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REBIRTH OF LITERARY AESTHETICS: A STYLISTICS READING OF SONY LABOU TANSI'S AND ALAIN MABANCKOU'S SELECTED NOVELS

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ABSTRACT: African francophone literature has gained prominence since its inception with the publication of René Maran's *Batoula: un véritable roman nègre* before the attainment of independence by most African nations. Representing the challenges and the struggles of the newly independent states became a focal point in the presentation of thematic thrusts, with movement from colonial criticisms to combatting the virus of dictatorship among other woes of the continent. Female arrival in the literary scene also paved way for feminist movement which underscores the need of women liberation from patriarchal settings, underlining issues of inheritance, favouritism of male offspring, male chauvinism and incessant labouring of women in conjugal settings. With the presentation of thematic thrusts from one generation of writers to the other came divergent manner of depicting realities in fictions, a focal point for the birth of true aesthetics from stylisticians perspective. Focussing on *how* message is relayed instead of *the* message ensures aesthetic in committed African literature. Thus, adopting semiotics for meaning recovery in selected texts and the French method of *explication de texte*, this study investigates the birth of literary aesthetics between two different generations of writers, who share similar thematic and stylistics preoccupations as mentor and mentee semantically. Literary aesthetics is captured in the form of allusions and neologisms as stylistic tools contributing to meaning projection in selected texts as well as underlining signatures of the writers. Hence, this study investigates the role of coinages in meaning projection semantically.

Keywords: Stylistics, Aesthetics, Neologism, Allusion, mentor, mentee, mentorship.

I. INTRODUCTION

African literature in French has always been known to be engaging, with a lot of aesthetic features made possible by stylisticians manipulation of language while creating fiction. The manipulation of language makes African fictions written in European languages, French and English respectively in West Africa, depicts foreignisation. Specific ways of language manipulation in the creation of African literary works include; decolonisation of language through insertion of foreign registers and syntax, insertion of local lexemes through code mixing, a total switch from language of narration through code switching, amongst others. Adebayo (2000) considers these forms of manipulation as daring by the African writers in language usage. She remarks that "the new generation of writers, male and female, have become more daring following the fact that they go beyond a mere sprinkling of local expressions in French language to creation of new forms through the adoption of certain strategies such as transgression, integration, translation, transliteration, transposition, deviation, word-coinage, mixture of levels of language, and code-mixing now termed textual heterolingualisme or textual pluralism". Ayeleru (2010) considers metonymy used by postcolonial writers for the introduction of local colours as a means of promotion of Africa civilisation in literary creation.

Mabanckou and Tansi are renowned writers of the African continent, occupying different generations as literary giants of Congo Brazaville. The latter is believed to have greatly influenced the former in a mentor and mentee relationship. Both writers share other things in common apart from their country of origin. Conscientious studies have proven both writers to be poets, playwrights and militants in their respective area of interests. While Tansi fight against the woe of dictatorship in his days, Mabanckou as an advocate of world literature in French fights against ingratitude toward Africans, underlining the lack of gratitude as a virtue with the French. His argument as a joint signatory of the *Littérature Monde* with other forty-three (43) writers is further captured in his *Le monde est mon langage*. As an African descent, his combatant nature is reflected as he follows the footstep of earlier acknowledge totem presenter, Camara Layé in *L'Enfant noir*. Mabanckou

publication of *Le coq solitaire*, foregrounds the beauty of African beliefs peculiar to Congo Brazzaville earlier captured in *Demain j'aurai vingt ans*.

Sony Labou Tansi came into the limelight of African literary scholarship in the late 1970s and early 1980s with the publication of *La vie et demie* (1979), one of the texts in this study. Ayeleru and Edonmi (2009) believed that Tansi was influenced and highly motivated by the literary prowess of Wole Soyinka, whom they believed, he shares similar stylistics and thematic thrust with. The publication and success of *La vie et demie* made Tansi a national hero, sought by all and sundry. Mabanckou in an interview with Sonia Patricelli in France 24, title *À L’AFFICHE* asserts the importance of Tansi after the publication of *La vie et demie*. He pursued his assertion and incorporated the place of mentorship in the rebirth of literary aesthetics. Mabanckou recalls the reception of the original manuscript of *La vie et demie* from Tansi, following his declaration of interest in becoming a writer to Sony Labou Tansi. He reiterated the words of Tansi to him like a mentor to a mentee thus: “*n’écris pas la poésie. Cela ne sera jamais être publié! Regardez-là dedans. Vous allez savoir à peu près comment les écrivains souffrent pour écrire*” (do not write poems because it will never be published. Look at this closely. You will discover at least how much writers suffer while writing). This action of Tansi revealed by Mabanckou underline the place of an older generation writer’s impact in the development and success of future literary national and global giants, as Mabanckou became the first literary writer and critics to come to limelight after Tansi in Congo Brazzaville with several literary global awards.

