



The Great Lakes Looming Crisis as Displayed in Elechi Amadi's the Great Ponds: A Discourse Analysis Perspective

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Abstract

The issue addressed in the present work attempts to decipher the Great Lakes' crisis which has caused a disastrous situation not only in this area; but it has also affected the entire Africa. Due to her ecologic and economic position, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has undergone an endless and cruel situation of war. Instigators of the war resort to subjugation and neocolonialism to subdue and exploit the Congolese natural resources freely through multinationals and NGOs. Consequently, the population is preyed on violence, massacre, rape, kidnappings... To reach the goal assigned to this study, discourse analysis through the re-contextualization of the situation in the novel *The Great Ponds* (hereinafter it is [15]), was of paramount importance. That means, the events set in the novel were compared with what really happens in the Great Lakes region to identify similarities and dissimilarities. It has been found that Westerners often intrude in the African matters as pretenders who would like to rescue Africa from disasters whereas it is a strategy for them to foster the conflicts through propagandas and usurious loans. In addition, the war between the so-called superpowers has been transplanted in the powerless countries but leads Africa nowhere. Thus, the Erekwu people, i.e. the wrong third party in peace negotiation (see novel) together with the belligerent factions should stop their war, for it profits nothing for Africans but to an invisible hand.

Keywords: Great Lakes region; Great Ponds; land conflict; peace agreement; modus operandi; modus vivendi; war.

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1. Introduction

Africa has faced serious troubles for decades. In fact, all the corners of Africa are experiencing today a war situation in a way or another. The most striking crises include for instance, the African Great Lakes crisis, the Mozambican Cabo Delgado crisis, and many others. The African Great Lakes crisis is a deadlock which has troubled the central Africa for years. This scourge surges from different factors, mainly the rulers' greed and lust for wealth and power. In fact, the core root-cause of the crises lies in the envy of the natural resources, minerals and fertile lands, especially in Democratic Republic of the Congo whereby the neighboring countries and multinationals would like to settle and exploit them for their selfish interests. Consequently, hatred and bloody fights arise among the groups involved in the exploitation since each of them would like to have a total control over this region. These conflicts culminate in the low people's unbearable life conditions namely abject poverty, massacres, kidnappings, etc. Hence, this situation urges the reader to wonder if there are similarities and dissimilarities to the endless conflicting relationships in the novel and the African Great Lakes [1;2;3;4]. Indeed, in the Great Lakes, namely in the eastern area of Democratic Republic of the Congo conflict is elusive and the oldest people's concern. In his poem entitled "War after War" Mbiti cited in [5: 98] laments through powerful and ironic words saying that he is tired with the recurring wars which have not only made people psychologically ill, but the bombs' smoke has destroyed the African environment. Thus, the conflicts have triggered many studies whose literatures have dealt with them intensively and extensively. For instance, [7] have made it clear that the Great Lakes scourge is older than the Berlin Conference (1885) held by Bismarck in the objective of clearing the boundaries of the Leopoldian cake, Congo. Since then the great lakes have never known a stable period: the settlement war of the natives in the seventeenth century during the migrations of Bantu peoples and nilotics, the first and the second world wars fought respectively in the years 1914-1918 and 1940-1945. A subsequent and bloody war happened between the Leopoldian Congo and Arabs for more than one decade followed by too much tribal strife. In fact, both Arabs and Belgians, i.e. rulers of the Independent State of Congo, were greedy for red rubber and ivory. Moreover, as [1] argue, Africa's Great Lakes Region has not only experienced political strife, armed conflict, and population displacements; but also people have lived unbearable hardship due to land scarcity. Some researchers together with President Filipe Nyusi of Mozambique think that the real problem of Africa is due to "resource curse", a term coined by Hoeffler quoted in [1]. For the above researcher, the great lakes region, mainly the Democratic Republic of the Congo might have queries because she wears a very beautiful robe and has abundant natural resources which arouse envy of the entire world, and as a result they would not attain sustainable development. [7] highlights that insurgents are recruiting more members by exploiting the poverty of young people in the north of Mozambique, mainly in Pemba, the capital of Cabo Delgado province. He admits that despite the three Northern provinces - Cabo Delgado, Niassa and Nampula - having great natural wealth and enormous agricultural potential, they have the country's highest levels of abject poverty. Notwithstanding the different peace talks, land conflicts are spread all over the eastern area as propounded by [2:30] when he says: "Disputes over land access between communities and within communities have a long history within Ituri, which probably predates the arrival of the Belgian colonialists." Thus, the present study seeks to identify and sort out parallelism between the actual motives of "The Great Ponds", the spatial setting of the novel; and the African Great Lakes crises together with their impact on the population and the ways to eradicate this scourge. People seek the ways of unraveling the

deadlock through negotiations but in vain. To exemplify, in the novel, many peace talks are organized; but all the agreements always end in fiasco. The readers of the novel and the bearers of hardship in the Great Lakes do not know how and who will get them freed. In fact, this study revolves around three articles from [8] titled Imperialism Charter set by Westerners; and which urges the readers to wonder whether the African unity will be fulfilled due to the westerners' mismanagement. Three articles of the Charter run as follows:

Article 1

Motto of imperialism: Governing the world and controlling the riches of the planet; our policy is to divide and conquer, dominate, exploit, and loot to fill our banks and make them the most powerful in the world.

