

Experimental Techniques and Postcolonial Markers in Kateb's *The Man in Rubber Sandals*

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Abstract

This article explores the way Kateb Yacine juxtaposes experimental form and postcolonial content in his play *The Man in Rubber Sandals*. It discusses postcolonial issues like racial and gender dimensions of the play from historicist perspectives. Taking its theoretical bearings from Brecht's modernist techniques, Gilbert Helen's markers of postcolonial drama, Ashcroft's and Fanon's postcolonial concepts, it contends that Kateb's play is a tentative attempt at the redefinition of a *Katebian* theatre which is becoming experimental / Brechtian in form and postcolonial in content. It inquires the way the playwright expends the context of the politics of the sixties as a pretext to review the established power relations as related to the scorching issues of the day.

Keywords: Algerian theatre, postcolonialism, experimental theatre, racism, gender discourse.

1-Introduction

Kateb's meeting with Bertolt Brecht whom he admires in a Parisian coffeehouse ends with a polemic over the importance of using tragedy in theatre. While Brecht claims that tragedy is no longer applicable for modern time issues because they are situations without exits or outlets, Kateb replies that tragedy is timeless and remains a powerful tool in the expression of contradictions and conflicts like the one his country is living under the French colonialism (qtd. in Aouadi S., 2006, p.4). As time passes, and at the end of the sixties, and the beginning of the seventies, he travelled to Vietnam to share their tragic experience and to be involved in their daily struggle. Soon after, he wrote *L'Homme aux sandales de caoutchou/ The Man in Rubber Sandals* (MRS, hereafter) in which he staged the most important conflicts inherent to the twentieth century in the world using Vietnam as the principal setting for the events of his play. This play marked a turning point in his career and in his theatre since he shifted from tragedy to produce a modernist / experimental play though he previously refuted this model. To these modernist techniques, Kateb dexterously juxtaposed and explored postmodern issues as I shall argue in what follows.

2- Methods

To analyze and explore the form of the play, we have borrowed Bertolt Brecht's techniques of the experimental theatre as explained by David Rush (2005) and John Willet (1959). Theatrical Modernist techniques started with Brecht's epic

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theatre that transformed Western drama. For him, the final cause of a play is not the feeling of responsiveness that originates from the catharsis of the Greek tragedy, but it is to make people question the world and make changes through appealing to class consciousness foremost in mind (Rush, D., 2005, p. 242). His theatre is called epic because of the use of a large narrative / story, crossing many locations and time frames. In addition to this, it is epic in the sense of the classical drama which represents great heroes set for dangerous quests and adventures against supernatural monsters. Yet, in his epic theatre the monsters are social and economic circumstances that stands as hindrances in front of the hero's progress while the dialogue of the play clearly includes storytellers, songs, and narrators that initially pertain to classical drama.

To make things clear, Brecht opposed the modern / epic theatre to the dramatic one by pointing at the main changes between them. Therefore, Brecht's epic theatre's methods, John Willet says are defined in comparison with the Aristotelian (dramatic) theatre's techniques of plot, human being as a theme, character / actor, spectator, and scene (Brecht, in Willet, J., 1959, p. 98-9). So, unlike the plot of the Aristotelian theatre that involves the spectator in a stage situation, in Brecht's epic theatre, the plot is substituted by the narrative form that turns the spectator into a bystander by exhilarating his power of action. The human being taken for granted in the dramatic theatre becomes an object of inquiry able to alter. Concerning the actors / characters, Brecht thinks that they should show attitudes 'gesten' or distancing rather than feelings, insisting on the audience's thoughtful disinterestedness rather than complete emotional involvement (empathy). Further, unlike the spectator who concentrates on the end of the play, in the epic theatre, he should concentrate on the process of the situation.

Regarding the scene, in the dramatic theatre, each one grows from the previous one while in the epic theatre each scene is independent from the other, and they are fragmented in a form of assortment to show not a man as a consistent whole but as a contradictory "ever changing character whose unity comes despite or rather by means of, interruption and jumps" (Brecht in Willet, J., 1959, p. 175-6). These effects, Brecht adds, are supported by a set of stage properties like the use of screens (projections), music, light, direct speech with the audience (the breaking of the fourth wall), poetry and so on (Brecht in Willet, J., p. 38-42). These techniques are depicted in the play under study as we shall discuss.

