

A Literary Account of Genocide through Martin Amis' *Time's Arrow or the Nature of the Offence* (1991) and Meja Mwangi's *The Big Chiefs* (2008)

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Abstract

This article sides with the opinion that literature is a product of society and writers get inspiration from society to produce texts that reads as their subsequent accounts for what occurs in society. It focuses on a British literary perspective on the holocaust and on the 1994 Rwanda genocide under an African literary perspective. The study lays emphasis on their causes and their impacts leaning on Martin Amis' *Time's Arrow or the Nature of the Offence* (1991) and on Meja Mwangi's *The Big Chiefs* (2008). The study uses the Marxist critical theory through its two lenses of class confrontations and the intra and inter-humane relations, in relation to the concept of responsibility. From the selection and analysis of incidents from the corpus texts, the study has come to the conclusion that literature, in the form of Meja Mwangi's and Martin Amis' fictions, exposes human's foibles and folly that harm human dignity and destroys human life to the extreme level. The end result of the study is the exposure of leadership manoeuvring and its decadent effect on the society for the readership to take notice and due action to improve human relations.

Key-words: Literary account, genocide, leadership, Rwanda, Germany, dignity, symbolism.

Résumé :

Cet article défend l'idée selon la littérature est un produit de la société et que les écrivains s'inspirent de la société pour produire des textes qui rendent comptes de ce qui se passe dans la société. Elle développe une perspective littéraire britannique de l'Holocauste d'une part, et une perspective africaine sur le génocide Rwandais de 1994. L'étude met l'accent sur leurs causes et leurs impacts en s'appuyant sur *Time's Arrow or the Nature of the Offence* (1991) de Martin Amis et sur *The Big Chiefs* (2008) de Meja Mwangi. L'étude fait appel à la théorie critique marxiste à travers ses deux aspects que sont les confrontations de classes et les relations intra

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et interhumaines en relation avec le concept de responsabilité. La sélection et l'analyse des incidents tirés des textes du corpus ont permis de conclure que la littérature sous la forme des romans de Meja Mwangi et de Martin Amis, expose les travers et la folie de l'homme qui portent atteinte à la dignité humaine et détruisent la vie humaine à l'extrême. Le résultat montre l'exposition des manœuvres de leadership et de leurs effets décadents sur la société afin que le lecteur en prenne conscience et agisse en conséquence pour améliorer les relations interhumaines.

Mots-clés : Récit littéraire, génocide, leadership, Rwanda, Allemagne, dignité, symbolisme.

Introduction

One of the most outstanding pronouncements Ngugi wa Thiong'o made about literary is that, literature does not grow in a vacuum; but it takes impetuous shape from society through human experience. It in this perspective that, we have undertaken to explore the way literature goes about social experience it stems from. Various genocides have been recorded throughout history in many parts of the world. Cases such as the genocide of Armenians on the fringe of the First World War, the Ukrainian genocide in the 1930s, the Holocaust against the Jews in Germany, (R. E. Goodin and C. Tilly, 2006) and the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, are few examples of genocides that fiction writers have portrayed in their texts. Literature responds to these various genocides in different forms of creative writing. In other words, the various genocides that constitute a reality have inspired many creative writings across the world. Referring to the Rwanda genocide, O. Nyirubugara (2017), asserts that "fiction is another way of representing reality at a different level and in a more suitable way." (O. Nyirubugara, 2017, p.11). This subtle way provides the fiction writers with the opportunity to speak of issues that are otherwise under censorship in real life situations before adding that

The assumption is that in societies with a contested past like Rwanda, laws and other unwritten rules intimidate and prevent people from expressing themselves freely through mass media and academic writings, about genocide, ethnicity, the war and the political system, amongst other subjects. (O. Nyirubugara, 2017, p.11)

This study works out the different ways in which genocides story on the Holocaust in Martin Amis' *Time's Arrow* and the 1994 genocide in Rwanda in Meja Mwangi's *The Big Chiefs* relate to the wars and human experience that allude to bad human behaviour through politics and civil conflicts. The hypothesis originates from the belief that if stories of violence are well told and the narrative genius put to social use, peace can be constructed out of the told stories with the help of the memories of the past.

The study uses the Marxist critical theory through its two lenses namely the class issue and class intra and inter-relations, and the responsibility issue that calls on the social duties individual characters in the corpus and people in our society are called upon to fulfil. Upon implementing the theory, we have found that the class hierarchies do more harm than good. Class aesthetics create frustrations among the people who are not satisfied with the stratification that does not take into account the opinion of the people. To be *tall*, that is to be *rich* enough to

make decision and implement them, to travel and participate and contribute to the world ideological mapping is not enough. Politics can reshuffle everything. So, politics have to be reshaped and the politicians persuaded to place the collective interest before any urge for political casting and decision-making. The context of responsibility is a call to duty in the society that is ill of its performance and social organization. The responsibility is beyond class barriers; it is in the role each person can play as contribution to the better health of the society and its becoming.