Article 4

All Third World countries are divisible and their borders displaceable according to our will. Respect for territorial integrity does not exist for the Third World.

Article 8

We do not negotiate agreements with the Third World countries, we impose what we want and they undergo our will.

2. Methodology

The study is qualitative paradigm by nature, for it deals with written texts such as novels and reports rather than numerical data. That is, the research is an ex-post facto, for there is nothing to do with the variables [9]. In order to understand the essence of words, the reader needs to make two operations for text analysis: re-contextualization and de-contextualization. These are key terms during the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). In this instance; [10] assess that each utterance, new or repeated, derives its meaning from its context; that is, in broad terms, the speech situation (participant, location and medium) and genre combined with varying degrees of socio-cultural knowledge are shared among the participants. These scholars have summarized their discussion through these words: "A text may be 're-cycled' into context that is different in kind and historical circumstances from its initial production" (10:13). Still, CDA is a textually-oriented discourse analysis [11:152], departing from other versions of discourse analysis. As a matter of fact, power relation is worth dealing with in this work in order to see the challenges which exist between the powerful countries and the powerless ones. So, the CDA fits best to unveil language of the powerful ones as claimed by [12:9] through these words: "Power is another concept which is central for CDA, as it often analyses the language use of those in power, who are the responsible for the existence of inequalities." Stated otherwise, central purposes of CDA are to "critically analyze those who are in power, those who are responsible, and those who have the means and the opportunity" to deal with social problems [13:4].

In addition, due to the eclecticism of discourse analysis, both ecocriticism and a comparative study of the events in *The Great Ponds* (novel) and the Great Lakes region within the war situation will be undertaken. The former is, according to [14], focused on the environmental management and mismanagement. The proponents of this trend castigate the fact that human beings have destroyed nature thinking that they have been created superior to dominate other beings. In so doing, the whites can destroy the blacks and vice-versa depending on how they perceive power relation; humans can destroy plants and animals... and in return, nature can destroy humans. The comparative method is worth undertaking too since it enables the reader finds common points in both situations. In this respect, data will be collected through the documentary technique which relies on reading books and reports and charters related to the theme of the study.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 *Intrigue*

Unity of Africa has been struggled for since her accession to independences. For instance, in Addis-Ababa (Ethiopia), in 1963, it has been created the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) which was an attempt to create the united states of Africa and whose aim was to make a potentially strong and powerful Africa. However, this unity seems to float, for the Africa's riches have been the core of envy all over the world as everybody would like to own and control them alone. Still, whenever Africans seek for common ground they cannot reach it since the powerful countries and their watchdogs hinder such a genial initiative. As a result, different wars are fought generally in Africa and particularly in the great lake region due to searching for ways to loot the Africa's wealth. Such wars are displayed in Elechi Amadi's celebrated novel entitled *The Great Ponds* [15] which is about the rift between two villages over fishing rights in Wagaba pond. Indeed, in *The Great Ponds*, Elechi Amadi depicts a conflicting relationship between Chiolu and Aliakoro, two villages in endless bloody wars because of Wagaba, a pond full of fish. Each group would like to fish from it alone. Consequently, the conflict over the ownership and the management of Wagaba pond leads not only to hatred among the populations; but starvation, murders and kidnappings are people's daily song. Given that the population is living desperately because of Wagaba pond, some of the Chiolu villagers are ready to surrender it to the Aliakoro village provided that peace is restored. On the other hand, the conservative people do not want any other people to fish from their ponds. The war between Chiolu and Aliakoro does not affect only the warring villages but it also affects the neighbouring villages such as Isiali, Aliji, Abii... whereby people face troublesome situations. As a matter of fact, the latter villages get involved in the race trying to reconcile the fighting groups. Unfortunately, their attempt does not have any effect since it always ends in fiasco. Finally, neither Chiolu nor Aliakoro will own the pond since, Wago, the strongest warrior from Aliakoro has drowned himself in it, an abomination to the land. In other words, the novel ends in the sad note as seen through the following conversation: 'We have lost the Pond of Wagaba,' Diali moaned. 'Is Olumba dead?' 'No.'

'It would be an abomination to fish in a pond in which someone committed suicide. During a divination that evening Achichi confirmed that Wago the leopard-killer had committed suicide [15]. One finds that there is no work in this society, for the only people's activity is fishing, fighting, killing, kidnapping and so forth. Still, when there is a conflict over pond or land possessions in the society, people live not only miserably but also