After the form, the Postcolonial content of Kateb's play will be explored borrowing some postcolonial concepts. Postcolonial literatures, as Ashcroft asserts, developed through different stages which correspond to national / regional consciousness and to the project of asserting difference from the centre. For him, these two stages are first the literature of the representatives of the

empire in the colony, and the second is that of the natives or the outcast (Ashcroft, B., 1991, p. 6). Sharing the same views, Stephen Slemon, contends that postcolonial literature is a way of *disidentifying* whole societies from the dominant codes of cultural organizations and an intrinsically dialectical involvement in the hegemonic production of cultural meaning (1987, p. 14). When it comes to drama, Helen Gilbert traces some markers of postcolonial theatre that are according to her acts 1) to respond to the experience of imperialism directly or indirectly; 2) for the continuation / regeneration of the colonized; 3) to incorporate post-contact forms; 4) to interrogate the hegemony that underlies imperial representation (1996, p.11). These markers will be showcased in the play in the discussion.

3- Results and Discussion

The investigation of the literary form and the content of the play has made it possible to draw the following results. One of these results is that the playwright has used the experimental techniques in his play despite the fact that he rejected them at the beginning because this kind of theatre appeals to the consciousness of the masses. Furthermore, these techniques create critical thinking that can affect change rather than emotional involvement of the audiences. Another result of this analysis is that to the modernist techniques, the playwright juxtaposes a postcolonial content to voice the colonized nations and their aspiration to be independent and participate in the dialogue of civilizations. This postcolonial content denotes the playwright's negative response and rebuttal to the war in Vietnam. To discuss these results we will first analyze the modernist / experimental techniques and second we shall explore the postcolonial content of the playtext.

3.1. Experimental Techniques in Kateb's Play

Almost all the above mentioned characteristics and techniques are found in Kateb's play. The plot of the play is episodic and narrative and designed to turn the spectator into an observer and a decider by arousing his capacity of action since he is made to think and face something. Kateb's play is divided into thirteen scenes / episodes separated from each other. Each scene is relatively self-contained in the story and represents a historical moment of the selected country.

For instance, the first scene starts with the epic sister Trung Trac and Trung Nhi as a reference to the first historical heroines of Vietnam and then he moves to the brothers Tay Son who struggled like the two sisters against the Chinese to liberate their country. Yet, the two brothers asked the help of the French with the intermediary of Pierre Pigneau de Behaine who arranged the historical encounter between the French and the Vietnamese empire. As shown in the play, these relations developed after the coming of the missionaries to Vietnam as with the unnamed preacher and his assistant Marius (MRS, p. 20-5). In the same scene,

Kateb shows the Africans from Dakar and Algeria like Mohamed and Nguyen Ai Quoc (Ho Chi Ming), deported by force to Vietnam, as the following passage testifies:

The officer:
We have a raffle
On the port of Dakar,
All at the barracks
They are ready to go
.....
All the blacks passing by
Are automatically engaged.
Second African:
But free our family
General DECOQ:
Ours are dying in Verdun,
And I'll let the blacks take a nap here? (MRS, p.30-32 *)

The second scene is set in China with the intervention of Mao (Mao Zedong) right at the beginning. Then, the audience hears Nguyen Ai Quoc in China who prepares an insurrection, saying, "Nguyen: Je représente en Chine / Le peuple Vietnamien" (MRS, p. 44). Nguyen is imprisoned and tortured for his political actions in quest of liberating his country from colonization. In the same scene the Americans collaborate with the Chinese to destroy the Japanese in the agreement between General Alexander (American) and the General Lou Han and Tchang Kai-Chek (the Chief of Chinese Nationalist Army) who deceitfully declares to his General Lou Han, "Tu peux faire coup double/ Et piller à la fois/ les français et les Japonais" (HSC, p. 59). Soon later in the same scene, General Giap declares the victory of the insurrection while Nguyen proclaims the independence of Vietnam (MRS, p. 6). Kateb historicizes his play by using different settings and this trait is a modernist technique. The juxtaposition of scenes employing multiple locations and time frames created a montage effect. He sets the actions of his play in the past and draws parallels with contemporary events to enable the spectators to view the events of the play with emotional objectivity and garner a thinking response.

The play's Characters stand for actors and narrators at the same time and directly address the audience. This feature is another experimental technique used for the sake of breaking the fourth wall (the invisible wall) in theatre. Brecht contends that unlike the realist theatre, the experimental one should remind the spectator that he is in front of a play not in real life to push him to think critically. Furthermore, almost all the characters of the plays are historical, real-life characters. In some of Brecht's plays, character names were generic. The characters of the play represent these traits. Starting from the last techniques, Kateb's characters: "Le Missionnaire / The Missionary, Le Coiffeur / The Hairdresser, L'Officier / The Officer, La Femme / the Woman, Le Vieillard

/ The Old Man” among others are not given any names but their profession indicates their identity, therefore, the names are generic.

