

# AFRIQUE ET DEVELOPPEMENT

# AFRICA DEVELOPMENT

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# **AFRICA DEVELOPMENT AFRIQUE & DEVELOPPEMENT**

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**Vol. XIII, No .3, 1988**

*Editor*

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**Africa Development** is the quarterly bi-lingual Journal of the Council for the Development of Economic and Social Research in Africa (CODESRIA).

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# Change and the Intelligentsia in African Literature: a Study in Marginality

Felix Mnthali \*

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**RESUME** La littérature africaine met en relief le rôle plutôt incertain que joue l'intelligentsia dans la société africaine moderne. Il est bien vrai que celui qui est instruit peut opérer des miracles; hélas il reste en marge des choses. On lui fait des éloges, il reçoit des accolades, et tout cela au mauvais moment, pour des raisons erronées. Il a perdu pied par rapport aux sources d'antan et pourtant, il ne saisit pas non plus, ni "n'africanise" l'essence du monde contemporain. Il ne joue aucun rôle majeur dans quelque plan de changement que ce soit. Les intellectuels africains constituent une étude de cas marginaux dont la vie est marquée du sceau de la rupture de l'aliénation.

Hantée par la disparition d'une belle culture, l'intelligentsia africaine se retrouve tiraillée entre la course folle pour rattraper le reste du monde et le besoin de préserver les valeurs d'un monde tombant dans l'oubli. La littérature africaine tente de faire passer une vision d'une certaine totalité, un paradigme de la totalité de l'existence d'un peuple. Vue donc sous cet angle, l'intelligentsia africaine vit désespérément seule, sans convictions, isolée du commun des mortels; elle a tendance à démissionner de sa responsabilité publique elle souffre de la dépendance et ne parvient pas à trouver les mots appropriés pour faire passer l'expérience du peuple africain.

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Bile burns my inside!  
I feel like vomiting!  
For all our young men  
Were finished in the forest  
Their manhood was finished  
In the class-rooms,  
Their testicles  
Were smashed  
With large books!

(Okot p'Bitek, SONG OF LAWINO)

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\* University of Botswana - Gaborone, Botswana

Long Before Mongo Beti decided to devote his considerable fictional talent to the exploration of unhappiness<sup>1</sup> and memories of his country's political traumas<sup>2</sup> he wrote a satire called *Mission to Kala* or, to give it its French title, *Mission Terminée*<sup>3</sup>, which really means that an assignment has been successfully done. In that story a boy by the name of Jean-Marie Medza who has failed his baccalaureat or sixth - form examination returns to his village only to be sent on a momentous mission which involves retrieving a wayward wife who has ran away from her husband. Like all great prophets and leaders of genius before him, Jean-Marie Medza tries to wriggle out of his mission. He is only a child! His fellow villagers, however, think otherwise. To them, Jean-Marie Medza is "he who is to come", the one man who can save the honor of their village, the integrity of a family, the continuation of the human race! To drive this point home, the village sage, old Bikokolo uses a parable:

*There was a man who all unbeknown to himself, spoke with the voice of thunder. Imagine his astonishment when one day he was sent on a very similar mission to that which faced me now. In particular he asked himself what supernatural power he commanded to make him succeed where others had failed<sup>4</sup>.*

Jean-Marie Medza, Mongo Beti's archetype of Africa's intelligentsia is given the sense of boundless power in the harangue he receives from the sage Bikokolo:

'My son', he concluded, 'when this story is recited after my death, you will be its hero. You are that formidable man; you speak with the voice of thunder, and have never suspected your own powers. Shall I tell you what your special thunder is? Your certificates, your learning, your knowledge of white men's secrets...'<sup>5</sup>

That a boy who has failed his sixth - form examination can still be seen as possessing the voice of thunder underpins Mongo Beti's irony. It also highlights the ambivalent place of the intelligentsia in modern African society. The man who has 'read' books can work

1 *Perpetua and the Habit of Unhappiness*, Heinmann, AWS, 1978.

2 *Remember Reuben*, Heinmann, African Writers' Serie, 1980.

3 *Mission to Kala*, Heinmann, AWS, 1964, first pub, 1957 by Editions Courrier.

4 *Mission to Kala*, Heinmann, AWS, 1964, p. 15.

5 *Mission to Kala*, p. 15.

miracles but he still remains on the fringes of things. He receives accolades and encomiums for the wrong reasons at the wrong time. He has lost touch with the well-springs of yesterday without grasping and "Africanising" the gist of today's world. He occupies no central position in any blue-print for change. He is a case study in marginality.

Jean-Marie Medza is gradually debunked until at the end of his mission he has been found wanting not only in his knowledge of things African but also in the very white man's science which had been earlier regarded as his voice of thunder. On the way to Kala, Medza sees himself as a conqueror going to discover a new world, almost in the manner of those Spaniards, the so-called "conquistadores" who destroyed the Inca and Aztec civilisations of South America. A simple elongation of his name by the suffix "ro" would make him a "conquistador". He would then become "Medzaro" as in Pizzaro!<sup>6</sup> but Kala overwhelms him not only by its physical vibrancy but also by its intellectual probity. He finds he has to resort to lies and to a great deal of drinking to be able to answer the many and varied questions of the people of Kala. There is little superiority left in him now except perhaps in the minds of some of the more gullible of his admirers. The man who was supposed to speak with the voice of thunder is found to lack even the strength of a mouse!

At one point Medza is holding a discussion with his uncle in Kala. They are talking of blood - relationships. Medza, the man who knows science and represents Africa's intelligentsia maintains that blood is the liquid which runs in our veins. More in sadness than in anger his uncle patiently teaches him that blood stands for kinship.

Mongo Beti is taking a hard look at the formation of our intelligentsia - and does not seem to like what he finds. If a boy who has failed his sixth - form is of no use to his village and to himself, of what use is his kind of education? Mongo Beti asks, "To what god were we being sacrificed, I wonder<sup>7</sup>?"

In the ironic meaning of this satire's title, Jean-Marie Medza's mission is a failure. The wayward wife who was to be returned to her husband does not return or, rather, she returns at her own time and with a lover in tow! There is however, one sense in which Medza's mission is a success. Our archetype of Africa's intelligentsia has pitted his "school" wisdom against the commonsense of the people of Kala and found out how deficient in many things such wisdom is.

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6 *Mission to Kala*, p. 19-20.

7 *Mission to Kala*, p. 25.



Mongo Beti's satire, *Mission to Kala*, embodies many characteristics of the treatment of the intelligentsia in African literature. The person who by reason of his "reading" or formal education appears to stand above and apart from his fellow men is subtly compared and contrasted with those of his fellow men (or women!) who may on the surface appear less gifted, less noble and even venal but who on closer look are in many ways stronger, more intelligent, wiser and perhaps more humane than we were originally led to think. Medza is compared and contrasted with his cousin Zamba and those other colorful young men of Kala such as 'Abraham the Boneless Wonder', 'Petrous Son of God' and 'Duckfoot Johnny' (alias St John of Kala). His mission to retrieve the local 'Helen of Troy' and those Faustian powers attributed to him by Bikokolo are compared and contrasted with his re-education and maturity. Medza is no longer the passive object of his father's educational experiments. He now holds his own views. He even grows up emotionally and contracts a marriage. The point about all this maturation in Kala is that the successful completion of Medza's mission is not the recovery of someone's wayward wife but the discarding by Medza of all the illusions he had held concerning his upbringing and his Paris - based education. Medza's life remains ephemeral and meaningless until it is lived within the total experience of his people. We cannot place a member of the intelligentsia on any phase of the transition from one era to another until we know what meaning his life has in the hopes and aspirations of his people.