desperately because their future is uncertain. In short, the human dignity is not respected at all since people are treated like beasts. For instance, in his *One Man, One Matchet*, Aluko presents the Ipaja and the Apeno, two villages in turmoil because of the Igbodudu land which formerly belonged to the Ipaja villagers but invaded by the Apeno. Indeed, the Ipaja villagers would like to get their land back. Thus, there is misunderstanding between both villages as said in the following passage; I would like to remind you all of the importance of land in the life of an individual and of a people. What was the underlying cause of the intertribal wars of old? Land. Why did the forces of one tribe invade the territory of another tribe? Land. That was what led one tribe to invade another. Did God Himself in the Bible not encourage the Israelites to wage war against certain neighbouring tribes? Did God Himself not promise the Israelites the lands owned by the victims of their invasions?... We must fight now for the restoration of the land that was ours and will be by the grace of God and the endeavours of you good patriots soon be ours once more [18:56-7]. From the passage above, it is noticed that land conflict seems to be sacred and is as old as mankind. Likewise, the Israelites, during their migration from Egypt to Canaan, fought bloody wars in order to own lands. Obviously, the narrator in *One Man, One Matchet*, is trying to show the paramount importance of the land to his clansmen. He clearly explains his audience that the land is very important for the community and that it had been the source of invasions and wars in the traditional societies as well as in their community. In so doing, he is persuading his fellow people to fight for their land. Hence, he is determined to struggle for the restoration of his land from the Apeno villagers who have already invaded it. However, the writer does not give the negative outcomes of fighting blindly for the land which might result in serious gaps among the fighters. Therefore, the following table highlights the similarities and differences between the situations that happen in the novel and the Great Lakes region.

Table 1: of situational similarities and dissimilarities.

Outcomes	Common features	Contrasts
Modus operandi for warring	-Guerilla/skirmish with rudimentary tools -Allies to both belligerent groups; -Kidnappings, robbery, and rapes	- Involvement of new technology in the war such as drones, heavy weapons, raids; - Children (Kadogo) involvement - Terrorism; - anti-Semitism, carnage and genocide.
Social outcomes	-Diseases, famine, hardship, immorality, witchcraft...	- Proliferation of militia factions, multinationals and humanitarians; -Homosexuals and lesbians.
Displacement mode	- Walk, - Canoes - Witchcraft	Involvement of technology such as sophisticated planes, stealth fighters, fighters ...
Setting	- Pre- colonial era - Night versus daytime - 1918	Post-colonial period
Resolution	- Suicide of the protagonist to soil the land, - Patriotism, - Agreement meetings	-Allies' support through deadly war, - Resort to balkanization - Xenophobia
Gender and power relationship	Male-based	Emergency of feminist trends
Modus Vivendi for peace agreement	Peace talks	Carelessness

3.2 Description of setting

Elechi Amadi has set his novel in great lakes state that he called “Great Ponds”. It is the imaginary world of the novel into which the reader is invited to roam [15:23]. In fact, this world, however small, portrays the society with its own culture, politics, and values. Temporally, the event in “The Great Ponds” might have occurred between the 14th century and the 21st century. Such a psychological lengthy time is clearly seen through the occurrence several times of the following items: “Wonjo or Great Influenza of 1918”, [15:192], “gods”, “semicircle”, [15:49], “divination”, [15:124], “use fish for firewood”, [15:21], “ransom” ... For example, the Wonjo disease is nearly like the Bubonic plague, for both diseases have many features in common. [19] describes the latter as an infectious fatal epidemic disease, caused by the bacterium *Yersinia pestis* transmitted by fleas that have previously bitten an infected animal or person, and characterized by fever, chills, and the formation of swellings buboes. In the 14th century, an extensive pandemic of it occurred, known as the Black Death. Also, the year “1918” in connection with the Wonjo disease is depicted as the climax of the clash between the winners and the losers of the first world war (WWI): the Great Influenza also called Spanish Influenza killed “some twenty million lives all over the world” [15:192].

Furthermore, as the novel is likely to be futuristic, i.e. it predicts the future of the world; the temporal setting can be extended to the 21st century. First of all, the 20th and the 21st centuries are featured by the rise of technology which has culminated in the production of lots of mass destruction weapons and the industrialization. As [19:165] maintains, the war and environmental degradation are linked, for war damages the environment and the environmental degradation also adds to the pressures from which conflict emerges. Consequently, the world has seen the emergency the phenomenon of global warming together with all its consequences such as smoke from factories, bloody wars, famine as satirized in the ironic phrase “use of fish for firewood, [15], strange diseases such as CHOLERA, AIDS-HIV, EBOLA, the COVID-19 caused by New CORONAVIRUS to cite only these catastrophes which are results of new technology and environment mismanagement. Not only the future is dealt with in the novel, but Amadi brings the reader’s mind in the remote part of Nigeria where a bloody tribal war was fought between the Igbo clans and the Yoruba people: the Biafran strife (26/05/1967- 15/01/1970). The war broke just after the secession and proclamation of Biafra as an independent state and Enugu as its capital city. Once again, Western pretenders came not to rescue the young state; but they only saw petrol rather than the population. When the British saw that France has won confidence among the Biafrans, they fought on the side of Nigeria to re-unite the country. In the novel, Aliakoro people are said to be thieves of fish in Wagaba pond whereas the Chiolu people are the actual owners of the said pond. However, names can parallel character-traits as seen through their morphology [20]. Thus, the morphological analysis of the item “Aliakoro” can reveal what follows:

a-lia-koro

a: indefinite article

liar: somebody who tells lies

CORE: Congress of Racial Equality [17]