What the reader notices about the characters’ names is that the bulk of these refer to real / historical personalities who from time to time narrates and directly address the audience. Characters in this play, starting from the man of the title, form an intertextual web with real historical figures. The man of rubber sandals stands for Ho Chi Minh or Nguyen Ai Quoc as he calls himself in a moment of his life career before the 1930s. In 1941, back in Vietnam, he took the name of Ho Chi Minh (the one who enlightens). That same year, he founded the Vietminh, or League for the Independence of Vietnam, with the aim of fighting both the Japanese and the French who had control over Indochina. After the surrender of the Japanese at the end of the Second World War and the inability of the French to regain power, Ho Chi Minh declared the independence of his country in 1945. He founded the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, of which he became president. But in 1946, negotiations with the French failed. So, Ho Chi Minh led the fight until the victory and independence in May 1954 (Vince, C., 2018, np.). Uncle Ho as named in scene two is described as making sandals from rubber before joining the insurrection, stating the following:

Uncle Ho:
In this land of rubber,
Men and trees
Are as flexible as tigers
A flat tire can also serve as
Sandals for the fighters (MRS, p. 76).

Ho Chi Minh lived a life full of events that can be traced back to his first voyages to France and other European countries where he joined political associations that initiated him to the socialist thoughts. Upon his coming back home he frantically struggled for the independence of Vietnam. Therefore, and as a historical fact which is reported in the play, he becomes the president of the Republic of Vietnam in 1945 (HSC, p. 61). The whole play is an intertext about this man and his life time achievements.

Another character of the play that is also real and stands for a historical figure is General Giap. Under the orders of Ho Chi Minh, General Võ Nguyên Giáp created the Vietnamese People's Army. This army waged an insurrectional war against the French colonists living in Indochina since 1887. It is a major force in the August Revolution and in obtaining Vietnam’s independence in 1945. General Giap addresses the audience in an attempt to expose his strategy of attack saying:

General Giap:
We counterattack
On two main fronts.
The main body of our army
Walk on Hoa Binh.

Two other divisions
Infiltrate behind the enemy. (MRS, p.127)

The character of Mao Zedong also appears in the play and refers to the real historical figure. Mao Zedong proclaims the People's Republic of China and becomes the leader of the Chinese Communist Party. Mao puts an end to years of Civil War, opposing nationalists and communists. He becomes president of the central government committee, an event that extends the Cold War to the Asian continent. Mao will rule China with an iron fist until his death in 1976. He is among the characters that are used by Kateb to break the fourth wall. By his direct address to the audience he appeals to their critical thinking. Kateb makes him say sarcastic comments on the silliness of the Western colonialists (General Niquessone and General Nikita). This is what happens in the same scene while the two generals let the big stone falls on their feet accusing Mao of being another Stalin as shown in what follows,

Mao.

A Chinese proverb qualifies the action of some fools by saying that they lift a stone, only to let it fall on their feet. The reactionaries of all countries are just such fools. The repressions they exercise against the people in revolution can only push them to expand and intensify the revolution. (MRS, p. 160).

It is to be noted that these techniques are accompanied with the use of placards, music, lights for the sake of disturbing the mind of the spectators to garner the effect of distancing. For instance all over the play the audience hears the ringing of the bells, alerts, sirens and music of war to recreate the atmosphere of war and at the same time to cut off the stream of consciousness they can develop through their involvement with the events of the play. Therefore, all these techniques testify of the modern form of Kateb's play.

3.2. Postcolonial Markers in Kateb's Play

Theatre is a potential and a direct means that contribute in raising the awareness of individuals since it represents society in miniature in front of a society in meditation. The capacity of postcolonial theatre to intervene publicly in social organization and to critique political structures (Gilbert, H., p.7) is what pushed Kateb Yacine to direct his aesthetic urge towards attempting to produce his own. He understood the desire of the colonized to participate in the production of meaning and in providing a cultural critique to partake in the polyphonic arena of the dominant powerful countries' discourses. This objective is set to share in this dialogue and contribute in creating new cultural codes that include the colonized countries.