A great deal has been written about that early African poetry now generally given the label of "negritude". Many critics and commentators have had some harsh things to say about this poetry, accusing it of idealizing the Africa of yesterday at the expense of historical accuracy. Some have even gone to the extent of comparing negritude to apartheid. The harshest form of criticism has come from writers in English-speaking Africa, notably Wole Soyinka, Esk'ia Mphahlele and Taban lo Liyong. At this point in time it would be idle to pick up the cudgels either for or against this poetry. What we need to realise now is that negritude poetry was a gigantic and systematic attempt by the intelligentsia of French - dominated Africa and of African origin to undo the marginalisation which they had suffered and which they perceived the African continent to have suffered at the hands of colonial policies, especially the policies of assimilation.

Let us consider, for example, the famous long poem *Return to my Native Land* by Aimé Césaire<sup>8</sup>. Césaire's cry for a return to his fatherland is, in fact, a cry for those spiritual and psychological moor-

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8 *Return to my Native Land*, Penguin, 1956.

ings without which any change, any transition from one era to another, remains meaningless and without direction. Even among writers from English-speaking Africa this centrality of roots and cultural resources has been explored. The poetry of Okot p'Bitek derives its power from the poet's relentless search for "the roots that clutch", to use a phrase from T.S. Eliot<sup>9</sup>. Okot's persona in *Song of Lawino* decries the discontinuity and alienation which characterise the lives of the African intelligentsia. Lawino puts the lives of today's Africans on a scale of wholeness and meaning and finds them wanting. Her razor - sharp mind enables her to see the absurdity beneath all the frantic and feverish pursuit of change. For her the man who has "uprooted the pumpkin" from his homestead occupies only a marginal position in society.

The great writer that was Okot p'Bitek wrestled with this problem from all possible angles including that of playing the devil's advocate by attempting to demolish the position he had taken in *Song of Lawino*. The attempt in *Song of Ocol* comes out as a half-hearted and unconvincing defiance of our nagging gods:

*To hell  
With your pumpkins  
And your Old Homesteads,  
To hell  
With the husks  
Of old traditions  
And meaningless customs,*

*We will smash  
The taboos  
One by one,  
Explode the basis  
Of every superstition,  
We will uproot  
Every sacred tree  
And demolish every ancestral shrine.*

*We will not just  
Breach the wall  
Of your mud hut  
To let in the air,  
Do you think*

---

9 "The Waste Land" in T.S. Eliot, *Collected Poems*, Faber and Faber, 1954, p. 51.

*We plan merely  
To bring light  
Into the hut?*

*We will set it ablaze  
Let fire consume it all  
This lair of backwardness;*

*We will uproot granaries  
Break up the cooking pots  
And water pots,  
We'll grind  
The grinding stones  
To powder;*

*That obsolete toy  
With which you scratch the soil  
And the other rusty toys  
In the hut,  
The dried fish  
Riddled with cockroaches,  
The piece of carcass  
Hung above the cooking place  
Black with soot...  
We'll make a big heap  
Of all the rubbish  
From the hut  
And set the heap  
Aflame...<sup>10</sup>*

Okot p'Bitek's reliance on hyperbole in *Song of Ocol* shows that his case against "the pumpkins in the homestead" is yet to be made. It is because the old gods refuse to die that the poet adopts this tone of exasperation and sarcasm. We have here none of the graceful wit, devastating logic and sense of humor which we find in *Song of Lawino*. Okot p'Bitek's mask or persona in the latter "song" does not rely on exaggeration to make her point. Her disarming simplicity and clarity of thought succeed in making the reader see the centrality of culture in all our blue-prints for change. She manages to show how our frantic and feverish preoccupation with the "here and now" can only remain marginal until we are able to separate those things which matter from those which do not matter:

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10 Okot p'Bitek, *Song of Ocol*, East African Publishing House, 1967, pp 209-210.

*And while the pythons of sickness  
Swallow the children  
And the buffalos of poverty  
Knock the people down  
And ignorance stands there  
Like an elephant,*

*The war leaders  
Are tightly locked in bloody feuds,  
Eating each other's liver...<sup>11</sup>*

Although the speaker in *Song of Lawino* recognises the passing away of much of what her world represents, the fact still remains that that world was based on the solid foundation of a culture fully understood and appreciated. Not so with the universe traversed by *Song of Ocol*. This outrageous concoction of hyperbole and outlandish dialectics cries out to the reader not to be taken seriously:

*We will arrest  
All the village poets  
Musicians and tribal dancers,  
Put in detention  
Folk-story tellers  
And myth makers,  
The sustainers of village morality;  
We'll disband  
The nest of court historians  
Glorifiers of the past,  
We will ban  
The stupid village anthem of  
"Backwards ever  
Forwards never".*

*To the gallows  
With all the Professors  
Of Anthropology  
And teachers of African History,  
A bonfire  
We'll make of their works,  
We'll destroy all the anthologies  
Of African literature*

---

11 *Song of Lawino*, East African Publishing House, 1966, p. 182

*And close down  
All the schools  
Of African Studies.*

*Where is Aimé Césaire?  
Where Léopold Senghor?  
Arrest Janheinz Jahn  
And Father Placide Temples,  
Put in detention  
All the preachers  
Of Negritude;*

*The balloon of  
The African Personality  
Exploded long ago,  
Dubois is dead  
We will erect  
No memorial for him;  
Why should I care  
Who built the citadel  
Of Zimbabwe?  
Of what relevance is it  
Whether black men  
Architected the Pyramid?*

*Smash all these mirrors  
That I may not see  
The blackness of the past  
From which I came  
Reflected in them...<sup>12</sup>.*

An ominous air of uncertainly pervades the speaker's tone in this poem. It is as if he needs to reassure himself of "the pastness of the past" to quote T.S. Eliot again<sup>13</sup>. The stance is deliberate but the agonizing search is real. Okot p'Bitek appears here to be faced with the kind of dilemma which confronted the Anglo-Irish poet William Butler Yeats. The times in which Yeats lived witness the high point of Irish nationalism, the horrors of World War I, the crass

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12 *Song of Ocol*, pp 214-215.

13 "Tradition and the Individual Talent" in *The Sacred Word*, Methen 1960, p. 44-60.

materialism of most of the Irish bourgeoisie on the dawn of Irish independence and, above all, the whole uncertainty of a new age. Yeats was moved to write:

*And what rough beast its hour come round at last  
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born*<sup>14</sup>.