The story of genocide that engages people of all ranks is a pathway to how peace can be constructed through the retelling of life history of violence to bring change. Through the narrative focalization on the markers and makers of wars and genocides, the work sheds light on the ways the two novelists have recreated the story to restart a new era of peace and better life. The work is structured around the myth of superiority and how it causes genocide, textual markers of genocide and the writers' ideology, construction of peace through the story of violence.

1-The Myth of Superiority as the Causative Force of Genocide

Causative mishaps of genocide, a “deliberate murder of a whole community or race” (Sinclair et al. eds, 1987/2001:653), are placed on racial hatred, frustration backward narration and misnomer. The study presents two literary perspectives. A perspective from a British writer and another from an African writer. The two novelists have used their various narrative strategies to represent the actions of human beings who have bad character in society because they perpetrated actions that took various forms in terms of genocide. The British literary perspective is developed from the Holocaust against Jews. The Nazi genocide was committed against Jews during the Second World War. The African literary perspective focuses on the Rwanda genocide of 1994. Both forms of genocides constitute a crime against humanity, the representation of which is deemed problematic many scholars across space and time. Aristotle explains how it is difficult to represent human beings who have bad character or who committed offences against humanity in the following terms:

The objects the imitator represents are actions, with agents who are necessarily good men or bad – the diversities of human character being nearly always derivative from this primary distinction, since it is by badness and excellence men differ in character, it follows, therefore, the agents represented must be either above our level of goodness, or beneath it, or just as we are; in the same way as ... (J. Barnes, 1984, p. 2317)

For instance, Martin Amis, in *Time's Arrow*, to represent the genocide which is a bad action against Jews during the Holocaust, inverts the traditional narrative order of a narration in a realist novel to describe the experience of the holocaust against Jews following the life of a Nazi war criminal in an anti-chronological order that ranges from death of the doctor to his birth. The narrative develops a retrospective perspective of the holocaust perpetrated against Jews to highlight a kind of introspection into human being's consciousness about the level of atrocities human beings can commit against their fellow human beings for various causes foregrounding is so doing the characteristics of postmodernist novel that exposes trauma on human beings.

In fact, this postmodernist English novel relates the story of a Nazi doctor, Odilo Unverdorben, in a backward way from the end of his life through the time when he was serving at Auschwitz concentration camps, right back to the time of his birth to the years between the First World War and Second the Second World War. The backward narrative is a form of perjury on the medical professionals around which the story of the Holocaust is build up in the novel. In actual fact, the main objective of the medical profession is to save lives. But human beings, because of their folly, or their foibles have turned the moral sense in the world upside down, especially in the Nazi genocide during which medical doctors in blatant perjury of their Hippocratic Oath were used kill Jews instead of healing them in the concentration camps in Auswhwitz.

The perjury committed by the medical doctors against their Hippocratic Oath is created on purpose in the novel to show a metaphorical representation of the Holocaust which is a denial of the inalienable rights to life to human beings. This perjury creates a situational irony in the text in which the roles are reversed in the way in which the clock shows a reverse of time. This is the reverse of logic, the reverse of normality, the reverse of morale sense, the reverse of human dignity which leads to unspeakable suffering and mass killing of human beings. This brings to the fore the theory of R. Lifton (1986) who “attempts to explain how men sworn to uphold the Hippocratic Oath could dedicate themselves to mass murder” (Diedrick, 2004: 136) as quoted by I. Indiyae (2015: 146). Martin Amis in his novel represents the par jury of the Hippocratic Oath in the following manner:

I swear by Apollo Physician, by Health, by Panacea, and by all the gods and goddesses, making them my witnesses, that I will carry out, according to my ability and judgment, this oath and this indenture.... I will keep pure and holy both my life and my art. In whatsoever houses I enter, I will enter to help the sick, and I will abstain from all intentional wrongdoing and harm (M. Amis, 1991, p p. 24-25)

The Holocaust was ignited and executed by the higher political authorities of Germany in the person of Adolph Hitler and his National Socialism Party. Hitler even proclaimed the racial superiority of the Aryan race over the Jews and the rest of human beings in the world at large. In the novel, the justification of the holocaust is based on racial grounds deemed to be baseless by contemporary scholars:

All cultural development was ascribed to the German way of life, while the Jews were described as ‘physically, spiritually and morally degenerate’. Chamberlain presented history as a confrontation between the Teutons and the Jews, and therefore prepared the ground for Nazi race theory, which portrayed the Jews as a universal scapegoat for all of Germany's misfortunes. The Nazis blamed the Jews for Germany's defeat in 1918; they were responsible for its humiliation at Versailles; they were behind the financial power of the banks and big business that enslaved the lower middle classes; and they behind the working-class movement and the threat of social revolution. In Hitler's view, the Jews were responsible for an international conspiracy of capitalists and communists, whose prime objective was to weaken and overthrow the German nation. (A. Heywood, 2003, p. 25)

The myth of racial superiority is based on a long standing history of anti-Semitism against Jews which culminated in the form of the Holocaust that is depicted by Martin Amis in *Time's Arrow*. The Germans led by Adolf Hitler believed in this myth of the Aryan race superiority over the rest of human beings. As the narrator asserts:

In the Clubroom I am told... Jews come from monkeys from (*Mesnschenaffen*) as do Slavs and so on. Germans; on the other hand, have been preserved in ice from beginning of time in the lost continent of Atlantis. This is good to know. A meteorology division in the Ahnenerbe has been looking it. Officially these scientists are working on long-range weather predictions, in fact, though, they are seeking to prove the comic-ice theory once for all. (M. Amis, 1991, p. 131.

The myth of the superiority of the German people over the Jews was established on false grounds. The Marxist Critical perception of class exposes the danger of sticking to class difference with the aesthetics of the deadly binary opposition. Thus, the myth of superiority is used in the construction of the plot in the story in Martins Amis' *Time's Arrow*. Likewise, the story in Meja Mwangi's *The Big Chiefs* is woven from the myth of ethnic or social superiority, the radical comparison of the 'tall' and the 'short', the animalistic portrayal of the poor masses as 'cockroaches'. The reader encounters the ironic designation of the powerful by the masses as 'the big chiefs' which introduces the reader to the sorrow in the poor victims of the absolute power corruption in Mwangi's novel. Mwangi constructs the idea of myth on the absolute irrational base on which to understand the concepts of tall and short in the narrative.

As one reads *The Big Chiefs*, the idea of tall may sound like the positive appreciation and those who are ranked tall is well treated. On other occasions, the "short" seem to be the empowered people against the "tall". The novel provides a context of confusion in the designation of characters and the character-class which as a whole corroborates the confused world of *The Big Chiefs*. It is worth noting the specificity tied to the irrationality in which genocide can justify itself, a world in which a responsible citizen, like Boy, wonders how the idea of genocide baffles the values that used to tie people together. The issue of responsibility of Frankfurt School is worth remembering here to stress the moral duty of human beings in carrying out their social contract. With sorrow in the heart and the accusing finger pointed to the cruel machination of genocide, the reader is led to understand the implied conspiracy against the people whose history has inspired the writing of the literature on genocide. Reasonably, "A whole people can't have fasted and feasted together, intermarried and integrated together, birthed and buried together, lived and reasoned together, and then, one day, decided to go out and kill all their friends, relatives and neighbors" (TBC: 10). This passage is expressing the hidden agenda of the people who, in search of their egoistic interests, go further into organizing the murder of the other people they are jealous of or want to ruin for their self-glory.

The Holocaust as "an event in which there is a lot of destruction and many people are killed, especially one caused by war," (Sinclair et al., 1987: 749), is the hallmark of Amis' narrative wherein Jewish characters experience the saddest event of extermination of their people or race. The two World Wars are exemplifications of mankind' self-destruction or

extermination that took the form of a genocide or the Holocaust against the Jews. This self-destruction is explored in Martin Amis *Time's Arrow*. Regarding the myth as a tentative approach to explain things people find difficult to explain, the idea of *tall* and *short* can be better understood in the mythology of the 'Big Chiefs' making. To be a *tall* or a *short* person is to bear and live a forged fate the political authorities of the novel have reserved for those who are designated by the corresponding attributes of their mythology. The "Head Chief can be tall or short, married or unmarried, read or unread... It made no sense at all, but history and politics had elevated it to a science" (TBC: 18).