The direct confrontation of the Vietnamese, the Algerian, the French, the British and the American characters in the play symbolizes the bitter clashes and encounters between the powerful colonizer and the powerless colonized. In postcolonial criticism the term "other" refers to the colonized or the one who is

dominated. In this play, the colonizer is the French, and the American while the principal “other” is the Vietnamese. Then, there is a clear reference to the other “others” who are the Algerians, the Palestinians, and the African Americans. The themes are entangled with the mosaic of cultures, a characteristic inherent to postcolonial reality. Therefore, this section’s concern is to depict postcolonial issues and markers as showcased in the playtext.

According to Gilbert, **The first** marker of postcolonial theatre lies in that it constitutes a response to the experience of imperialism. Kateb exposes the traits of Vietnamese local design, diversity and variety to voice their own stories. As a setting to the events of the play, Vietnam symbolizes the struggle for national independence of Asia, Africa and Latin America from Western colonialism. Vietnamese under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh prepared insurrection despite their lack of weapons and war-like empowering means against the French and the Americans to free their land as it appears in what Ho Chi Minh (Nguyen Ai Quoc) states to Giap, appealing to all the people notwithstanding their belongings or backgrounds.

Nguyen Ai Quoc.

Forward, dear compatriots!

Let whoever has a gun fight with the gun.

Let him who has a sword fight with a sword.

Than the one who has neither a gun nor a sword

Fights with shovels, pickaxes, sticks.

And let no one stay out of the struggle. (MRS, p. 53).

The second feature of postcolonial drama, as Gilbert argues, is that this kind of theatre acts for the continuation and the regeneration of the colonized and sometimes (pre-contact) communities. So, to regenerate the language and the culture of the Vietnamese, Kateb revives them in the stage and shows the way the colonizer distorts these components and undertakes the mission of displacing them by imposing his own. French missionaries who are represented by the priest and his assistant Marius refer to the Vietnamese using the expression “savage people” and to their language as “incomprehensible animalistic sound”. They plan to convert them to Christianity and to teach them the French language as it is shown in the following dialogue:

Marius, (aside):

The savages have everything to learn.

Isn't it for them to work?

.....

So my father you study

The language of these macaques!

The missionary:

The natives of these regions

Chirp like birds.

Words have only one syllable

And the meaning changes with the tone,

So that we sing
More than we speak.
You would have to be a musician. (MRS, p.15).

The importance of language as a support to culture is underlined by Fanon in his book *Black Skin White Masks*, in which he writes; “to speak is to be able to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that particular language, but above all to assume a culture, to bear the weight of a civilization” (Fanon F., 1952, p. 17-18). By attacking the linguistic system of the colonized, French missionaries demean the whole body of the Vietnamese culture supported by this language. Yet, to represent this situation on the stage is to render justice and regenerate the pre-contact community's language and to voice them. It is through this artistic form on the stage that responds to the colonizer's attempt at obliterating the culture and identity of the colonized.

Furthermore, the language of the play is replete of reference to the Vietnamese cultural beliefs and the most significant one is that of the “Ong”, which means that Kateb celebrates the continuity of the colonizer's culture. The “Ong” refers to a tiger (a sacred animal), but means in Vietnamese language “great god” and is mentioned in the play when a tiger attacks the house of the noble French woman Madame Virginie and the church of the missionary who scorns the colonized in the following passage:

The Missionary:
The natives call Ong,
That is, My lord,
This ferocious beast that devoured
In my only parish
Over a hundred Christians
.....
And me they tutor me
It's curious isn't it?
But the native loves the tiger
For the sole reason
That the tiger is a native (MRS, p.17-18).

Performing acts with the awareness of and sometimes the incorporation of post-contact forms is **the third** feature of postcolonial drama as argued by Gilbert. The play's first scenes are the playwright's attempt, not much devoid of sarcasm and burlesque, to incorporate the share of the colonizer in disrupting the native's way of living. This is shown in the new institutions brought by the Westerners like the church in the context of the great sacrifice that “the Frenchmen's burden” requires to civilize the Vietnamese. In the beginning, the natives are described by Louis XIV as being “docile creatures” (MRS, p. 24) accepting everything coming from the “civilized” Frenchmen. Yet, when they start to show resistance through insurrection they are called “savage creatures” (MRS, p. 15). One of the appropriate examples of the colonized incorporation of post-contact forms is the conversion of the native called Jean de la Croix into Christianity and becoming a clergyman who built a church. Ironically, he is

shown using the crucifix to attack the French missionaries when they wanted to occupy his church (MRS, p. 19).