The Africa of Okot p'Bitek is in many ways similar to the Ireland of William Butler Yeats. What makes Okot p'Bitek's poetry even more prophetic than that of Yeats is that the marginality Okot p'Bitek ascribed to the African intelligentsia represented by Ocol became apparent even in Okot's own lifetime. The beauty of the culture whose passing away he laments in *Song of Lawino* remains to haunt Africa's intelligentsia caught between the frantic rush to catch up with the rest of the world and the need to preserve the values of a world that is being forsaken. This dilemma has well been captured by the Gambian poet Lenrie Peters in his poem, "Homecoming":

*Our sapless roots have fed  
The windswept seedlings of another age*<sup>15</sup>.

It is partly to get out of such a dilemma that the speaker or persona in *Song of Ocol* advocates a "tabula rasa", a clean slate, as our precondition for entering into a new area. The "integumenta" of history is to be jettisoned and we are to begin a future without memories of heroes or kings for these can only be taken for what the speaker says they were rogues, tyrants, charlatans and "paper-tigers":

*You young soldier  
Guarding the border post,  
Do you know  
When that sacred boundary*

*Was drawn?  
Which of your ancestors  
Established the area  
Of your beloved  
Country,  
No street*

---

14 "The Second Coming in *Poems of W.B. Yeats: A New Selection*, edited by Norman Jeffares, McMillan, 1984 pp. 246-247.

15 "Home-coming" in Moore and Beir, *Modern Poetry from Africa*, Penguin, 1963, p. 79.

*Will be named*

*After Mansa Sulayman  
Of ancient Mali,  
He is as irrelevant  
As the Greek goddess Artemmis.*

*A misertly king  
He passed nothing on  
To us;*

*Mohammed Askia  
Great monarch of Songhai,  
What a hollow sounding name?  
The Nilotic chiefs  
Labongo and Gipir  
Were famous for their quarrels  
Over famous for their quarrels  
Over a spear  
And for splitting open  
A baby's belly to retrieve a bead!*

*Let the kings of Ghana  
Rot in the earth,  
We'll forget  
The rulers of Monomatapa...*

*As for Shaka  
The Zulu General  
How can we praise him  
When he was utterly defeated  
And killed by his own brothers?*

*What proud poem  
Can we write  
For the vanquished<sup>16</sup>*

The irony in the position taken by Okot p'Bitek's persona in *Song of Ocol* is that in advocating a *tabula rasa* or clean slate as our starting-point he is enhancing the very weakness he seems to be attacking. Without a past, of whatever kind, we are unlikely to have a future. The models we are often asked to emulate; namely, Japan,

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16 *Song of Ocol*, pp. 254-255..

China, India, Russia etc have in some ways drawn upon the resources of their past to build their present and their future. They have escaped marginalisation by drawing upon the resources of the very forces against which they were reacting. The feudal loyalties of the Japanese appear to have metamorphosed into loyalty to industrial companies. We can see and speak of a "Japanese" character which has turned it into the industrial giant that she is. Our intelligentsia has not come up with anything new precisely because it has not succeeded in infusing the values so eloquently evoked in *Song of Lawino* into any of our blue-prints for change. It would be a most rewarding exercise to study or, at least, compare and contrast the "message" of our poetry with many of the theories along which we have attempted to mould society such as "ujamaa", "African socialism", "humanism", "authenticity", "The Common Man's charter" etc. We may well find that these blue-prints do no more than set out more logically and perhaps more coherently those ideas which creative writers dramatise in their own inimitable way. We may also find that the lucid and coherent theories on which all our manifestos are based do not, in practice, really work and that a better understanding of our literature would be a more useful guide into the future. A work such as *Song of Lawino* throws light on one moment of transition from a culture-bound tradition into one dominated by the "cash-nexus". It throws such light without separating what men admire in life from how they live. It is in the vision of a certain wholeness, a paradigm of the totality of a people's existence that the value of masterpieces like *Song of Lawino* is to be found. In looking for such a value we are struck by the marginal position which those who should be leading society by reason of their learning and thinking occupy:

*Bile burns my inside  
I feel like vomiting!*

*For all our young men  
Were finished in the forest  
Their manhood was finished  
In the class-rooms,  
Their testicles  
Were smashed  
With large books<sup>17</sup>.*

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17 *Song of Lawino*, p. 191.



In a recent article on the role of intellectuals in policies as seen by African writers, Dr Juliet Okonkwo has observed:

*Until recently, the educated African was a retiring and cautious individual who, partly because of the intellectual and social gulf which existed between him and his countrymen, preferred to live in isolated retirement rather than become embroiled in disputatious misunderstanding with the uneducated who form the majority of his people. He was often an object of distrust and of persecution. Antagonistic forces constrained many intellectuals to hold ideas which could lead to the upliftment of their people*<sup>18</sup>.

Those achievements and attributes which should make him useful are the ones which tend to separate the African intellectual from the rest of his society. African literature highlights a number of traits common to members of the intelligentsia.

**a) Loneliness:**

In African literature members of the intelligentsia tend to stand alone not only in the hour of their triumph and in the moment of their wisdom but also, and especially, in the hour of their folly. Obi Okonkwo, the central character of Chinua Achebe's second novel, *No Longer at Ease*<sup>19</sup> comes across as a lonely young man. In some ways his loneliness resembles that of the Okonkwo of *Things Fall Apart*<sup>20</sup>, his grandfather who commits suicide because the men of Umuofia are no longer prepared to fight for those values which in his youth had made them great. The only difference between Obi Okonkwo and his grandfather, (and it is a major difference), is that whereas the original Okonkwo is lonely because he holds certain values, our latter - day Okonkwo is lonely because he despises and at the same time acquiesces in the new dispensation around him. As Nadine Gordimer has observed, we see Obi Okonkwo "extending himself docilely on the rack of bourgeois values his society had taken

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18 J.L. Okonkwo, "The Intellectual as Political Activist in Recent African Fiction", UFAHAMU, XIII, 2-3 (1984) pp. 216-237.

19 Heinemann, AWS, 1960.

20 Heinemann, AWS, 1958.

over from the white man; values totally unreal in the economic and social conditions of that society"<sup>21</sup>.

We admire Obi Okonkwo when he deflates the pomposity of the Umuofia Progressive Union by appearing in his shirt - sleeves when everybody else is sweating it out in three - piece suits or formal *ag-badas* at a party in honor of Obi Okonkwo. Achebe wryly refers to this simplicity on the part of Obi Okonkwo as "Mistake Number one"<sup>22</sup>. We also admire Obi Okonkwo's guts and confidence when he replies to the florid and convoluted address of welcome from the same Umuofia Progressive Union in plain English:

*"Education for service and not for white-collar jobs and comfortable salaries. With our great country on the threshold of independence, we need men who are prepared to serve her well and truly"*<sup>23</sup>.