Therefore, only can we assume that the Aliakoro people tell lies upon the ownership of the Wagaba pond. Regardless of their lies, the drowning of Wago in the pond proves to which extent the pond is not theirs, so it will be for no use to either group since it is a sacrilege to make suicide on the land and soil it. Still, the writer asserts that equality of tribes should be prevailed as far as land exploitation is concerned. Unlike the 'great ponds', which is a fictional setting, the Great Lakes region is a real region located on the African map, mainly the central Africa (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Republic of Central Africa, South Sudan, Republic of Congo, Angola, Tanzania). As far as the war in the Great Lakes region is concerned, the Africans have experienced disastrous outcomes ranging from social to ecological. Ngitsi, quoted in [21] from his celebrated ecopoem entitled "Virunga Park, A Telephone Call", makes a call upon the war makers in general, those of the Great Lakes region in particular. They have changed Virunga National Park into battle field. Besides, that war has wreaked vast destruction. As a result, the environment is polluted not only by the gun smoke which in turn creates unknown diseases among both animals (the bat being the most vulnerable) and people, but the fauna and flora no longer exist. Furthermore, the animal race is extinguishing since the world is polluted by chemicals and wastes and new illnesses have set forth. Who knows? Couldn't COVID-19 be the result of climate change and pollution? Can it be controlled or mastered when human lungs have undergone the effects of pollution and genetically modified organisms (GMOs)?

Nonetheless, the first world (WWI) and the second world (WWII) wars respectively fought in 1914-1918 and 1940-1945 came to be more disastrous than it was thought. People were slaughtered by the slaughterers in Europe. Atomic and nuclear weapons were made not only to kill the poor mosquitoes and monkeys of the African and Amazonian forests, but it was to demonstrate power between the United States of America and the former United Republic of Soviet. The rest of the world, i.e. the Third World, underwent only the bad effects of war since people were used as shields to the powerful countries. These countries formed two blocks: the Capitalist, America and the allied forces; and Russia together and the allied troops with their Communism which went till the end of the Cold War (1991) and the Balkanization of the United Socialist Republics of Soviet in 1984. Other alliances were made between European countries and their colonies; and those who did not yield in such as Libya, stood in non-alignment camp but finally got the whip of the wind. The former implemented the predacious ideology of the more powerful animals to eat the least powerful beasts, which stemmed from imperialism [3].

Therefore, after the WWII the United Nations were created in 1947 with the purpose of cooling down the roaring lions and restoring peace in the world. However, the Westerners have compromised peace in the world in general and particular in the Great Lakes region to add to the masses' suffering. Indeed, the most powerful countries have created neo-capitalists through the intelligentsia and the European bourgeoisie in Africa. These are brainwashed people who, according to [22] were prepared culturally to deny themselves at the expense of the Western culture. So in schools, the European culture was introduced and learnt through the European languages; and the European God was said to be the best and the most powerful one. [22:66] of Uganda considers this fact of changing the African's mind as challenge and crime done by the Christian missionaries who should confess. Moreover, Africans were taught that their race conferred them an inferior rank through the

curse of Cain, as seen in [23:4,13]; yet, [24:7] in the tone of anger laments: "If I were God, I would regard as the very worst our acceptance, for whatever reason, of racial inferiority." As a result, Africans have an eternal status of a child who should either beg or be given everything by his father, the White. In addition to their policy of acculturation, Westerners, mainly the Americans, implemented the policy of aggression and hegemony. [25:140] puts it saying that the United States of America have never designed any development project for black Africa. He goes on to say that after their failure in Korea (1954), in Cuba (1962); and in Somalia in the 1990s, they implemented the policy called "The American policy of the third millenary" which aimed to go on re-colonising Africa through deadly exploitation.

3.3 Conflict and Warriors' Modus Operandi

As seen in the intrigue so far, the events in *The Great Ponds* move in fast tempos from exposition to resolution through complications. That is, each episode of the story begins the introduction of the setting and the characters come complications or conflicts. For instance, when the story opens, the Chiolu villagers and the Aliakoro live in harmony with each other. But this seemingly serenity is troubled when the Chiolu hear that the poachers from Aliakoro will go to the great ponds tonight to steal fish.

Guerillas usually operate by night mainly through skirmish, that is, they either make ambushes for their enemies or fight within a short time before disappearing in the bushes. In addition to the above modus operandi, they steal fish from the pond, kidnap and ask ransoms to release the kidnapped, rape women, and bewitch each others to cite a few strategies.

'People of Chiolu', the chief began. 'I have learnt that poachers of Aliakoro will be at the Great Ponds tonight. There is no doubt that they will try to steal from the Pond of Wagaba which as you know is rich of fish. Our plan tonight is to bring one or more of these thieves home alive and ask them heavy ransoms. [...] We need seven men for this venture. I call for volunteers.' [15]

As it can be noticed, a similar situation happens in the Great Lakes region. Indeed, one of these countries, the Democratic Republic of Congo seems to have more fish in her pond. The animal imagery "fish" implies in this context good natural environment rich in minerals such as diamond, gold, coltan, silver... together with rich forests endowed with rare species. This richness has aroused envy of the entire world which has resorted to robbery and war. As [26] argues; land and natural resource use systems, competitions for access, control and use of the resources, could be the root causes of the turmoil in the Great Lakes.

