.

He'll come to-day.

To lead us back to glory.

Oh hear them.

They come nearer. (1st neighbor: 60)

He and the village are waiting for Remi to save them from all intruded customs and bring them back to a safe zone, to heal their wounds and let them live a normal life. The appearance of Remi is the hope that they had been waiting for. As he comes, he starts addressing his people telling them that: “Go now dear elders. And remember what I told you. We must all turn to the soil. We must help ourselves; build more schools; turn our hearts and minds to create a nation, then will tribe and race disappear. And man shall be free.” (Remi: 64)

Remi believes in that every single bad tradition will disappear by building strong education facilities and developing strong minds. He tells the elders that they have to build schools in order to educate people. He makes them aware of everything that need to be done so as create a utopic nation that is free of slavery, prosecution, racism, and the dominance of tribal traditions. When these things are achieved, then racism and tribal slavery will be certainly disappeared giving them the opportunity to accomplish their Utopic world.

Omenge advises Remi that his political party should lead the state and there should be a plan for eliminating illiteracy so as to give “back the settlers’ land to the people” [which will help their] Illiteracy ought to be abolished within a year. ” (Omenge: 70) Remi’s friend suggests that the African Party should rule and take back the lands from the settlers and give them to the people. In addition, illiteracy should be eliminated. Otherwise, people will return to tribes and extremists to achieve their needs. So the message that the readers can get by the end of this play is that to create a utopic world then it should be free of illiteracy which is ruled by tribalism and religion because they are the real obstacles that challenge people and hinder accomplishing their dream of the utopic world.

4. Conclusion

Black people suffer a lot from slavery, illiteracy, oppression, prosecution, disrespect, and racism but they have not stopped searching for a world that is full of respect, equality, justice, anti-racism, and freedom which is symbolized by utopia. Utopian aspirations are all around us, yet little is known about how they impact everyday individuals’ interaction with their civilizations. Utopias can trigger processes of communal self-regulation where citizens are critical of their societies or take action to modify them. Therefore, Utopia has three utopian functions: change, critique, and compensation which are connected with

utopianism. The research demonstrates that utopian thought consistently increases the intentions to change and criticize.

In *The Black Hermit*, Ngugi Wa Thing'o explores the theme of the quest for utopia in the context of black theatre. Through the character of the Black Hermit, a disillusioned and cynical revolutionary who withdraws from the world to live in solitude, Ngugi raises questions about the possibility and desirability of creating a perfect society. The play exposes the flaws and limitations of various utopia-building projects, such as those based on religion, ideology, or individual ego, and suggests that true utopia can only be achieved through collective struggle and dialogue.

The analysis of *The Black Hermit* reveals that Ngugi's vision of utopia is not a static or predetermined state, but a dynamic and open-ended process of becoming. Utopia is not only a place, but also a relationship between human beings and their environment, based on respect, mutual recognition, and solidarity. Ngugi's utopia is rooted in the specific cultural and historical experiences of the black diaspora, but it also transcends these boundaries and speaks to universal human aspirations. Therefore, *The Black Hermit* is a thought-provoking and timely play that invites us to reflect on the meaning and potential of utopia in our contemporary world. It also challenges us to imagine alternative futures and to take an action to realize them, in the face of the many challenges and crises that we face as a global society. So by engaging with Ngugi's play, we can expand our horizons and enrich our understanding of the human condition, as well as our own role in shaping the world we want to live in.

5. References

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