The impact of Tansi as an older writer is evident in Mabanckou’s fictions. The manner of nominal creation, use of allusions, linguistic use of language in form of lexical cohesions among others are found in the projection of Mabanckou’s thematic thrusts, after decades of Tansi’s reign in the world of African literary scholarship. *African Psycho*, as a forerunner of *Verre cassé*, the fifth novel of Mabanckou, which announces him to the world as a global writer, coming as runners up in the French Goncourt prestigious prize (2005) and *Memoire de Porc-épic* (2006) winner of the Goncourt, all testify to the impact of Mabanckou’s mentee relationship with Tansi. *Black Bazar* (2007) goes further to highlight the lifelong impact of the mentor on the mentee, especially in nominal creations and other aesthetic stylistics tools employed in the text. This study thus, investigates to what extent is the role and impact of mentorship in the rebirth of literary ingenuity, using Mabanckou and Tansi as case study for contemporary writers and critics. Also, the relevance of motivation is also foregrounded following Ayeleru and Edonmi (op.cit) postulation that motivation is a great factor in human endeavour, which play primordial role in human activity. The question of Mabanckou as a child of Tansi, like Adech to Achebe, is thus a focal point in the comparative analysis of both writers’ works in this study.

II. NEOLOGISM AND REBIRTH OF LITERARY AESTHETICS

Stylistic analyses of texts encompass several tools, of which neologism is assumed to be a veritable one. Neologism is not a novel practice in the study and evolution of languages following its role in the formation of words in any given language. Neologism is used to describe the creation of a new word either in its signifier or in its signified form or even in both, at the same time in such a way that the newness is understood historically (Mazaleyrat and Molinié 1989: 234). Sorlin (2014) in a bid to describe “the indisciplinary of stylistics” concludes that “nothing less than neologism could best define the essence of stylistics as a discipline practising indisciplinary in the sense that stylistics has created a space of its own by borrowing both its object and theoretical tools from many different fields in the social sciences. Ayeleru and Edonmi (op.cit) posit that neologism can be creation of new words through borrowing from another language or through existing words within the language. The latter is found in the fictions of both writers studied in this work.

Tansi’s Neologisms have been discussed severally by critics and stylisticians over the years. Ayeleru (2001:128), posits that Sony Labou Tansi freely creates new words, sometimes out of existing ones, or entirely new words. Adebayo (2000:79) summarises that “Sony Labou Tansi is today not well known for the thematic concerns of his works but for his unique style which consists of a highly personalised use of French language”. One outstanding example of nominal creation from an existing word in *LVD* is in the creation of “sourissonner” a noun from the existing third group verb “Sourir”. This coinage of Tansi entails a transformation of the “re” ending in the original word to “er” in the created word, after insertion of double letter “SS” + “O” vowel and “NN” consonant. It also entails a movement from the verbal group to the nominal group in conventional grammar. Thus, Tansi, assures a phonological and orthographical departure in bringing to pass a new word in French in the context of the text. He also uses some slangs and jargons specially created for each situation. For example, the registers of money he uses include “fric” (dough, cash) (*LVD*, p. 77). He uses “le type, le mec” to mean “young man” (*LVD*, p. 35).

The most visible type of neologism associated with Tansi is the creation of long complicated names. These names have several connotative values than denotative. Notable among them in *La vie et demie* are “Sacré – Jean coeur de Père” (*LVD*, p. 127) (Sacred John – Heart of father), “Jean l’Ami des peuples” (John friend of the masses) (*LVD*, p. 143), “Jean – Brise – coeurs” (*LVD*, p. 142) (John Hearts – Breaker), “Mallot l’Enfant-du-Tigre” (*LVD*, p. 176) (Mallot son of Tiger). These nouns are onomatopoeic in nature as a close

linguistic evaluation of them could be sufficient in bringing out meaning. For example, the first name on the list “Sacred John- Heart of father” is a composition of the past participle of the verb “sacred” plus the proper noun “John”, the noun “heart”, the preposition “of” and a generic noun “father”. Each of these elements on their own is harmless and does not carry any negative connotative or denotative remark. However, a combination of them to form a single noun foregrounds the stylistics of the writer in the portrayal of the character and revelation of deeper meaning of his wickedness as a heart breaker.