In addition, the turmoil situation in the Great Lake Region has seen the intrusion of different allied forces on the sides of the belligerents groups. On the one hand, the Westerners (America and watchdogs) side with the former colonies of Belgium in order to silence the Communist ideology of nationalists such as Patrice Lumumba of Congo, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Julius Kambarage Nyerere of Tanzania, Sylvanus Olympio of Togo and many others. On the other hand, the United Republic of Soviet together with their allied dogs such as Cuba, Angola ... seeks to rescue the DRC which is the world barn or store from the beak of the eagle, Capitalism but in vain. As a result, the Olumbas and the Wagos, that is, the belligerents' representatives have to be killed so

that the resources could be plundered with no hindrances. [19:9] opines: “These people are dying under the supervision of the Red Cross and the United Nations.” The common ground motto of belligerent factions is encapsulated in [27:63] satirical text which clearly displays the imperialists’ *Modus Vivendi*: To live hypocritically a brotherly togetherness.

Good morning Mr. Dispossessed,” says Mr. Possessing. “A bad morning”, replied Mr. Dispossessed. “I’m truly sorry about your condition”, adds Mr. Possessing.

“But it’s you who is sitting on my back”, replied Mr. Dispossessed.

“That’s the law of Nature and God”, says Mr. Possessing. “Let’s live in harmony and brotherly togetherness. Let’s not disturb the universal law of stability.”

This way of life is characterized by the deadly exploitation of man by man, i.e. the most powerful ones could suck the blood of the weaker. Thus, in *The Great Ponds*, both belligerent sides seem to be weaker despite hiring allied forces from neighboring villages. Each group, however, seeks the way to strengthen themselves either through witchcraft or other mystical ways but in vain since the eagle has settled in their society.

Likewise, in the Great Lakes, the subjugated masses think they could find solace to their problem through resistance militia factions. In other words, there is proliferation of militias: the Mai-Mai movements who, perhaps seek to liberate their people from neocolonialists. This situation is castigated by [28] who claims that the current violence in DRC is qualified as one of the world’s worst active humanitarian crises which has its origins in the massive refugee crisis that resulted from the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. Indeed, after Rwanda’s genocidal regime (as it was qualified) was overthrown in June 1994, more than 2 million Hutus fled to DRC fearing reprisals by the newly established government led by Paul Kagame.

Since the genocidal regime has exiled in the DRC and from the accession of Laurent Kabila’s AFDL to Congo’s power, not only the concept genocide has been transferred to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), but also crimes and tribal wars are reported wherever due to the proliferation of militia troops. Since then a hundred rebel factions have mushroomed and been reported (e.g. more than one hundred rebel factions in the eastern Congo are instances). In addition to the imbroglio made by the refugees together with their army, the democratic force of liberation of Rwanda (FDLR); the DRC has experienced the theatre performed by militias and Mai-Mai fighters, all of them seeking to access and control the land and wealth. In fact, all the eastern part of the DRC is besieged by rebels in the 1990s mainly after the fall of Habyarimana’s regime and the arrival of Laurent Kabila’s AFDL to Congo’s power. [29:30] puts it about Mokoto’s massacre in Masisi: “One estimate, published by Human Rights Watch, suggests that a hundred people may have been killed.”

[30] adds that, in addition to the Mokoto massacre of Hunde and Tutsi by the former army of Rwanda, the Ex-FAR, in September 1996, many Banyamulenge were massacred in the village of Kabela in South Kivu province, Fizi territory. Since then, killings and kidnappings are reported everywhere in the DRC in general and in eastern Congo in particular and bloodshed is the everyday people’s activity. Like the Holocaust and the Rwandan genocide, the killing in Beni territory (North-Kivu) aims at exterminating the majority ethnic group

composed of Banande, Bamvuba, Balese... Indeed, Holocaust refers to the genocide of European Jews and others, that is, the systematic extermination of millions of European Jews, as well as Roma, Slavs, intellectuals, gay people, and political dissidents, by the Nazis and their allies before and during World War II [17]. Still, there are fought today between the Congolese army (FARDC) and CODECO militias in the name of nationalism and popular auto-defense, for each ethnic group (Bahema, Balendu, Bangiti...) would like to control golden mines at Kpandroma in Djugu territory [32]. The question is easy: Where do rebels get guns to kill themselves and the innocent population?

Today, the modus operandi in Beni territory (North Kivu district) and Mambasa (Ituri district) is similar with what happened in Rwanda in 1994: chopping people with machetes or axes; cutting males' genitals; killing pregnant women by putting sticks in their genitals, cooking human heads in pans, burning people and their houses and eating human flesh to cite only these humiliating deeds. Once again, from his poem entitled "Human Butchery, Kivu", Ngitsi; quoted by [21], considers the eastern Congo as a human abattoir and kraal where cows are slaughtered at any rate.