With devastating irony Achebe refers to this reply as "Mistake Number Two"<sup>24</sup>. The deeper irony is that the Obi Okonkwo who returns from England with such confidence and courage soon embraces practices that are contrary to these views. He does not stand up for the Nigeria of his original beliefs. He accepts bribes, cancels his engagement to Clara on the grounds that she is descended from an Osu or outcast and frantically combs the city in search of an abortionist to undo the result of his love for Clara. His loneliness could not have been greater had he decided, like his grandfather, to commit suicide. He who had seemed superior to members of the Umofia Progressive Union sinks lower than they had anticipated although they still rally around him and decide to engage yet another lawyer to launch an appeal against his conviction<sup>25</sup>. Great things had been expected of Obi Okonkwo but he achieves nothing. He leaves no mark on the history of the threshold of his country's independence, no positive contribution to change. Obi Okonkwo's interview for the post at the scholarship office is presented by Achebe as an omen of things to come. The interviewers probe Obi Okonkwo's knowledge of English literature, in particular, his knowledge of

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21 Nadine Gordimer, *The Black Interpreters Spro - Cas/Ravan*, 1973 p. 23.

22 *No Longer at Ease*, Heinemann, 1960, p. 39.

23 *No Longer at Ease*, pp. 32-33.

24 *No Longer at Ease*, p. 5.

25 *No longer at Ease*, p. 5.

Graham Green's novel, *The Heart of the Matter*, whose existentialist thrust complete with tangled passions and a suicide exalts failure and downgrades the kind of confidence and courage Obi Okonkwo needs to leave a mark on his country's history.

**b)Lack of convictions**

Tied to Obi Okonkwo's loneliness and moral failure is a certain lack of conviction. We can with certainty point to the values which the Okonkwo of *Things Fall Apart* holds. There are no such values and convictions in the story of Obi Okonkwo. Even his love for Clara is expendable in the interest of what? We may here recall the words of William Butler Yeats'.

*"The best lack all convictions while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity"<sup>26</sup>.*

This lack of convictions has sometimes been referred to as an "ideological vacuum", a term which in some ways leaves much to be desired. Members of the intelligentsia in Africa have been known to profess certain ideologies while doing the very opposite of what such ideologies demand. It has become doubtful whether those who profess identifiable ideologies are even convinced of the correctness of what they are professing. Cynicism and opportunism, like the poor, will always be with us. Need they be?

In Nuruddin Farah's novel, *Sweet and Sour Milk*, the unnamed General who rules Somalia with an iron fist boasts that he has nothing to fear from his country's intellectuals whom he sees as being more interested in fast cars, in women and in holidays abroad than in national problems<sup>27</sup>. He therefore pays more attention to the feelings and rumblings of tribal elders. He fears religious leaders more than he fears intellectuals. When news reaches him that imams are about to protest against his rule, he has ten of them executed in one day<sup>28</sup>. The General is "Opportunist Number One" who affects a commitment to socialism and publicly professes friendship with The Soviet Union but laughs at the Russians behind their backs. Only a writer of Farah's foresight and understanding could have so accurately dramatised Somalia's switch in alliances from West to East and now

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26 "The Second Coming" in *Poems of W.B. Yeats: A New Selection* edited by Norman Jeffares, 1984, p. 246.

27 Nuruddin Farah, *Sweet and Sour Milk*, Heinemann, 1979, p. 53.

28 *Sweet and Sour Milk*, p. 53.

back to the West. It becomes clear that ideology plays an insignificant part in this change of alliances and that intellectuals play an even less significant role here. Those who secretly form a kind of opposition alliance are easily routed. They are subjected to torture, bribery, exile and even cooption into the General's cabinet. Some of them, like the *saue* physician Ahmed Wellie who seems to be on everybody's side, are turned into the eyes and ears of the state.

The unnamed General also so thoroughly understands the weakness of the intelligentsia that he will even try to use those he has killed to confuse those who survive. In *Sweet and Sour Milk* the regime kills the leader of the secret band of intellectuals opposed to the General's dictatorship and then fabricates "his last words". He who had felt only revulsion at the slogans of the regime is now made to utter with his last words:

*"Labour is honour and there is no general but our General!"*<sup>29</sup>.

The cooption of the dead young intellectual is complete. He is made "a hero of the Revolution" and a street is named after him. Not only is he made to deify the General posthumously but he is also deftly removed from the minds of his admirers. His father, a former security functionary who had lost his job because of torturing a detainee to death is now reinstated and given a pension on top of his late son's gratuity. The rift between him and his remaining son is irrevocable. This remaining son is a bewildered man who is now isolated and forced into the splendid exile of a diplomatic posting. The thoroughness with which members of the intelligentsia can be decimated and sometimes eliminated is frightening.

It is possible that such a decimation is made easy by the intelligentsia's lack of convictions. It is not easy to elicit sympathy and followers when the public cannot distinguish your ideological position from that of your tormentors. In Chinua Achebe's fourth novel, *A man of the People*, the teacher Odili Samaru does not, in the final analysis, differ from the corrupt and cynical Chief Nanga. Chief Nanga flaunts his cynicism and his ill-gotten wealth and influence. Odili Samaru silently envies this wealth and is ready to throw in his lot with Chief Nanga:

*"When I lay down in the double - bed that seemed to ride on a cushion of air, and switched on that reading lamp and saw all the beautiful furniture a new from the lying down position and looked beyond the door to the glean-*

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29 *Sweet and Sour Milk*, p. 99.

*ing bathroom and the towels as large as Lappa I had to confess that if I were made a minister at that moment I would be most anxious to remain one forever*<sup>30</sup>.

We may read this as the exaggeration of a man laughing at himself in a moment of enlightenment. We also need to remember that Odili Samaru has at that point already entrusted himself to the Byzantine ways of corruption by accepting Chief Nanga's intercession in the matter of his scholarship abroad. It is also remarkable that Odili Samaru does not break with Chief Nanga until the latter seduces Elsie, Odili Samaru's girl-friend in his hearing!

Odili Samaru's brief flirtation with political organisation is also characterised by a clear lack of conviction and a naive approach to national issues. He is more interested in avenging a personal injury than in tackling national problems. We are not surprised when he devoted the best part of his time to courting Edna, Chief Nanga's fiancée and not to politics. It also comes as no surprise when after the military coup he uses party funds to pay for the bride - price and educational expenses of the girl he snatches from Chief Nanga. In setting personal scores in this manner Odili Samaru is playing the same game of corruption that the Nangas and Koko's of this country are playing. His convictions, such as they are, do not go beyond private and personal loyalties. His admiration for his friend Max stems less from this friend's political position than from the fact that Max had "impaired someone to come forward and shoot (his) murderer in the chest without asking to be paid"<sup>31</sup>. The heroism being singled out for praise here has nothing to do with politics as such. Max is avenged by his girlfriend.

### c) Political and social naivety

In modern African literature the classic example of the naive intellectual is the teacher Lakunle in *The Lion and the Jewel*. His naivety shows even in his appearance. We see him in "an old - style English suit, thread - bare but not ragged, clean but not ironed, obviously a

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30 *A Man of the People*, Heinmann, 1966 pp. 36-37.