Also, like Ayeleru and Edonmi (op.cit) remarked, if the names of Labou Tansi’s characters carries strong meanings, it is not surprising because it is a feature of African tradition. Names of children sometimes express the wishes and prayers of their parents. They may also be a sort of positive prophecy for the family. Status and religious belief of different families also inform the kind of names given to their children. Akpojisheri (2018) remarks that “when giving names, Africans pay particular attention to the physical characteristics and the circumstances surrounding the birth of the child and the cultural beliefs of the people. This assertion is evident in the naming of Abibatou alias Yetoudé in Sanusi’s *le bistouri des larmes* (2003). Bestman (1981: 204) claimed that a name is never, in Black Africa, a simple etiquette; it has both meaning and efficiency. John (2016) corroborated this assertion while investigating the naming of twins in the native land of Yoruba origin, where the younger is often named “Kehinde” and he elder “Taiwo”. Achebe (1975:96) summarized the foregoing saying that: “if you want to know how life has treated an Igbo man, a good place to look is the names he bears, his joys and sorrows, his grievances against his fellows, or complaints about the way he has been used by fortune, even straight historical records, are all there”.

Tansi’s usage of names carries a political and aggressive undertone, in line with the thematic thrust of the novel. For example the name of the dictator “Jean – Brise – Coeur” John-Heart-Breaker, connotes the lack of pity of this dictator in his relationship with his subject. It also projects him as a self-centered individual who will stop at nothing to achieve his aim, even if it demands stepping on people oppressively. This manner of presentation of characters in the pursuit of thematic thrust is observed to have been transferred from mentor (Tansi) to mentee (Mabanckou) in *Verre Cassé* and *Black Bazar* used in this study, among other literary works of the writer.

Mabanckou’s mentee influence under his mentor is severally manifested in the composition of *Verre Cassé* and *Black Bazar*. Certain forms of nominal coinages peculiar only to Sony Labou Tansi are used in the texts. For example in *Verrecassé*, names carry onomatopoeic meanings. This is evident in the characters such *Verre cassé* (Broken Glass) the name of the narrator, *Escargot entêté* (38) (Stubborn snail), *Casimir qui mène la grande vie* (p.98) (Casimir, who lives a luxurious life), *le type aux Pampers* (P.46) (the one that wears Pampers) , *L’Imprimeur* (The Printer) etc. All these names employed by Mabanckou in the text possess a linguistic and a metaphorical meaning, which semiotics helps in its recovery. The names present the day to day life of the marginal African society reflected in the text.

Just like Tansi’s *Jean-coeur-brisé* depicts literary and metaphorically the cruelty of the dictator in *La vie et demie*, *Verre Cassé* as a proper noun given to the narrator in the text, depicts a shattered life affirmed by the *Verre Cassé* himself on his way to the cross of *Zéro Faute* residence: “...honte à vous gens de peu de foi, vous ne pouvez rien contre moi, a-t-on jamais vu un verre cassé être réparé?” (VC p.163) (shame on you people of little faith, you have nothing against me, have you never seen a broken glass repaired?). He further asserted this reality with optimism at the end of his sojourn in the bar, *Le crédit a voyage* as he addresses Holden, whom he left with the responsibility of handing the written book to *Escargot entêté* : “... pour la première fois, un verre cassé aura été réparé par le bon Dieu” (VC. p.245) (for the first time, a broken glass will be repaired by the good Lord”. Also, *Escargot entêté*, *le type aux Pampers*, *L’Imprimeur* are other names created by the writer, depicting meaning literarily. For *Imprimeur* (Printer), the name underscores his profession as a worker in a printing press, whereas *le type aux Pampers* underlines the physical health condition of an abused buttocks accompanied by flies.