Awful statistics about vulnerable Congolese are reported in different magazines. For instance, [31], in Al Jazeera, reported that nearly 3,383 people have been killed in the fighting between the DRC forces and militia members; and about 3.7 million have become internally displaced people living in dilapidated tents. The [32] highlights that starving and sick, people living in the RRC are caught in a bloody cycle of violence and political turmoil. They add that around the town of Beni both the DRC's army and the UN are fighting a presumably Islamist militia. Consequently, dozens of people have died in frequent ambushes and skirmishes.

Unlike the Great Pond where children and women are not allowed to partake war activities, in the Great Lakes region children are enticed to the army in militia factions. For instance, there were many Kadogos, i.e. children in Laurent Desiré Kabila's army when he headed for the liberation of Kinshasa in 1997. Today, in the name nationalism, rebellions are fought by minors, i.e. the children who are used as shields in South Kivu by Yakutumba faction; in North Kivu by Nduma Defense of Congo (NDC), Raia Mutomboki, Mai-Mai Mazembe and Nyatura; and in Ituri the Congolese cooperative of development (CODECO) has caused deaths and desolation among the innocent population, to cite only these militias. According to RFI Kiswahili, Issue of 20 April 2020 at 3 pm, GMT, there are almost 60,000 refugees in concentration camps at Drodoro (Djugu territory/Ituri district) without any sanitizers with a high risk of COVID 19 contamination. Indeed, bloody wars

In order to exert their power on the vulnerable population, both the adversary forces use rape as a tool not only to weaken their adversaries but also to loot people's wealth. Their slogans are: "No Nkunda, no job", "Ebola business", and the like. Here below is an anecdote of a true story which happened in one village of the eastern Congo during the M23 war fought by Laurent Nkunda's the National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP) created in 2003 and which encapsulates the rebels' business.

Anecdote: One day, Mr. Y and his wife X were coming from field at around 5 pm. The woman was carrying a sack of cassava and the husband a six month old child. Suddenly, they met three rebels. The first rebel seized the child and chopped it into pieces with his sword. Meanwhile, the second and the third were busy raping both

the child's parents. When the two finished their ugly business, the first one went on with Mr. Y. Truly, when Mr. Y reached home, he could not do anything but to make suicide.

3.4 Resolution and Modus Vivendi

In order to restore harmony between the Chiolu and the Aliakoro, a third-party process is needed. In this respect, the Erekwí people will come to interfere in the matter, in order to convince them stop the war. Thus, Elendu an Erekwí man declares:

'Listen. The conflict between you and the Aliakoro has reached a very dangerous stage. You have both begun to kill people from other villages not concerned with the war. Therefore, Isiali, Omokachi, Abii, and other villages who speak our tongue have selected us to arrange a peace meeting between you and your enemies, before great havoc is done.' [15]

Likewise, peace agreements have been held in the Great Lakes region: some have sought to extend the concept "great lakes" to other countries rather than DRC, Rwanda, and Burundi; but other meetings sought to convince the Congolese to share the resources with the rest of the world. Here are some instances of peace agreements and which aimed at nothing rather than the control of land and wealth; but all of them floated:

- In Lusaka (Zambia), the ceasefire between MLC faction and the Congo's army was signed on 04/May/2001.
- In Pretoria, one year later another peace meeting was held to make an inclusive transitional government of the DRC.
- In Sun-City meeting (South Africa) the inter-Congolese political negotiation was held and "The Final Act" was signed on 02/April/2003. This peace agreement sought to reconcile the belligerent groups, i.e. the Congolese Democratic Rally (RCD-KML and RCD-Goma) who have separated and created three blocks or three independent states. The meeting resulted in the re-unification of Congo. The final act culminated in the fathomless government which had four heads comprising the president or head of State followed by three vice-presidents [34].
- The Addis-Ababa (Ethiopia) meeting was held on 24/February/2013 for the security and cooperation in the Great Lakes region [35]. Despite the peace talks held so far, and despite the heavy tribute charged on the Republic of Uganda (4 000 000 000\$) for having plundered the Congolese resources; the national army of liberation of Uganda (ADF/NALU) has gone on with the bloody and genocidal operations in the forest of Beni territory massacring people, raping women, looting cacao, coffee, wood, and burning houses. The war has reached its paroxysm when pillage and rape have become resourceful incomes as castigated by [36] through these terms:

While Mudimbe's fiction demonstrates the mobilisation of power and the domination inscribed on female bodies, the continual violence and heinous rapes in eastern Congo these past years remain perplexing and troubling. Despite their obvious economic and political contexts, the rapes have been naturalized as a culturally specific, Congolese characteristic and, additionally, have become political currency, much like yesterday's red rubber or today's coltan, gold and diamonds.

The genocidal war in the eastern Congo has given rise to many NGOs whose objective is not to rescue people but perhaps to foster and nurture war. The activism of humanitarians and war makers has reached its peak. For example, in Butembo, a city located in the eastern Congo, 280 tons of rice was found improper to consumption by the national control office (OCC). It had to be burnt or destroyed but the WFP attempted to impose it to the population. Such an attempt raised the anger of the population who had discovered the helpers' cunning [37]. Then the researchers wonder to know why such food could be given to people. Was it to create a new catastrophe?