It is worth noting that the story of *The Big Chiefs* unfolds in an imaginary country of Mwangi's creation where ordinary people and the political dissidents are butchered without any trial. It is the country that has sunk into the pit of death soon after the crash of the presidential jet. The power of the historical references and the emotional display of hatred against the oddities of war still in the minds of many people persuade the reader to agree that such a story is a literary account of Rwandan genocide of 1994. The narrative exhibits ethnic folly and the big chiefs' lust to kill people they consider to be their political and material challengers. This lust is the background force that is reinforced and justified through misnaming of victims and the political maneuverings in the story making of *The Big Chiefs*. Most definitely, the binary set of people in the created world of *The Big Chiefs* and their appreciation of each other on the Machiavellian mode foreshadow enmity, frustration and open conflicts.

Apart from poverty, social hatred is bred through the mutual exclusion of the classes and so, in its unfolding, it causes the outburst of genocide. In *The Big Chiefs*, politics is a machine to exploit the masses or to exterminate them if they resist exploitation. Another paradoxical context that stands as the causative force of the genocide points to instances where bad politics raises and entertains poverty with the very awareness poverty causes revenge, which ends in cold blood shedding where the poor masses are still the losers.

The cover of the animal imagery renders the masses vulnerable by the principle of enmity and the nuisance associated with the cockroaches, a context of the novel that gives the right of life and death of the big chiefs over the masses. In fact, the metaphoric discourse that uploads the 'villain' animal imagery on people in *The Big Chiefs* equally uploads the social destiny of the named animal on the person designated. Take for example the scientific proof that cockroaches produce quite often and give diseases to human beings. No human being may like them. The potential great number of cockroaches the frequent production implies exhausts food and facilities reserved for true human beings. The context is well documented for the reader to better understand the imaginary world and the role of the big chiefs in it. It gives a true-false mood that the chiefs promote to forge the belief that the genocide is an alternative solution to save food and facilities for 'humans'. The life of a cockroach is a nuisance to a big chief. The death of a cockroach is a golden opportunity for a better to big chief. They are the 'enemies' of the people.

The causative force of genocide is constructed through the emotive style through which characters release their feelings and the malignant plans of human destruction. Situational contradictions created in the corpus novels where people who once lived together turn into foes. Strong malignant arguments are used by some characters to play their antisocial roles which, in

practical situation of media communication, drive the rationale of the passive audience into sleep just as, out here in society, social culprits do justify their mischievous actions to fool the masses and liberate their conscience.

Mwangi's created world is that of casualties, place where "a man easily trades his children for food" (TBC: 166), a place where people live like hyenas feasting while their children hunger (TBC: 166), where the sheep roars over the leopard (TBC: 169). It is a world of darkness, a world of confusion. The logic of life is turned upside down. The abnormality has become normality and the normality, abnormality, a world of awe and sorrow and of murmurs of dissatisfaction. According to Pewissi (2012), identity misnomer, behavioral misnomer, leadership misnomer and conceptual misnomer of the narrative stakeholders in their imaginative world have served as narrative tools to substantiate paradoxes that cause tragedy in the making of the genocide.

2-Textual Markers of Genocide and the Writers' Ideology

Critical studies use texts as raw materials to evidence the arguments. The study identifies and analyses the textual elements that call to minds the realities of a genocide or fix them. It is worth noting that genocide out here in the target society and genocide in the text are perceived from the metaphorical approach, i.e. an effort to understand how real life genocide relates to the written genocide with a focus on sameness.

One textual marker is associated with the **falsehood** of the people who hold on to genocide and seek by hook or by crook to argue for it. That human beings are 'cockroaches' and 'tall' has nothing to do with physical appearance. It is rather an ideological mapping of human categories in order to justify social and racial hierarchies and malignant actions and reactions. The coined strategy validates the heinous actions. In Martin Amis' *Time's Arrow*, this heinous actions were directed against Jews through mass massacre of innocent people, especially children in the hospitals. Hitler could not succeed alone in his mission of the genocide without the collaboration of academics who believed in the myth of racial hierarchy that placed Germans at the top of the social stratum. The social classification also positions the political leaders as belonging to the higher class. They are metaphorically called the 'tall' and the people who belong to the lower class are called the cockroach because they are deemed to be a danger to the tall. Yet in Mwanagi's *The Big Chiefs* a person is not a cockroach. And not everybody in the masses is 'tall' if the word is meant to designate the height of the person. It is just a construction and a process of validation of social hatred.

The short are people of ordinary social class who are at the big chiefs' service. Their life and death are in the hands of the big chiefs. They cannot afford to travel. They are bound to obey and do things they are ordained to do. The enemies of the big chiefs are not specifically of a definite social rank of class. A person may be of any important rank but fail to belong to the group of the privileged. A person of an ordinary rank who has never been to school and who is poor in terms of material wealth can make his way to the defined social elevation only because of the big chiefs' will. The elevation can be material, moral or of the two types defined by the standards of politics in the novel. The person that enters the group of the privileged earns powers to silence "academic giants" (TBC: 43). In this context and paradoxically enough, the named academic giants are cockroaches by the political standards of the novel.