Black Bazar, though captures the life of an African community in France with several nationalities who meet in *Jip’s*, *le bar afrocubain*, the stylistic use of nomination is also richly practiced by Mabanckou. From the prologue of the text, names such as *Roger Le Franco-Ivoirien* and *Paul du grand Congo* (p.12) are brought to the fore along with their contribution to the entire intrigue of the text. In the body of the text, coinages such as *Hippocrate* (p.34), *Couleur d’origine* (p.62), *Yve*, “*L’Ivoirien tout court*”, *Vladimir Le Camerounais*, *Paul du grand Congo* alias “*Esprit sein*”, *Pierrot Le Blanc du petit Congo* alias “*Le Spécialiste du verbe*”, *Olivier du petit Congo*, *Patrick « Le Scandinave »*, *Bosco « Le Tchadien errant »* alias *Paul Valéry noir* and *poète de l’Ambassade* (P.64-65), *Fessologue* (p.67) and *Lokossa* alias « *L’Attaquant de pointe* » (p.85) are all enshrined with aesthetic value to the narrative. Other forms of nominal creation, which are not proper nouns include: “*Marie-couche-toi-là*” (P.104), used to depict the societal disparity of men and women who cheat on their spouse and partners and “*ma blonde de neige*” (p.60), used to foreground the early childhood romance of the narrator in his home country.

The aforementioned nominal creations of proper nouns in Mabanckou's *Black Bazar* share similar characteristics with the names created in Tansi's *la vie et demie*, reinforcing the unbroken mentor and mentee link. Just like names in Tansi's text literary mean what the linguistics signs represent, the place of onomatopoeia as a stylistic tool is foregrounded. Apart from "Fessologue" as the only single word in the list of names in *BlackBazar*, other names carry additional adjectives to describe the characters. For example, Yve, "L'Ivoirien tout court", Olivier du petit Congo, and Vladimir Le Camérounais, depicts the country of origin of these immigrants in Paris as well as the physical description of Yve. Paul du grand Congo alias "Esprit sein", Pierrot Le Blanc du petit Congo alias "Le Spécialiste du verbe", Patrick « Le Scandinave », Bosco « Le Tchadien errant » alias Paul Valéry noir and poète de l'Ambassade, all have additional information attached to them as nicknames to depict their devotion and obsession to a particular habit. For Pierrot, his obsession of grammar, especially verbs as beginning from the origin of man is reflected. Bosco's, literary commitment is underlined from his nickname "poète de l'Ambassade" and "Paul Valéry noir", coined from the famous French poet Paul Valéry. For Fessologue, his name reflects his expertise in the science of buttocks as a buttologist. "L'Attaquant de pointe" attached to the proper noun Lokassa, is self-revealing as it underline the level of sexual relationship and sexual obsession of the character with the opposite sex. The name depicts precision in wooing and winning a lady, especially for sexual intercourse in line with the narrator's presentation of the character as a sex machine:

"... qui se vantait d'avoir une chose-là plus grosse que nous tous réunir. A la fin il nous fatiguait ...que lui tirait plus vite que Lucky Luke et son ombre. Chaque fois qu'il en rajoutait sur ses performances et longueur de sa chose-là, je me souviens alors de cet homme intelligent qui a dit que le tigre ne se pavane pas en criant sa tigritude, il bondit sur sa proie et la dévore"

BB, p.85

...who boasts of possessing a male sexual organ bigger than all of us combined? At the end he wearies us...that he strikes faster than Lucky Luke and his shadow. Each time he rehearses his performance and the length of his male organ, I recall the saying of this intelligent man that says, the tiger does not flaunt by proclaiming its tigritude, but traps its prey and devours them.

The presentation of the narrator in the above citation with regards to the sexual prowess of Lokassa alias "L'Attaquant de pointe" is instructive. The above citation is borne out of the inability of Lokassa to get the young lady leaving with them to bed. The use of literary allusion encompassing Wole Soyinka's "tigritude" after years of Negritude discourse goes far in underscoring the precision of the character in doubt by the narrator.

One special form of nominal creation associated with Tansi's *La vie et demie*, replicated by Mabanckou as a mentee is found in the name Hippocrate. Just like the creation of the noun "sourissonner" from existing third group verb "sourir". The name Hippocrate is a neologism, is coined from the French noun "Hypocrite". Whereas Tansi engage in the formation of noun from verb, Mabanckou in like manner creates a new noun from an existing noun. The possible reason for the birth of this creation could be ascribed to the linguistic incompetence of the character in articulating the French original noun. The action also depict phonological problem caused probably by limitedness of education. One observes the doubling of the alphabet [p] in the created noun to realise the same French consonant sound {p} instead of a single letter [p] in the original word. Also, the manipulation of the letter [y] to [i] in the created word is similar to the conventional conjugation of French verbs with "yer" endings, as both letters in the original and created noun maintains the French vowel sound {i}.