Clearly, humanitarians and NGO's might have come for unknown purposes. That is why Mugabe contends that they do not come here in Africa to help but rather to exploit Africa. Late President Mugabe is quoted by [38] from his address to the 26th Summit of the OAU in 2016 through the following words:

They are everywhere in Africa. If not physically, through NGO's [Loud applause], through spies, through pretenders who come to us and to say they are here in Africa to assist us. Even in groups, armed groups in some of our territories. What help is coming from them?

Mugabe and the researchers herein have taken a skeptical outlook about the Westerners' attitudes for Africa and the so-called Third World in general. In this respect, the rift which is created among the Third World dwellers should be filled. This gap is viewed by Amadi as an iconic concept "semicircle" whose other side is empty, for half of the people have joined the Westerners' ideologies. These ideologies include, for instance, the deadly exploitation of man by man through capitalism, the western neo-colonial system, and so on.

Likewise, [39], through the reflection in her article entitled "Politics of Balkanization: Divide and you shall conquer", highlights that division makes the community weaker. The researcher goes on to say that the term "Balkanization" derives from turbulent Balkans and refers to a division of a multinational state into smaller, ethnically homogenous entities or to an ethnic conflict within multiethnic state; and that 'divide and conquer' strategy can be connected with a common geopolitical process, Balkanization, happening throughout the globe in different ways and shapes.

Finally, the xenophobic and tribal *Modus Vivendi* "Kila mamba na kivuko chake" has become the slogan in the DRC. Literally, it means "one boat, one shore" which merely connotes "exclusion" and "otherism" in this society. As a result, some people who are said to be aliens in some areas of Congo should be expelled. For example, it was broadcast on RTNC Kinshasa, 7th April 2020 at 5 am GMT, that adepts of Bundu Dia Kongo (BDK), a religious and political movement rioted in order to get expelled all non-natives living in Congo Centrale district. Such a demonstration is subsequent to many other events of the kind such as the "Kata-Katanga", i.e. "cutters of Katanga" an insurrectional movement of separatists who would like Katanga district to be autonomous so that people from that rich place could enjoy its richness alone [40:19]. In this regard, [41:31] joins in saying: Watawakatakata, katakata they said. They are going to chop chop you until you are all finished. They will chop you all to dust, soon that the land, your land and the power that they have held for decades they can keep for centuries.

Meja Mwangi, a committed writer, has used Swahili words “Watawakatakata”, that is to say, they will chop and chop you into pieces. Doing so, the writer makes his people aware of their leader’s mismanagement due to selfishness. In other words, the leaders who lack the sense of humanism cannot hesitate to chop or cut people with machetes provided that they get wealthier. They not only resort to killing the ruled but they also divide them through wrong propagandas. As a result of their bad behaviour, in the name of democracy and populism the DRC has seen the rise of more than 500 ethnic political parties whose creators’ purpose is to have a share of the cake.

4.5 Gender and power relation

Gender and power relation are old issues commented on extensively and intensively through language in the context, for instance, of women’s emancipation, education, empowerment... All Elechi Amadi’s weak characters are said to be women or children throughout the novel. They are not given role and they cannot be featured in decision making meetings. The women themselves are given names which feature their attitudes as perceived by males. To exemplify, “Nyoma” is the name given to Olumba’s wife. In Kiswahili language (Guthrie’s geographical classification, Bantu, Zone G), if we replace the vowel “o” with “a”, we have “Nyama”, a stupid person. In fact, women and children are heard crying when things go wrong in the novel village.

“Where are the women and children?” Wago almost howled. “Locked up in their houses,” [...] “A few are hiding in the bushes”

Indeed, it can be remarked that the pronoun “their” rather than “our” confers a sense of exclusion on the whole affair of women. [42:205-6] argues:

The discursive construction of ‘US’ and ‘THEM’ is the foundation of prejudiced, anti – Semitic and racist perception of discourses. This discursive construction starts with the labeling of social actors, proceeds to the generalization of negative attributions and then electorate arguments to justify the exclusion of many and the inclusion of some.

Kate Millet, quoted in [43:262] highlights the issue on the women subjugation muttering that “patriarchal culture is resolute as a system of power relationship, whereby men as a group control women as a group and possess more social wealth, power, esteem as well as control over these resources than women” [44] goes further to confirm women’s fate in such a strong patriarchal society through the following words: “‘What does your wife do?’ The question would, to a majority of men, seem tautological: ‘She’s my wife - that’s what she does.’” In the same perspectives, [13:249] asserts that discrimination of other groups usually focuses on Origin, Appearance, Ethnicity, Gender, Language, Religion, and so on. Stated otherwise, a woman is a man’s wife whose job is to cook food and lay the bed for her husband. However, the male could do jobs such as warring, building, farming and so forth. In this respect, Olumba is a man, for he is a matador and a bullfighter. Yet, the morphology of his name makes a pace ahead to unravel his personality. We read:

/o-lu-mba/: a child's utterance of **/lu-mu-mba/**

It seems that even many illiterate Igbo people could utter the above name likewise (Olumba). So, Olumba is the name given after patriots such as Olumba, the hero of the novel who, like Patrice Lumumba of Democratic Republic of the Congo, fought courageously for the Congo's independence until he snatched it from the Belgians' hands. On the other side, Wago is a woman (the letter "w" being at the beginning of both items), for he is too weak to rescue Wagaba pond from the foes' hands, the Chiolu people.