To be short means nothing until it is associated to the status of a cockroach or that of the big chief. Belonging to the group of the cockroaches condemns a person to death or poverty as a result of the big chiefs' emotion. The blatant contradiction in Mwangi's *The Big Chiefs* is a reversal situation of normality. Those who preach peace by day and organize war by night are the nationalists, the patriots, and humanitarians because they are paradoxically hungry for their own welfare. The big chiefs are those who arm ordinary people against their enemies and ordain the slaughtering of the masses or of the people who seek refuge in the churches during the genocide. The case in point is The Holy Family Church (TBC: 38). The church which is normally a place for prayer and protection is rather transformed into a place of mass massacre. The church fails to play its role of healing bad character or soul in the same way a hospital fails to heal the body in a community. The same contradiction is observed in Amis *Times's Arrow* where atrocities are committed against a large number of Jews waiting to be heal. In the context, paradox is played on the character Tod Friendly whereby the narrator presents him as a committed medical doctor and yet his hospital is a place of mass atrocities against other human beings, the Jews. The narrator describes hospital in the following terms:

Put simply, the hospital is an atrocity-producing situation. Atrocity will follow atrocity, unstopably. As if fresh atrocity were necessary to validate the atrocity that came before. As if the atrocity that came before was necessary to validate the atrocity that will come after. Stop now and But you can't stop. Atrocity upon atrocity. And then more atrocity and then more. (Amis, 1991, p. 92)

Martin Amis uses the concept of atrocities as textual a marker in his description of the Holocaust during which human beings of all walks of life were massacred. Additional markers are associated with the counter performances of the big chiefs in *The Big Chiefs*, understandably, the cabinet ministers with portfolio that are used against the masses: "the Big Chiefs are cabinet ministers with portfolios: The Big Chief for Defense, the Big Chief for Health, the Big Chief for Agriculture (TBC: 88)." Not anybody is needed in the society where the big chiefs have made the law to exclude some people from the mainstream of social life turning them into people to spit on or easy prey to the government's Machiavellan decisions. Such decision is to "rocket the cockroaches to hell in their sleep" (TBC: 88), to "fumigate the cockroaches with something more lethal than mere insecticide" (TBC: 88), or to "starve the cockroaches to death, along their fleas and their bedbugs and their numerous offspring" (TBC: 88).

The ideology of extermination is a marker of genocide or philosophy that sustains it. In context of the Holocaust, the extermination of potion in hospitals was a common practice of the day. For example, the narrator describes how two doctors and Odilo (now called John Young) and a colleague treating patients by recreating their injuries: "We took the stitches out and swabbed the boys with blood. I remember Witney's skilful insertion of some kind of crossbow bolt; me, I was wedging shards of brown glass into the other boy's crown" (M. Amis, 1991, p. 83). In this vein, the masses also known as the cockroaches struggles with a fake fate imposed on them. In *The Big Chiefs*, the masses, including the narrative voice, are "born in slavery, brought up in chains, and broken to serve. "To serve every day and in every way without any hope of a reward, to serve till we dropped dead and could serve no more. The masses had to

fight and die to shake off the colonial yoke” (TBC: 13). In the full wing of the genocide, on the criterion better known to the big chiefs, short people have a mission to travel within a definite space to slaughter the ‘tall people’. The potential victims “were detained at the checkpoint and sent to the Holy Family Church to be killed there” (TBC: 38).

The authorities imposed a requirement that all persons wishing to travel outside their districts and communities receive a written authorization from their District Commissioners. *Tall people* were ordered to stay home for their own protection while their assassins received passes so that they could travel freely to kill them. There was now no way of evading the road blocks that had sprang up all over the countryside to trap those trying to flee (TBC: 39)

From the above excerpt, it follows that the imposition of the pass is the very strategy used to locate the ‘cockroaches’, the political outcasts, the contextual enemy of the people. It is to kill them cold-blooded. *Tall people* are rich people who can travel anytime as money is not a problem to them. The narrator suggests that the big chiefs think that when the tall people flee the country, they become a permanent danger because they can raise a rebellion with the money they have. As it can be seen, victims of the genocide have different designations that justify their slaughter. They are either thieves or cockroaches, tall or short people. In any case they have a name that justifies the hatred against them. It is in this environment full of confusion and moral decay that the reader is brought to

see innocent men perish at the hands of a trigger-happy police, as the law was misused and abused by those who had grudges and scores to settle, and by those who had to fear for an end to their supremacy. But even that was nothing compared to what they did later with machetes (TBC: 41).