Apart from coinage of proper nouns discussed above, names of places are also captured in like manner by Mabanckou as an attentive student of Tansi in the creation of his fictional works. In *Black Bazar* for example, long hyphenated names of streets, quarters and establishments such as Champagnac-de-Bélaire (p.31), rez-de-Chaussée (p.33), Chateau-d'Eau and Chateau-Rouge (p.39), Garges-lès-Gonesse (p.49) and Marcadet-Poissonniers (p.83) all follow the pattern of Tansi's nominal creation. *Verre cassé* recorded the usage of "marie-couche-toi-là" (p.43), later used by Mabanckou as an internal intertextual expression in *Black Bazar*. The use of this expression by le type aux Pampers in a bid to narrate his ordeal highlights the level of immoral behaviour in religious circles, between the leadership and the laity. He summarises: "ma femme était donc là à vagabonder avec ses marie-couche-toi-là qui prétendaient aller à l'église prier alors que c'est pour croiser leur petits amants de merde, parce que je te jure ça fornicque bien sec dans les églises (p.43) (my wife roams around with those « marie-couche-toi-là », who pretend going to pray in church, where as they go to meet their shit lovers, I tell you Verre Cassé these fornicate very well in the churches). Just as found in *Verre Cassé*, Mabanckou earlier work, *African Psycho* (2003), provided a platform of experimentation of the mastery of this technique with the creation of "celui-qui-boit-de-l'eau-est-un-idiot", to depict the quarter of drunks in the text. Thus, this technique once more reinforces the impact of a mentor on a mentee as both fictions share a similar relationship over and over again. It is also important to note that this pattern of nominal creation richly

employed by both writers, stylistically contribute richly to their literary aesthetics. It also makes the work unique and underlines the signature of both writers who hail from Congo Brazaville.

III. ROLE OF ALLUSIONS IN REBIRTH OF LITERARY AESTHETICS

The beauty of contemporary African texts from stylistics point of view is anchored more in the definition of style as choice between alternatives and deviation from the norm; two major component of the six definitions of style by Enkvist in Spenser (1964). Allusions also serve as catalyst for stylistic analysis among critics. Allusions take the form of text incorporation or intertextuality. Devésa (1996: 155), argued that the main idea behind intertextuality or text incorporation is to affirm that every text is posited at the junction of several other texts which is at the same time the rereading, accentuation, condensation, movement and depth. Derrida (1979: 107) also argues along this line, maintaining that “each text is a machine with multiple reading heads for other texts...where, one text reads another”. Also Ayeleru and Edonmi (2009), insist further that a text is not just a rereading of another text but a text dialogues with another text and indeed with history.

Allusion to the Holy Bible is found with Tansi and Mabanckou in the creation of fiction. Their use of biblical allusions can be justified with the assertion of Bolonge (1991: 160) who rightly opines that: “Consciemment ou non, la Bible est constamment présente dans nos discours. Est-il possible de comprendre certains textes sans se référer à la Bible ?” (Consciously or not, the Bible is constantly present in our discussions. Is it possible to understand some texts without referring to the Bible?).

Biblical allusions in Tansi's *La vie et demie* is likened to a traditional liturgy which sounds biblical as in “granita! granita! Sodom et Gomorrhe” (*LVC*, p.189). Sodom and Gomorrah as found in the 19th chapter of the King James Version of the Holy Bible, reminds one of the story of destroyed cities through the rain of fire and brimstone, which consume the entire inhabitants except Lot, Abraham's nephew and family for the sin of homosexuality and immorality. Adelakun (2016) is of the opinion in line with some critics such as Derrick Bailey, Barlett and Phyllis that the orthodox interpretation of homosexuality as the root cause of the destruction of these cities might not be entirely true. He argued that since the two angels came to Lot and not to the men of Sodom, the people could have been guilty of inhospitality in place of Homosexuality as postulated by the aforementioned critics. However, biblical allusion of Sodom and Gomorrah in the context of usage in the text depicts immorality, which is in line with the conventional orthodox interpretation. Also, in the context where Monsieur L'Abbé and Chaidana are talking, we see an expression patterned after the biblical story of famine in the Pentateuch: “il y aura onze ans de saison sèche, tout sera charbon, les rivières s'éteindront, la forêt mourra de chaleur puis il pleuvra pour des siècles et des siècles” (*LVD*, p.171) (There will be eleven years of dry season, everything will be charcoal, rivers will dry up, the forest will die of heat, and then it will rain for centuries and centuries). This presentation of Tansi is similar to the popular seven (7) years of draught in the land of Egypt predicted by Joseph while interpreting Pharaoh's dream: “and there shall arise after them seven years of famine;...and the famine shall consume the land” (Genesis 41:30).