The Christian religion is used by the imperial power as a means to intrude Vietnam and to convert Vietnamese to a new religion whose principal teaching is to love fellow men. Yet, behind this institution lies the imperialist greed and pretentiousness that are manifested in the political stage whenever the wealth of the colonized is at stake. In the play, the French royal family represented by King Louis XVI and queen Marie-Antoinette are undergoing their “exotic experience” in Vietnam. They ironically affirm to the Prince of Tonkin that the only and true objective of the French empire in Vietnam is to spread Christianity as it is shown in what follows:

Louis XIV:

Very high, very excellent, very powerful and very magnanimous prince,
The thing of the world that we would wish the most, for you and for your states, would be to obtain, for your subjects who have already embraced the law of the one true God of heaven and earth, the freedom to profess it, this law being the noblest, the holiest and above all the most suitable to make kings reign absolutely over people (MRS, p. 20).

In his book entitled *The Wretched of the Earth* Fanon shows the devastating role that the church plays in the colonies and how it reinforces the implantation of foreign influences contending that, “the church in the colonies is the white people’s church, the foreigner’s church. It does not call the native to God’s ways but to the ways of the white man, of the master, of the oppressor” (Fanon, F., 1961, p. 32).

Up to this point of the discussion, and with Fanon’s idea in mind, we can speak of the play’s attempt to interrogate the hegemony that underlies imperial representations which is **the fourth** marker of postcolonial drama as claimed by Gilbert. Kateb, then, mockingly laughs at these Christian missionaries in Vietnam by denouncing their abuse of power and their hypocrisy. He puts in the mouth of the Christian missionary-assistant Marius the following discourse:

Marius:

We are finally in the land of Cockaigne,
Where all the fruits grow,
A paradise on earth
Where every Christians is a lord
Who has the sky in his luggage (MRS, p.12).

The play questions the imperial hegemony by representing the unequal battles and the use of sophisticated weaponry to attack the rebels and the peasants who struggle using basic means they can supply, “Si c’est pas malheureux / une arbalète contre la 7eme flotte” (MRS, p. 203). This unjustified violence of the empire to repress the indigenous people is not only intended to destroy their cultural and social tenets, but to exterminate any resistance from those who stand against the empire. This situation generates the colonizer’s hatred and violence against all that pertains to the empire. As shown in the play, the Vietnamese become conscious and ready for a revolution despite the fact that

they have to engage in an unequal fight that might exterminate all of them. As reported in the text of the play, Pierre Loti, the French journalist, in his article written for *Le Figaro*, 1883, describes the French unjustified horrifying attack on the Annamites / Vietnamese. The following quotation from the play well expresses this war's horrors and atrocities consciously acted on the innocents:

Pierre Loti.

The Annamites fall in groups, mown down for at least five minutes by the rapid shots of salvo ... we had seen them appear, massing half-scorched when leaving their villages, still hesitating, rolling up very high the better to run like children, covering their head, in anticipation of bullets, with pieces of planks, mats, wicker shields-childish precautions... like wounded animals (MRS, p.27-28).

Racism as related to skin colour draws the difference between black, red and yellow people of the colonies from the white colour of the imperial nations. White colour grants them superiority and authority that legitimate the demeaning of the indigenous subjects. In the play, the Vietnamese / the yellows and the blacks are dehumanized by the French and the Americans lying down the principle that the native and the African should be relegated to inferiority.

Probably, the most disastrous binary systems of the colonized / colonizer as circulated by imperialism is the invention of the concept of race (Ashcroft, G., 2000, p. 20). The issue of race is another crucial theme in the play. In order to subjugate the people of the colony, the colonizer uses many stratagems, and the most devastating of all is the psychological one that consists of debasing the culture of the native and creating in his consciousness a complex of inferiority, which is shattering and fatal to the pre-contact and post-contact community's culture.

In chapter six of the play, Kateb uses Vietnam as a ground to the racial battle. He exposes the problem of the African Americans through the character named Alabama who is also nicknamed "the Black Panther". This expression refers to one of blacks' political and radical resistance against whites' racism in America. Alabama embodies the depravity and discrimination of his fellow blacks. Yet, Kateb displaced the docile and servile slave by a rebellious black character conscious of the historical situation. Kateb's Alabama knows his rights and dares to ask them from the president himself as the following passage shows:

Alabama

The black panther does not leave you

Can't you feel its claws?

She comes and goes in you

In your blood

In your breath

And you can't help it

.....