31 *A Man of the People*, p. 149.

size or two too small. His tie is done in a very small knot, disappearing beneath a shiny black waistcoat. He wears twenty-three - inch bottom trousers, and blanco - white tennis shoes<sup>32</sup>. His attack against bride - price is a volley of synonyms whose impression is not strong enough to support his beliefs. When he runs short of adjectives he excuses himself by saying he owns "only the shorter companion Dictionary"<sup>33</sup> and that he has "ordered The Longer One"<sup>34</sup>.

Lakunle has no beliefs - only a hapazard collection of simple - minded impressions of what constitutes "civilisation". It comes as no surprise to the audience when Lakunle loses the girl Sidi to the village Chief, the Baroka of LLijunle. Lakunle makes a poor showing in strength and wisdom while the wily old fox comes across as the supreme example of wit, strength and wisdom. Our village intellectual Lakunle fails even in his understanding of the knowledge of that new world with which he is supposed to be familiar. For him the new dispensation overrunning the land is essentially a collection of superficial and demonstrative ways of white people. He will kiss his wife "as white people do" and as white people do he will walk arm in arms with his wife in the streets of Lagos. It is this naivety which Wole Soyinka is attacking in *The Lion and the Jewel*. Soyinka seems to be saying that if our intelligentsia perceive change in this simple - minded manner we need not be surprised if traditional leaders win out against change.

The message here differs from that of *Kongi's Harvest* where the attack is against dictatorship in Africa but Soyinka's intellectual does not rise in any considerable manner above the simple - mindedness of the teacher *Lakunle in the Lion and the Jewel*. A similar naivety surrounds the five members of the intelligentsia around whom the novel, *The interpreters*, revolves. These young men are supposed to interpret to the reader their impressions of the new Nigeria in which they find themselves. They are also supposed to interpret to Nigeria the new enlightenment which they bring from their universities. These interpreters are rightly disgusted by the artificiality of their society as symbolised by the mannerisms and the decorations in professional houses and at professional parties. In their righteous indignation these young professional people smash plastic fruits at receptions in professors' houses. They formulate, in the privacy of their offices weird philosophies, such as Sagoe's philosophy of shit," which are meant to dramatise their revulsion at the corruption in

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32 *The Lion and the Jewel*, Oxford University Press, 1965, p. 6.

33 *The Lion and the Jewel*, p. 8.

34 *The Lion and the Jewel*, p. 8.

Nigeria and to titillate our sense of the bizarre and the ridiculous but, in the final analysis, they leave no impact on their society. The best of them, Sekoni, is mercilessly crushed by the coordinated "alliance in corruption" between local contractors and "expatriate experts". His beautiful idea of a cheap power station is pronounced "unsafe" and is dismantled. He himself drives into a parked lorry and dies on the spot. There is a certain simple-mindedness in the belief that armed with their admirable ideas and their education, a group of five or six intellectuals can make a dent on the polluted atmosphere of Nigerian society. Our interpreters end up with the usual concern of members of their class - personal and private relationships and art as the exclusive preserve of the groves of academe and exclusive soirees. To say all this is not to attack Soyinka's achievements which are formidable but only to point out what kind of world, what kind of vision some of his characters evoke. The observation we have just made in relation to the central characters of *The interpreters* was made by Ngugi wa Thiong'o in 1969 in relation to the characters of Soyinka's plays. Ngugi wrote:

*The ordinary people workers and peasants, in his plays remain passive watchers on the shore or pitiful comedians on the road... It is not enough for the African artist standing aloof, to view society and highlight its weaknesses. He must try to go beyond this, to seek out the causes and the trends*<sup>35</sup>.

Ngugi himself has indeed reached a stage in his writing where he does go beyond highlighting society's weaknesses to seeking out causes and trends. This was not always the case. The Central characters of *The River Between* and *Weep Not Child* have their own simple-minded panacea to the problems of Kenya. It is education. Waiyaki combs the ridges of Kamenno and Makuyu trying to promote education. People rally to his call but these people also want something more. They want the recovery of their lands and it is only when the people have discarded him as a leader and he is about to be tried for breaking his oath with the secret society he had joined in order to reconcile the old and the new that he realises that education must be for unity and the unity must be for political action:

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35 Ngugi wa Thiong'o "Satire in Nigeria" in Cosmo Pieterse and Donald Munro, *Protest and Conflict in African Literature*, 1969.

*"Maybe one day he would join forces with the men from Muranga, Kiambu, and Nyeri and with one voice tell the white man" Go! And all at once Waiyaki realised what the ridges wanted. All at once he felt more forcefully than he had ever felt before the shame of a people's land being taken away, the shame of being forced to work on those same lands, the humiliation of paying taxes for a government that you knew nothing about*<sup>36</sup>.

In *Weep Not Child* we see a similar kind of simple - mindedness on the part of Njoroge the boy who pins his hopes on education. These hopes are rudely shaken by the ferocity of British soldiers and British settlers against the Mau Mau. This ferocity makes education, for the time being anyway, irrelevant. Njoroge is called back by his mothers from an attempted suicide. Side by side with Njoroge's naivety and his desire to flee from his surroundings is the resolve of his girlfriend Murihaki who rather than flee her present problems is determined to stay and help her people.

#### **d) Isolation from the Common People**

Loneliness, lack of convictions, and naivety go hand in hand with isolation from the well - springs of a healthy outlook on society, in African literature members of the intelligentsia tend to be prisoners of the mores and prejudices of their class, usually the lower and upper middle class of society. Their association with the common man lacks the solidarity of people with a common cause. It has not always dawned on the intelligentsia that there can never be really an 'African' intellectual life apart from the general experiences of the African people at any given moment in time. The much - maligned negritude poetry we referred to earlier recognised this fact. Aimé Césaire's defiant and "tongue - in - cheek" exaltation of those who never invented electricity or gunpowder is an assertion of the poet's psychological unity with all his people irrespective of class.

Matters are not that simple when we look at some of our writers in English - speaking Africa. The well-known and much - admired poet, Christopher Okigbo, spent the best part of his writing career pursuing an extremely private and personal vision. We see him undergoing purificatory acts and concentrating his gaze on a somewhat ephemeral image of fulfillment and salvation. In all this, he is alone. His audience does not matter and people "out there" do not matter:

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36 *The River Between*, Heinemann, 1963, p. 142.



*"I was the sole witness  
to my home coming"*<sup>37</sup>.

This is an extreme case of the intellectual who is isolated from the well-springs of a healthy outlook on society. We feel relieved when the realities of Nigerian politics jolt this writer into a more "public" but still highly resonant poem, "*Come Thunder*"<sup>38</sup>, and we are, in a way, not surprised when his commitment takes Okigbo to the front of the Nigerian Civil War where he dies.

We have already had occasion to look at Wole Soyinka's "interpreters" and to see how their views and expectations come to nought. We should, of course, add that no one can "interpret" a society of which he really knows only a part. The drawing - rooms of professors' houses are no substitute for the whole life of society. Neither are night - clubs. Works such as *The Interpreters* are far removed in space and time from the works of, say, Jane Austen but their limitations are the same. They are enclosed in a self-contained world which only occasionally admits intrusions and fresh air from outside.