Just like the mentor (Tansi), the mentee (Mabanckou) employs in a comical way allusions to the Bible to drive home his point in the presentation of thematic thrusts. In *Verre Cassé*, the expression “mon Dieu, mon Dieu, pourquoi m'avez-vous abandonné” (V.C p.29) suggested to the dictator, Adrien Loukouta Eleki Mingi, in his quest for authenticity, originality and posterity to match the formula of the Minister of Agriculture and Commerce, Albert Zou Loukia, brings to mind the lamentation of Jesus Christ on the cross as recorded in all the synoptic and the gospel according to Saint John of the Holy Bible. The rejection of the formula on the ground of pessimism for a powerful personality like Jesus with all powers, but allowed himself to go through suffering of the cross, reflect the thirst for power and control by the dictator. Also the threat of beheading the ministers if they fail to get a formula to match that of the minister of Agriculture is also an allusion to the act of the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, who threatened to destroy all the wise men in Babylon, including Daniel and his companion, for a dream he forgot and the interpretation.

Other instances of biblical allusions in *Verre Cassé* are recorded with the narrator in a bid to recount his personal life and le type aux Pampers. The latter remarks “homme de peu de foi, les brebis égarées, les pharisiens” (V.C, p.44) (men of little faith, lost sheep, pharisees). These three different expressions used by le type aux Pampers is instructive in the description of sinners and religious hypocrites in the Holy Bible. The first expression “hommes de peu de foi” is an allusion to the statement of Jesus Christ to his disciples for their unbelief in the ship with a tempestuous wind. The second expression “les brebis égarées” refers to the story of the lost sheep in Luke chapter 15 and the command of Christ to his disciples to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel when he sent them out to preach the gospel. The final word “Pharisiens” as a biblical register, to refer to the religious authorities in Christ days, who opposed and tempted him throughout his earthly ministry, before crucifying him. *Verre cassé* usage of biblical allusions include: “gens de peu de foi (V.C, p.163) (people of little faith) like that of le type aux Pampers, “ Dieu lui-meme nous a dit de multiplier... sans avoir le temps de dire “notre père qui est aux cieux” (V.C, p.208) (God himself told us to multiply...without having the time to say “our Father who art in Heaven”. The second biblical allusion is a summary of the commandment of God to the

first man and woman to "...Be fruitful and multiply..." (Genesis 1:28) in procreating the earth whereas the third, "notre père qui est aux cieux" depicts the Lord's prayer in Mark 6, which the drowned mother of Verre Cassé never had the chance to recite at death. With reference to these aforementioned allusions raised by le type aux Pampers and Verre Cassé, Mabanckou stylistically criticised the prejudice notion of religious fanatics who labeled non-members of their faith and local assemblies as infidel and lost. It also goes further in revealing the author's religious background reflecting his religious affiliation. Thus, Mabanckou calls for solidarity among citizens irrespective of their religious affiliation.