Additionally, a man's sitting place in Olumba's society is the "obi", that means, the hut [45]. Obi is not only a hut, but Okonkwo's grandson is named after it in *No Longer at Ease* [46]. Once more the morphological analysis of the word "obi" can shed more light on the Igbo culture.

Obi: through metathesis, i.e. translation of letters within a word, we have:

o-b-i → b-o-i → boi (boy)

Therefore, Olumba deserves reverence and can sit in the hut (obi); unlike Elendu an Erekwí man who has womanized when he attempts to persuade both the belligerent factions to give up the war. The latter's place is the kitchen where women and children stay telling old stories and cooking for males. Still, Elendu seems to play his game in the centre which means, he is neither a Capitalist nor a Communist. Through his powerless and centrist language endowed with negatives, he attempts to convince warring people to stop the fight but with no avail, as seen so far. Can we confirm here that the proponents of peace in the Great Lakes region are viewed as women and weak by those who get riches from wars; and these women should get off the way?

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

This investigation has addressed the sociopolitical and ecological crises and war which happen in the central Africa. In fact, the main concern of this paper has evolved around the imperialism Charter that sets norms to be followed by the imperialists so that they can maintain neo-colonialism in the so-called "Third World".

To reach the expected results, both qualitative method and critical discourse analysis were used. Through simulation of events and setting in both *The Great Ponds* (novel) and the Great Lakes region, it has been proved that there are similarities and dissimilarities among the aforementioned settings. In addition, it has been proven that in both cases, the conflict results from envy of natural resources, lands, rulers' greed for wealth and power, selfishness to cite only these vices. Consequently, war, kidnapping, violence, rape, strange diseases are experienced all over both the world and the Great Lakes region. However, in the Great Lakes region, the involvement of new technology has added new aspects to the crisis outcomes. These aspects include, for example, terrorism, increase of mass destructive weapons, genocidal terms such as Holocaust, xenophobia and so on.

Briefly, it has been found out that in both settings neither groups won victory, for either group would like to prevail their selfish interests. Therefore, the ideal and endless search for common ground and unity among the belligerent groups together with the awareness of the source of the evils are to be the core of the oppressed daily concern.

In light with the novel “The Great Ponds”, in order to unravel the queries that hinder development in the Great Lakes region, the researcher suggests the following recommendations:

- People (Great Lakes dwellers) should awake from their slumbering mind. That is, they should be endowed with consciousness and let their conscience be their guide which urges them to know that the Westerners’ policy is to Divide-and-Rule/Conquer” [47].
- The African ideology should stem from the “Garveysian” vision of Africa for Africans and the “Nkrumahian” vision of Pan Africanism [48:68]. In other words, the African resources should be exploited by Africans themselves in order to develop Africa; on the one hand, and the Africans should create a **brotherly unity** in order to enjoy the product of their sweat, on the other hand.
- Having all the potentials, the Africans should be self-reliant rather than being beggars, for development will never come from abroad. In so doing, the Great Lakes dwellers should work hard and hand in hand so as they can be the greatest developed community in the world. Indeed, this unity should not be based on ethnicity, neither should it stem from power, for the natural resources have to be shared equally.
- Rape, corruption, robbery, and embezzlement or laundering should be severely punished by the African justice; and women should be empowered through education and odd jobs of development; they should also be well represented in decision making circles thanks to their merits. Also the Congolese leaders in particular and the African in general should create jobs for the youth to counteract effects of militias since the latter create harmful gang groups due to unemployment.
- The westerners’ philosophy of colonizing the weaker should be re-thought. It means, they should redefine their so-called World Vision ideology which stems from “Divide and Conquer”. This redefinition would be based on equality between the producers of the raw materials and the transformers or consumers of the industrialized countries.
- The UN should play their role of peace-making with no discrimination, but not that of observing how people kill one another. In so doing, they should behave accordingly towards the different nations they control. In addition, they should have a bird’s eye view on the organizations which work under the flag of the UN such as WHO, WFP, UNESCO, UNICEF...
- The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) should release if not ban the unbearable debt of Africa, for the more indebted, the weaker. Therefore, COVID-19 and EBOLA should not be alibis for them to indebt the powerless countries all over the world.
- The European Union and the richest countries in the world, the G20 should loosen the chain for Africa, that is, they should cooperate as equal partners in the rendezvous of giving-and-receiving but not that relation authoritor-authoritee which aims at crushing the weak for them to emerge. Still, the Africans should not take it for granted the fact that Westerners are allotted power by God to dominate all the other races.

Finally, we do not make a dogmatic claim for the exhaustiveness of this study. Other light-hearted critics might

explore the causes and the extent of terrorism and genocide in eastern Congo mainly in both North Kivu and South Kivu, and Ituri provinces through ecocriticism of ecopoetry, for example, in order to see the extent of environmental degradation together with its impact on the population of the aforementioned areas.

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