The very cruelty of the genocide is brought to the fore when the identity papers are abolished and replaced by the ethnic origin brought forth to serve identity rights.

... new Government had taken over in the city, and that the new Big Chiefs had abolished the carrying of all identity papers identifying people by their place of birth or ethnic origin, that *they* had sworn to uphold civil and human rights and to provide peace, liberty and justice for all (TBC: 224).

The story here is a mere flow of promises of a society of ‘milk and honey’ for people. In the unfolding of the story, genocide takes the place of the promises. The allusion to the genocide in Mwangi’s *The Big Chiefs* is similar to the way Martin Amis describes in *Time’s Arrow* how masses of Jewish deportees were massacred. The rationale behind the established politics of genocide is blatantly voiced in the following terms by the well-fed guards who explain to the stranger the crux of the big chiefs’ motives:

We had no use for them... They were nothing but trouble, a terrible pain in our chiefs’ backside. They cried all the time for food and for shelter, for truth and for justice and for mercy and such trivia. They would not let our chiefs sleep in peace in their silk beds, so we killed them all (TBC: 207).

All the massacre was made in praise of alienation. While under normal conditions, all peoples intelligent, dull, short, tall, are needed in the society for the proof of solidarities and complementarity to be exhibited, the masses are literally excluded from the benefits society offers to its members. Against this philosophy of living together and sharing, the well-fed guards hold on to the motto; the display of which makes them the accomplices of the big chiefs.

They wanted too much... There wasn't enough for everyone, so the chiefs kept it all for themselves. Our Big Chiefs, as you know, are very big, very important and very many, so they eat a lot to alleviate their hungers. But those others you others you worry about, they were small and insignificant. They were all cockroaches and could live on nothing. But they whined and complained all the time, like old women, so we ate them (TBC: 207)

3-Construction of Peace through the Story of Violence

Reading violence in general and the story of genocide seems paradoxical to reading leisure stories. While story of violence brings revolt, questions the stakeholders' actions and their roles in the scene, participants in the leisure stories relieve stress and the negative emotions. The former story-type is a thought provoking initiative that aims to control the beast in very person.

The narrative choice prompts the idea that writers describe violence or genocide to negotiate peace from hard experience. The narrator's choice is therefore in line with the writer's literary project. In Mwangi, genocide is a chaotic writing that substantiates the domination of the instinct over the reason the human being is endowed with. Similarly, Amis' holocaust displays the abhorrent follies of the British who portion their restricted world two folds, a world for the upper society which has all the rights to exterminate the lower society, the Jews. This chaotic life is articulated through the literary reverse of chronology of time or events in the text. And this perfectly matches the abnormality that is chiefly seated against the time-space in the literary articulation of Amis. Reversing the direction of time in Amis' *Time's Arrow* makes the narrative start with the consequences and move towards the underlying events. This is an effective technique to act on the consciousness of the readers to reflect on the negative effects of war and genocide in order to envisage peace for the future.

A wonder on how things can happen the way they are doing in the narrative for children to be taught to sing the praises before they begin to talk (TBC: 60), the narrator opens the readers' eyes on the constant socialization of people of all ages. Thus, when a person is labelled short, he or she has to simply obey orders. The mission is to kill people who have caused no harm and have no enemy (TBC: 43). The victims' only sin is to be in the bad light of the big chiefs'. For that reason, the ministers also referred to as the big chiefs' plan the death of the people they have decided to label *cockroaches*. Thus, among other big chiefs,

the Big Chief for Water suggests to the other members of the cabinet, the poisoning of the wells and the reservoirs as well as all the rivers and the lakes from which the masses drink. Further biological information on the lives of cockroaches indicates that these animals need plenty food and water to ensure their living (TBC: 89).

As for the Minister for Justice he has ordained the militia to shoot the cockroaches to save the big chiefs the trials (TBC: 41). The people that are slaughtered by the militia are called thieves (TBC: 41). The context of the novel gives no excuses to the life of the Big Chiefs in the way they handle politics. To sum the whole lot of the political maneuverings, the narrator explains how easy crimes, corruption and political mischievous actions are perceived: “*Politics, corruption and crime were the only occupations that seemed to pay enough*” (TBC: 41). The crude ways in which the anti-values are exposed and the refusal of Mwangi to support them with convincing arguments are options for peace construction grounded on the historical experience of Rwandan genocide. Further arguments that expose the belief of the big chiefs cause hatred because of the arrogance and despise for the people they are supposed to serve in their capacity as cabinet ministers. As the narrator puts it:

They Believed in immortality; indestructibility of their power. They crowned themselves emperors, high priests without equal, up above the law and second to no one. They declared the earth their own and traded it for gold. They bartered their dignity for gold thrones and silk beds, and their people for silver goblets and ruby rings (TBC: 204).