Black Bazar also recorded series of biblical allusions in the projection of thematic thrust by Mabanckou as a sign of mastery of the mentee's lessons from the mentor. Typical of such allusions is "Dieu sait que nous en avons tellement qu'on se demande comment nous nous arrangeons pour nous comprendre dans notre tour de Babel" (B.B, p.45) (God knows how we actually try to wonder how we comport ourselves to understand ourselves in our tower of Babel). The group of words "tour de Babel" reminds one of the biblical "tower of Babel" incidents, where languages were confounded and people misunderstood one another, an act by God to scatter men over the earth. The use of this allusion captures the diversity of African languages in the proposed party by Fessologue to Couleur d'origine. That is an assembly of different cultures that assemble for a feast in Paris, of which, if Couleur d'origine attends, would be lost in the midst of the multiplicity of ethnicity at the party. Pierrot Le Blanc du Petit Congo alias "le spécialiste du Verbe" makes allusion to the linguistic component of the Holy Bible, saying « ...qu'au commencement il n'y avait pas que le Verbe, il y avait aussi le sujet et le complément d'objet direct » (B.B, p.64) (that in the beginning there was not only Verb, there was also subject and direct object complement). This assertion by this character is an allusion to "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). A linguistic reading of this verse of the scripture proves the assertion of Pierrot to be true with God (S) + created (V) + Heaven and Earth as (direct object complement). Hence we have Subject + Object + Complement from the beginning.

The case of l'Arabe du coin, giving gifts to Henriette, also foregrounds biblical allusion. With the interrogation of Fessologue on the reason for the incessant gift of L'Arabe de coin to their child, Couleur d'origine explain: "c'est surtout pour notre fille qu'il fait ça parce que la Bible ou dans le Coran ce sont les enfants qui sont les patrons. Le royaume des cieux c'est pour eux" (B.B, p.109) (it's certainly for our daughter he does that because the Bible and in the Koran, it is the children who are boss. The kingdom of heaven is theirs). This allusion highlights the good deeds which l'Arabe de coin is engaged in, by giving gifts to Henriette. This is an allusion to the statement of Christ to his disciples to allow children come unto him, because theirs is the Kingdom of God.

Biblical allusion also contributes a great deal in revealing the overall thematic occupation of the writer and the general intrigue of the text. The assertion of the narrator's nickname as Fessologue is strengthened through allusion to the Bible. Fessologue, traced the origin of his expertise in *fessologie* (study of buttocks) to the Bible. He remarks: « la science du derrière existe depuis l'origine du monde quand Adam et Eve avaient tourné le dos au seigneur » (B.B, p. 67) (the science of buttocks exists from the origin of the world, when Adam and Eve turned their back to the Lord). The verb "hid" in the scripture is translated and interpreted by fessologue as "turn" their back to the Lord, to foreground his fessologist discuss. This remark of Fessologue is a distorted allusion to "...and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord among the trees of the garden" (Genesis 3:8). The author recalls the fall of man and linked it to the love of buttocks Adam had for his wife as a catalyst for his yielding to her desire of eating the fruit. Hence, he attributes the fall of man to the love of buttocks, which is evidently manifested in Fessologue with Couleur d'origine, as the latter abandons him and flee with Hybrid, his false cousin to Africa, while himself continue to pay for the upkeep of their child and couleur d'origine. Thus, man's inability to resist the temptation of female buttocks is underlined.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study has investigated the role and influence of an older writer on a much younger one in underlining the place of mentorship in the attainment and sustainability of aesthetics in literary production from stylistics perspective. From the selected novels, nominal creations as a unique stylistic tool and biblical allusions have been drawn out as indispensable contributors to the overall aesthetics of the texts. Despite the difference in generation of writing and thematic thrust of both writers, similar creativity is achieved to lucidly convey their messages. Whereas for Tansi in *La vie et demie*, long hyphenated created nouns depicts dictatorship and corruption as a reality of his time, Mabanckou's nouns drawn from *Verre Cassé* and *Black Bazar* reveal the life experiences and occupations of the *damnées de la terre*. Biblical allusions in the texts further reveal the relationship of the mentor and the mentee with respect to the influence of the former on the latter in their literary production. The ability to manipulate words and distort original sayings in the process of allusions adds enormously to the aesthetics of the texts. Also, the fact that Mabanckou happens to be one of the most notable hero of Congo Brazzaville after Tansi in the literary world, underline the reality of self-reproduction in a mentor and mentee relationship. Hence, this paper concludes with a clarion call on the sustainability of African literary

aesthetics to all iconic writers for self-reproduction that lies in their hands. This is evident in the fact that the surpassing achievement of Mabanckou from national and continental hero as the peak of Tansi to world literary figure is made possible because of mentorship. Thus, only real mentorship will guarantee greater breakthrough for Africans in the literary scene in the nearest future, a reality all writers and critiques must bear in mind and act upon, by transferring knowledge not only in form of teaching, but encouragement and subjecting mentees to rigorous exercises in form of joint publications and reviews.

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