*The Interpreters* like Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* employs excreta as a symbol of corruption and decay. The disgust evoked by this symbol is so powerful that it seems to overpower some of the central characters in these Novels. It is well - nigh impossible to calmly analyse the underlying causes and trends of society's ills when you are overcome by the stench of focus and the slime and rot of everything around you. Such a stench increases your isolation from the main flow of life around you. You do not see ordinary human beings engaged in a daily struggle to make a living. You only see the beginnings of that which is doomed to putrefaction and dizzying smells. You begin to see corruption as the natural law of the human condition and you make no effort to uproot it from society. This kind of fatalism or defeatist attitude to corruption is what Chinua Achebe was really attacking when he pronounced *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*.

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37 From "Distances" in Moore and Beir, *Modern Poetry from Africa*, 1963, p. 141-143

38 Chinua Achebe, *Morning Yet on Creation day*, Double Day Anchor, 1975, p. 33.

*"a sick book. Sick not with the sickness of Ghana but with the sickness of the human condition"<sup>39</sup>.*

It is not enough to simply shun corruption. One must actively fight against it. We feel that Ayi Kwei Armah's central character "The Man", is by his passivity guilty of the many sins of which his wife Oyo and her mother never tire of accusing him. Although he has his convictions he is still very much like the "chichidodo", that bird which hates excrement but still feeds on maggots. His wife teaches him that life is like a road on which so many people are driving. Our man refuses to drive and there is no mention of the fact that he might even try to drive the other way round from everyone else's goal! The man's main problem is his isolation not only from "the drivers on the road" but also, and especially, from those who have no cars and with whom he might have forged a fellowship of those who either refuse to drive or wish to walk, - even in the other direction.

In chapters five and six of *The Beautiful ones are not yet born* we see a recapitulation of recent Ghanaian history. We see the high fences and savage dogs of colonial masters, the brutalised soldiers returning from the second World War, the lawyers who pioneer nationalist agitation for independence, the coming and impact of Kwame Nkrumah as well as the sitting into the body - politic of post-colonial corruption and the elitism of political leadership.

Through all these events, our man, "the man", is an outsider. He merely watches in dismay as the euphoria of Nkrumah's coming and agitation for independence is replaced by corruption,

*"How could this have grown rotten with such absence hast"<sup>40</sup>?*

The man cannot really answer this question because he is too isolated from the common man, to calmly study and analyse the corruption engulfing his country.

In *why are we so blest* Ayi Kwei Armah isolates his central character even more painfully than he does in *The Beautiful ones are not yet born*. Modin, the central character, seeks to join forces with the movement fighting for the liberation of an unnamed country ruled by the French, presumably, Algeria. He spends weeks trying to establish

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39 Chinua Achebe, *Morning yet on creation day*, Double day Anchor, 1975, p. 33.

40 Ayi Kwei Armah *The Beautiful ones are not yet Born*; Heinmann, 1969, p. 88.

contact with these forces and by the time he is on his way the french "Foreign Legion" have found out his location and his intention and they fall on him and tear him apart limb by limb in a macabre dance of death. Modin and his girl-friend are tied to a landrover and forced to make love as they are dragged in the hot sands. His tongue is cut off. What leads to this heinous cruelty is the relationship between Modin and his girl-friend. He is black and she is a white American. The racism of their capturer reached a frenzied peak and we are somehow shown that having established a relationship with a white woman Modin has isolated himself even further from the movement he seeks to join than he will ever realise. History would not appear to support Ayi Kwei Armah's point-of-view here but it is a view which does run through the entire novel. Modin's relationships tend to have a severely tangled complexity because of their defiance of the color line. His seduction of his professor's wife is not free from the overtones of color and racial prejudices. We may also recall here the overtones of color and racial prejudice which inform Armah's description of Arab slave - dealers from the North in *Two Thousand Seasons*. Race and color would appear to enhance isolation in Armah's works - a function that is more able served by other techniques such as "flash-back" narration and the "stream of consciousness". In their ability to show us the past in the present and the inner thoughts of character now moving before us the streams - of - consciousness and flash-bach techniques are most suited to the presentation of the next trait we associate with the intelligentsia in African literature. We will call this trait abdication. Members of the intelligentsia often opt out of society's problems and they invariably opt out of what we may call, borrowing a term from Sigmund Freud, "the reality principle".

**e) Abdication from public responsibility**

In the novel, *Fragments* Ayi Kwei Armah gives an extremely intelligent young man who like 'the man' in the *The Beautiful ones are not yet born* or 'the interpreters' in Wole Soyinka's novel of that name is disgusted by the corruption, artificiality and sterility he sees all around him. Life, he finds, is now governed by money in Ghana. Even an originally beautiful custom such as "out dooring" is now used to make money and infants die from exposure because the parents use their out dooring ceremony as an occasion for collecting money from friends, well-wishers and those who are out to show the world how much money they have. Banko, our young intellectual cannot take all this travesty of life. He wanders from place to place in search

of sanity and eventually runs mad. He has not only left society to its own devices - but has also deserted the reality principle.

Before his madness he had carefully analysed the malaise of his society and found it to be based on "the cargo mentality", a Polynesian tradition whereby a piece of cargo is set afloat the wide ocean only to return as multiplied wealth. He himself is seen in that light by his mother and his other relatives. Unfortunately this particular "cargo" returns as he went, with nothing to show for his absence except a keen intellect and an educated mind. He brings no refrigerator and no car as his friends do. What is worse he does not even think that the things matter. The stress of having to be reminded of his failure and his lack of conformity is too much to bear. He abdicates from society, not consciously perhaps but no doubt as a relief.

We find it remarkable that a similar "solution" should have been resorted to by Kofi Awoonor in his novel, *This Earth my Brother*. Here also a non-conforming intellectual runs away from wife and family and ends up running away from society as well as from sanity.

Perhaps the most remarkable examples of intellectuals who abdicate their public responsibilities are to be found in Ngugi's novel, *Petals of Blood*. We have first the case of Raymond Chui who as a school-boy leads a strike against a Euro - centric syllabus which emphasises kindness to animals while treating human beings as expendable. Raymond Chui rallies his fellow - pupils against the Principal a man by the improbable name of Cambridge Fraudsham. The strike is a success though pupils like Munira lose their places at the school.

The Raymond Chui who later by popular acclamation succeeds Cambridge Fraudsham as Principal no longer remembers his school-boy principles. He not only reinstates the Eurocentric syllabus against which he had fought in his younger days but out does the Europeans themselves in playing the role of middle-class Europeans. We last hear of him devoting more time to his business interests than to his school which he runs from gulf-clubs and other pleasure resorts. Yet another strike is simmering at Raymond Chui's school - only this time it is not against a white headmaster but against Raymond Chui!

The case of Godfrey Munira in *Petals of Blood* is a different example of abdication. He does not opt for high living and "playing white" as Raymond Chui does. His disappointment in his marriage and in his father first lead him to a remote school where he does a great deal of good work. He is one of the four people on whom this village depends for its upliftment and is centrally involved in the historic journey which the people of this village make to Nairobi in search of help. The transformation which the village experiences

after this historic journey is beyond everyone's belief. Development comes accompanied by slums and the usual denonciations one sees in African cities and towns.