The big chiefs have created pretext from the food riots to decide to get rid of the shanty communities their bad leadership has created. The pretext is that people who live there are troublemakers. Yet, the troublemaking is caused by the bad governance that has no room for the poor.

One day, after the food riots that left the City looted, raped and smoldering, the Big Chiefs decided they finally had the justification to get rid of shanties once and for all. All the shanty communities were declared health hazards, all their dwellers criminal troublemakers and a threat to peace and security. They had all taken part in the food riots and looted, burned and raped with extraordinary glee, and were all better off dead (TBC: 70).

The above passage delineates another inconsistent argument that calls for justice that Marxist critical theory calls for under the banner of social responsibility. In this vein justice is another name for peace where exploitation, corruption and crimes are entertained by the ruling body. From the narrative approaches that deny supportive argument to human follies, analyses and deductive conclusions, readers will see for themselves how reality and the fiction on the genocide match both as lived experience and as the logic happenings in the cause-effect relationship.

From the narratives of genocide and that of the holocaust in the British context of Amis’ imagination, peace results from political dialogue. Historical reminiscences, symbolism, metaphor and flashback, and juxtaposition contribute to exposing divergent experiences of different characters that articulate internal focalization of crude injustice. For the Old Man it takes tolerance, mutual understanding and constant dialogue to save the country from political decay and violence. The pathetic description of horrors, the killing of human beings by other human beings without a cause, without an offence, especially when innocent children are not

spared is disheartening and constitutes a crime against humanity which does not augur well for peace. The doctor-narrator acknowledges the pain and injuries caused by himself and the other doctors in Auschwitz. He mixes his reminiscence about his childhood mistakes with the most severe and horrific actions of his manhood in the following way:

Wait. Mistake there. Mistake. Category... We brang. We putten. We brang, we putten, their own selves we taken all away. Why so many children and babies? What got into us. Why so many? We were cruel: the children weren't even going to be here for very long. I choiced it, did I? (M. Amis, 1991, p171)

This introspection led Tod Friendly, the narrator to develop a remorse for his criminal actions. These regrets can help build peace in the future in the mind of the readers who will never rejoice over these bad behavior of human beings. There are only wonders on how human beings can come so low and act like wild animals. It the very emotional stirring through the narratives that prepares the readers' minds for a changes in the way human beings should relate.

Today we have seen everything there is to see on this earth... Today we have seen men bleed and die for no reason. We have seen men kill like wild beasts without any provocation. We have seen people kill each other over a piece of cloth. Today we have seen people drive lorries over the bodies of their dying brothers. Today we have seen things that are impossible to relate (TBC: 213).

Through the process of the dialog, patent issues of human relations are brought to light. Nobody can ask to witness the death or to die without a cause. Yet, the narrative introduces the readership to the intolerable scenes of killings and blood shedding in the created country of Mwangi.

In terms global peace, *Time's Arrow* projects a future in which world leaders must develop a strong and transformational leadership that will help mankind avoid a postmodern apocalypse. The postmodern apocalypse raises concerns about the future of mankind. The reversal of temporality that encourages the reader to look beyond the novel's apocalyptic imagery and tone to try to imagine a time outside the novel and more importantly beyond the present in order to create a future world without a perpetual menace a nuclear Holocaust.

On the pretext of leadership, many characters in the created world act out the bestial instinct beyond understanding. Mwangi feels sad and so, he has created a man to deliver the message of peace to the big chiefs in a context whereby the meaning of leadership is corrected. All things wrong that were associated with leadership are exposed and deconstructed.

'Leadership is not a carnival dance,' he said to them. 'Do you ever ask your people where they want to go? Do you ever look back to see if they are behind you? Leadership is more than a Government office and a big car, more than public rallies and decrees. Leadership without direction is a charging bull to chaos and civil strife' (TBC: 155).