We need this church

To turn against you

Your own crusade

My mother was born into slavery

Like this black panther
Whose skin I wear
My father was born in a reserve
With these American people
That you murdered (MRS, p. 190-91).

After this direct discourse with president Jaunesonne, the latter negotiates with the blacks and promises to give them their rights if they participate in the war against Vietnam. This is what happens to Alabama who enrolls as a soldier to go to Vietnam. However, though he takes part in the war, he clearly shows his position standing with the oppressed Vietnamese against the will of his president whose orders he refuses to execute orders, and who reacts by saying that,

President :
There are no more slaves,
Nor respect
If I watch black people,
It's the yellows that rise,
And if I attack the yellows
Blacks turn red (MRS, p. 206).

Kateb's play acts as a crucible in which the boundaries between the oppressed races are transcended. He draws different voices together to yell their denial of the white man's oppression. Yellow, black and red people are joining to express their rebuttal of the imperial authority. Moreover, the racist discourse of the play targets African countries that are represented by the two characters Mohamed and Face de Ramadhan. These two are first portrayed in Algeria as desperately waiting and complaining about their ruthless situation. They both decide to join the War in Vietnam for a better life. Once in Vietnam, Face de Ramadhan (the illiterate North African) takes profit from his French military position to apply his abuse of power and corruption. However, Mohamed the intellectual shows sympathy to Vietnamese people and joins their army against the French and the Americans.

Mohamed.

Me, the Viets,
I can't shoot them,
I can't help myself.
And when I see their
Attack against the colonizer
I am proud, as if they were
People from my village. (HSC, p. 121)

Like the blacks and Vietnamese, women are considered as beasts of burden by the colonizers. While racism differentiates people of colour from whites, patriarchy discriminates women from men, privileging men. Women in many societies have been relegated to the position of 'Other', marginalized and, in a metaphorical sense, 'colonized'. So, and as Spivak argues, they are forced to pursue guerrilla warfare against imperial domination from positions deeply fixed in, yet fundamentally alienated from that imperium (Spivak. 1987, in Ashcroft, 1991, p. 172). In the same way, in Vietnam women lived in a

patriarchal society in which they are considered as men's property constrained to live under the shadow of their husbands. This situation deteriorated under the colonial offensive.

In Kateb's writings, and to trust Roselyne Baffet, female characters are divided into two kinds; the docile Algerians and the free foreigners. So, while Nedjma and Attika in *Le Cercle des repêailles* promote the image of the tender mother that often emerges as a part of the male character himself, the foreigner is portrayed as a "fallen women" like "la jolie marseillaise" et "Dame blanche" in *Mohammed, prend ta valise* (1972) These stereotypes often enmesh Kateb in a misogynistic process of sexism (Baffet, R., 1985, p. 160). However, in the play understudy Kateb voices women of all classes and shows their imperative role in society mainly during war times. He starts his play by celebrating the great historical attack of the sister Trung against the Chinese emperor, and in this scene he emphasizes their love of land and liberty. These two sisters commit suicide rather than accepting to live as slaves or as concubine under Chinese power.

In this play, the female characters are not sepulchers of rectitude nor prostitutes but ordinary women peasants for the majority of them who strive to assert themselves and impose their presence at the individual and the national level. The last scene of the play is significant for women's resistance and triumph because after the execution of the Vietcong, Kieu, a woman / peasant and a fighter continue resistance and win the war against the Americans. her last discourse expresses her triumph and victory over all kinds of subjugation as the following extract testifies:

Kieu:
We open all the doors of the prison
Journalist:
Standing on the tower
From an American tank,
A young girl (Kieu)
Raise her weapon to the sky
As a sign of triumph.
For her and her friends,
There is no longer any doubt;
They are already victorious (MRS, p. 266).

4-Conclusion

It follows from the analysis above that Kateb has used a modernist framework to discuss postcolonial issues by taking the war in Vietnam as a pre-text to raise issues of colonialism, racism and gender in his play. These issues overlap and are directly related to postcolonialism since they constitute the different malaises lived by the ex-colonized and the newly independent subject. The conclusion that we can draw from our analysis is that the playwright's performance uses Western form that are, as we have argued, the techniques of

the experimental theatre to discuss a content that pertains to postcolonial reality following Gilbert's markers of postcolonial drama. Kateb like the majority of postcolonial scholars discusses this historical heritage because the power of the colonizer is manifested in its ability to project its influence beyond its own geo-national borders and historical periods.

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*It is to be noted that I have translated all the quotations used in this article from French into English (personal work).

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