Through out all these changes Munira sees himself as an outsider. The world is changing in the lives of other people not in his because all he can see is experiences in which he has no part.

It is when he becomes a "born-again" Christian that he seems to be involved in what goes on. The irony of this conversion is that it is spurred on by the loss of Wanja, the girl who is one of the central characters in the novel. She goes over to Karega, a younger and more dynamic man. The conversion is also spurred on by Munira's extreme disappointment with his father to take the Mau-Mau oath during the struggle for independence and who now takes this oath to safeguard Kikuyu land and other property holding against "the envy" and rumblings of other tribes.

In his new - found light Munira sees everything in Biblical metaphors. He will no longer fight against corruption and exploitation because these are of this earth and they will pass. When he does commit the one decisive act of the novel, that is burning down Wanja's brother, "Sunshine Lodge", he does it to save Karega from sin. He in fact kills Mzigo, Chui and Kimeria, representatives of massive foreign business interests. Munira at this time is no longer "of this world" and cannot see his arson in its proper perspective. He has become "a man of lead", a prophet, an even more marginal figure than when he first set out from Limuru to help the remote village of Ilmorog.

#### f) Dependency

The cases of Ngugi's, Raymond Chui and Armah's Modin illustrate one trait which we have not discussed so far. The intelligentsia in African literature has interesting links with the outside world. In *Sweet and Sour Milk* and in *Sardines* we see Somali intellectuals nostalgically remembering their days in Italy. We also see, especially in *Sardines*, the kind of adulation which some of them pay to intellectuals from the lands of their former colonisers. The case with which an Italian journalist named Sandran enters the corridors of power in a "left-leaning" Somalia is striking.

In his book, *Political Values and the Educated Class in Africa*<sup>41</sup>, Professor Ali Mazrui sees the intelligentsia in Africa as passing through two main phases of dependency, viz, christian dependency

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41 Heinemann, 1978, pp. 368-379.

and the secularisation of dependency. The secularisation of dependency has four phases:

- 1) the liberal phase
- 2) the liberal nationalist phase
- 3) the socialist nationalist phase and
- 4) the marxist phase.

The language in this transition begins with Biblical imagery and ends with marxist dialectics.

In African literature one sees a kind of amused revolt against this kind of dependency. When Biblical imagery is used at all it is often in an invented form as we see in an early fourth African poem called "Civilised Labour Policy".

#### 'CIVILISED' LABOUR POLICY

*Hertog is my shepherded; I am in want.  
He maketh me to lie down on park benches  
He leadeth me beside still factories.  
He arouseth my doubt of his intention.  
He leadeth me in the path of destruction for his Party's  
sake  
Yea, I walk through the valley of the shadow of destruc-  
tion  
And I fear evil, for though art with,  
The Politicians and the Profiteers, they frighten me,  
Thou preparest a reduction in my salary before me,  
In the presence of mine enemies.  
Thou anointest mine income with taxes,  
My expense runneth over,  
Surely unemployment and poverty will follow me  
All the days of this Administration  
And I shall dwell in a mortgaged house forever.*

The language of the Bible has been found apt in describing situations of oppression. It comes, after all, from a religion which began as a refuge of the oppressed. We find that in Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat* some of the Biblical verses quoted are said to have been "underlined in Kihika's Bible" and Kihika is a dealer of the liberation movement. In *Petals of Blood* the biblical images used (such as the one from the Book of Revelation just before the opening of the novel) tend to emphasise the deterioration of the socio-economic order - in Kenya. When such images are used by the "born-again" Godfrey Munira they tend to attach corruption and exploitation as aspects of "the devil's work".

### f) Language and experience

One discussion of the reliance on biblical imagery by the intelligentsia in African literature would be incomplete without reference to the poetry of Okigba, Soyinka, Eoherua and others who have been severely attacked for their borrowings. The eclectic nations of the symbolism and imagery of this poetry has made it difficult. The writers are familiar not only with their own Logba and Yoruba mythologies but also and especially with the Bible, as well as with Greek and Latin mythologies. This exasperating amount of learning has led some critics to pronounce this poetry "non-African". It suffers, they argue, from what they call "the Hopkins' disease", presumably after the English jesuit - poet, Gerald Manley Hopkins.

We are now referring to the book, *Towards the Decolonisation of African Literature* by Chimweizu, Madubuike and Jamie<sup>42</sup>. The main thrust of this book's message is that African literature should obey African aesthetic standards which themselves derive from African cultural values. The book finds what it calls the Ibadan - Nsukka group of poets deficient in these standards because of the excessively difficult English used and also because of heavy borrowing from classical mythology and from catholicism.

The debate involved in this discussion is not new. As far back as 1963 Obi Wali has argued that African literature was facing a dead end unless it stops using foreign languages and returns to African languages<sup>43</sup>.

In the view of this paper the dependency at issue is not language as such but language as the articulate vehicle of experience. What Chimweiru and his colleagues are attacking is surely not the absence of any mystical "Africanness" conveyed by works of art but the absence in some works of literature of any sense of the experience of African people. Language by itself is nothing. It is in its relation to experience that language acquires meaning and importance. Chimweizu and his colleagues should be requiring of African writers not some mysterious Africanness that language conveys by its simplicity but a certain ability to expand the reader's awareness of the present moment of our existence in its entirety. There is, after all, a language which transcends language, a style above all styles, it is the language

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42 A poem by "L.R." in Chapman and Dangor Editions *Voices from Within*, Ad Donker 1980.

43 Obi Wali, *The Dead end of African Literature*, *Transition*, 3-10 (1963), pp. 13-15.

of how people live, or fail to live, what they experience or do not experience.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has attempted to explore the presentation of the intelligentsia in African literature. The term is not all inclusive and literature clearly shows which character plays what role in a given poem, play or novel. We have examined those characters whom the writers by design assign the role of intellectuals. We have looked at the possibilities before such characters and found that they have common traits which have made their role in Africa somewhat marginal. Perhaps this marginality has contributed to Africa's present crisis. Perhaps.



# Notes sur l'Emigration des Hispano-Mauresques en Afrique du Nord et ses Conséquences dans l'Art Industriel Local

Valérie Gonzalez \*

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**SUMMARY :** The migration by successive waves of Iberian Moorish peoples from the Iberian Peninsula to North Africa has had economic and social consequences especially on the art industry, an all time important traditional market of North Africa. As is evident even today, the North African Art Industry was profoundly marked by the contributions of the Arabic Andalusian civilization brought by the migrants. Overall both the urban and rural physiomy of North Africa was modified by this process of migration. The Spanish Moores did not find it difficult to adapt themselves to their new environment since they were all linked by their common muslim background. The impact was more significant on fine jewellery and artistically conceived luxurious craftwork which are still to be found in North African artisanal production today. Therefore, these productions have nowadays a medieval touch which, even if it seems anachronistic, is nonetheless a precious cultural advantage which has to be preserved, a distant souvenir as it is of the prestigious past of western islam with its figurehead, Al-Andalus.