To be a leader is to be a role model. It is to be ready to serve which suggest to temper one's greed for other people to have their fair share in the society. Regarding law making, to be a leader is to make and sustain humane laws. It is also to do away with jungle laws. It is to lead

people to hope. Against this legal order, the Old Man spat in the fire by way of denunciation of what he and the other people of the regime would do:

‘The laws?’... ‘We had hundreds of them. Most of them we didn’t understand, and those we understood we didn’t like. But the laws were necessary to stop the poor from enjoying their lives, to keep the judges busy and, besides, a little law was good for everyone. Did I tell you we were gullible?’ (TBC: 57)

The law was selected on the basis of how the strengthen the power of the Big Chiefs and how well they contribute to the exploitation of the masses. The laws were there to make the judges busy. There was nothing serious about them. Yet to be a political leader is to accept the mission to help people to draw a line between a leader and a ruler. The former is more committed and conscience stricken while the latter is more focused on making bad laws for others and not for himself. In the light of the explanation provided by the Old Man in *The Big Chiefs*, comments were made in this imagined world to relate to the habits of the big chiefs toward the masses. The ruling went from bad to the worst and so it received the following comments:

They thought they were gods in our world. So one day, they had the idea to get rid of those they don’t like, which was nearly everyone. Anyone who was taller or shorter, fatter or thinner; or duller or wiser; or louder or quieter; or sadder or happier; or better or worse than themselves was their enemy. They did not like anyone but themselves. So they decided to do away with everyone and keep the whole world for themselves. That was how it all began (TBC: 206).

It is not surprising to see people acting like animals in the jungle after they are brainwashed to behave awkwardly. There is no other reason than the result of the brainwash: “A whole people can’t have fasted and feasted together, intermarried and integrated together, birthed and buried together, lived and reasoned together, and then, one day, decided to go out and kill all their friends, relatives and neighbors” (TBC: 10). Mwangi’s created world is a place where “a man easily trades his children for food” (TBC: 166), a place where people live like hyenas feasting while their children hunger (TBC: 166), where the sheep roars over the leopard (TBC: 169).

Besides, when the stranger asked why the orphans, the beggars and the poor, and all the people of this earth had been butchered without mercy, the well-fed gatekeepers replied without knowing it is God, “I am who I am” (TBC: 210), that complains to the Big Chiefs on behalf of the political victims and social outcasts:

‘We had no use for them,’ the gatekeepers said to him. ‘They were nothing but trouble, a terrible pain in our chiefs’ backside. They cried all the time for food and for shelter, for truth and for justice and for mercy and such trivia. They would not let our chiefs sleep in peace in their silk beds, so we killed them all.’

The stranger then asked, ‘Why didn’t you give them what they cried for so they could sleep in peace and leave your chiefs to their slothful slumber?’ (TBC: 207).

As if a divine decree, the stranger-God has blamed the big chiefs for failing to carry out their social mission on behalf of the people under their control.

‘You have done a great injustice to humanity,’ he said to them. “You have wronged heaven and earth and the land of your birth. You have shed the blood of the innocent and done wicked and evil things to widows and to orphans. Truly, I tell you, it would have been better if you had not lived at all. ... You are monsters that eat their own kind and hunger for immortality. Like the carrion eaters you emulate, you have forgotten that one day you too will die and be covered with dirt and be eaten by the same white ants that ate the poor people you butchered, and be turned into earth to be trodden on and forgotten like other vain people before you (TBC: 209-210).

The divine intervention at the close of *The Big Chiefs* with several rebukes on the Big chiefs’ leadership is a pass to alternative. The divine authority represented meets the requirement of the Marxists that are dispensers of duties toward other humans in the name of humanity. The alternative in this context is peace making from the experimented anarchy and chaos.

Conclusion

The aim of the study has been to analyse the way the two novelists, respectively from the British and African cultural backgrounds go about the issue of genocide or the Holocaust and the purpose their approaches serve in the making of peace in the contemporary world of ideological battles. The study has shown that, through creative writing, Mwangi and Amis defamiliarize the story of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and the Holocaust in ways that attract more attention to the details that reconstruct the very causes of wars and genocides. The emphasis has been laid on how the myth of superiority is the crux of violence, humiliation and exploitation, and especially the extermination of Jews in the target societies: African and German and British. The study has shown how the animalistic imagery associated with the human in context which degenerates human relations and justifies human flaws. There is no better way to teach the readership human responsibility in the crises going on in the world. Genocide literature is part of trauma literature. Through introspection, literature trauma influences the consciousness people to build a post-genocide peace. The study has also shown the mankind must endeavour to create a postmodern world free from a new apocalypse and a nuclear Holocaust.

The study has proved that the telling of the story is not the end itself in literature. Through the fixation of markers and makers of crises, wars and genocides in contexts, the novelists have given ample evidence for the readership to take notice for alternative actions in society. The powerful description of the scenes calls for a responsible literary criticism for the remaking of our contemporary world. Peace is being constructed through changing paradigms of the living together, humane relations and their opposites for a step away from violence and the construction of the paradigms of peace.

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