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Les composantes civilisationnelles d'une région du monde sont, pour celle-ci, comme une collection de costumes et de parures qui savèrent somptueux, princiers, sophistiqués ou séduisants à certaines périodes et, à d'autres, au contraire, pauvres, précaires ou sans attrait particulier. Du vieux fonds berbère au substrat arabo-musulman, en passant par l'apport classique romain et byzantin, jusqu'à la culture européenne moderne, l'Afrique du Nord possède, certes, une belle panoplie. Mais, dans cette dernière, se trouve précisément un élément parmi les plus précieux et raffinés qu'elle ait jamais eu: la civilisation hispano-mauresque. Depuis le prestigieux Califat omeyyade de Cordoue (8e siècle-11e siècle) jusqu'à l'ultime Royaume nasride de Grenade (13e siècle - 15e siècle), *al Andalus* constitua pour le Maghreb une source intarissable de science, d'art et de culture, qu'elle le domina ou qu'elle fut dominée par lui. Si bien

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qu'aujourd'hui encore, des traits andalous appuyés marquent sa physionomie et plus spécifiquement sa physionomie artistique et industrielle traditionnelle. A travers les formules musicales, vestimentaires ou artisanales nord-africaines actuelles, se dessine encore le profil de l'ancienne Espagne islamique, figure de proue de l'Occident musulman classique (Algérie, Maroc, Tunisie, Espagne et Sicile musulman).

Quels sont concrètement les phénomènes historiques qui ont conduit à l'infiltration puis à la conservation d'us et arts mauresques espagnols dans l'esthétique maghrébine? C'est là une question à laquelle il faudrait répondre par un faisceau de réponses. Par conséquent, nous nous attarderons sur une époque et un processus précis que nous pensons être fondamentaux ou déterminants dans l'histoire de ce transfert culturel d'une rive d'un continent à l'autre: la perte des derniers comptoirs musulmans d'Espagne entre les 13<sup>e</sup> et 15<sup>e</sup> siècles, et les déplacements de population qui s'en suivirent entre les 13<sup>e</sup> et 18<sup>e</sup> siècle. A ce titre, la prise de Grenade nasride par les Chrétiens en 1492 et ses répercussions géopolitiques dans le monde musulman occidental, s'avèrent décisives. Des milliers d'Hispano-musulmans et de gens attachés ou affiliés à l'Islam ibérique, par la religion ou par la culture, tels que les Juifs et les Morisques<sup>1</sup>, arrivèrent par vagues successives en Afrique du Nord, procédant à une véritable transplantation de civilisation, dont les séquelles, parmi les plus apparentes de nos jours, résident dans les arts industriels et les technologies d'art.

### **Le Cadre Historique Maghrébin entre les 13<sup>e</sup> & 17<sup>e</sup> Siècles**

Aux derniers moments de la reconquête chrétienne, les réfugiés andalous qui voulurent émigrer en Afrique du Nord eurent le choix entre trois points de chute, correspondant aux trois Etats en place depuis l'effritement du grand Empire almohade. Ces derniers poursuivirent leur évolution indépendamment les uns des autres, le

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1 Les juifs étaient affiliés à l'Islam ibérique non pas confessionnellement, bien sûr, mais culturellement. Après la reconquête chrétienne, ce lien civilisationnel les rattacha au groupe des Morisques, tout au moins aux yeux des Chrétiens. Quant aux Morisques en question, ils formaient la population musulmane ou d'origine musulmane qui demeura en Espagne redevenue définitivement catholique, dès 1492. Certains se convertirent de force, d'autres protégèrent leur foi clandestinement.

Maghreb n'ayant plus retrouvé l'homogénéité qui avait fait la gloire de cette époque.

Au Maroc, le Sultanat mérinide qui avait alternativement prêté main forte aux Nasrides face à la pression castillane, et tenté de soustraire leur pouvoir à Grenade pour leur propre profit, n'avait cessé, en somme, d'être en contact étroit avec l'Islam ibérique et, par conséquent, était tout imprégné de sa civilisation. La seconde moitié du 15<sup>e</sup> siècle, succédant aux Mérinides, les sultans saadiens héritèrent de cette tradition andalouse qu'ils s'appliquèrent à cultiver: leurs coutumes, leur art, leur architecture la reflétaient. Notamment, ils s'entouraient d'un luxe comparable à celui des monarques grenadins; l'un d'eux, al-Mansur, était si riche qu'on le surnomma "al-Dawhib", "le Doré" (Ricard, 1924, p.303). Il en fut de même avec la dynastie suivante des Alaouites, encore régnante aujourd'hui, avec cependant, par la force des choses, plus de modestie. Des trois pays du Maghreb, le Maroc est celui qui conserva le mieux la culture hispano-mauresque car, fort de son prestigieux passé, il eut tendance à se fermer aux influences étrangères et, en particulier, résista à l'invasion turque. En effet, au 16<sup>e</sup> siècle, celle-ci bouleversa la configuration maghrébine. L'Algérie zianide et la Tunisie hafside devinrent, dès cette époque, des provinces de l'Empire ottoman; le substrat hispano-africain se mélangea aux nouveaux apports turcs, donnant le jour à une civilisation composite. En outre, la Tunisie se laissa de plus en plus influencer par l'Italie toute proche, tandis qu'à son instar, l'Algérie était touchée par divers courants européens. On connaît ensuite l'histoire coloniale du Maghreb, consécutive à la chute de l'Empire ottoman.

Ainsi, le devenir de ces émigrés andalous se confondit avec celui des Autochtones, mais en laissant dans le pays d'accueil une empreinte indélébile.

### **L'Emigration des Andalous et des Morisque au Maghreb entre les 13<sup>e</sup> et 17<sup>e</sup> siècles**

Dès le 13<sup>e</sup> siècle, les Chrétiens ibériques, galvanisés par les succès militaires contre les Musulmans et revigorés par leur nouvelle puissance politique face à l'Islam occidental en voie de décadence, entreprirent, parallèlement à la reconquête dans la péninsule, des opérations offensives sur des points stratégiques de la côte africaine. Il résulta de ce processus bilatéral un double phénomène de déplacement des populations victimes: du côté européen, il déclencha des vagues successives d'émigration vers l'Afrique, et, du côté magrébin, il provoqua des mouvements migratoires vers l'arrière-pays et les régions reculées. Ces flux complexes de population eurent

pour conséquence le déplacement, le repeuplement ou le peuplement de diverses zones des pays concernés. Cela dura jusqu'au 17<sup>e</sup> siècle, date des ordres d'expulsion des Morisques sous Philippe III, mais les vibrations des mouvements de ce bouleversement humain devaient se ressentir encore longtemps, jusqu'au 18<sup>e</sup> siècle.

C'est à travers ces chemins tortueux, empruntés par ses détenteurs, que nous essayerons de reconstituer l'étonnant parcours des arts industriels hispano-musulmans tardifs, d'une rive d'un continent à l'autre.

En 1260, la ville de Salé qui servait de port à tout le Royaume de Fès fut attaquée par les armées castillanes et s'en trouva, par la suite, fortement dépeuplée (Jean Léon l'Africain, 1956, p.169-170). D'autres cités importantes subirent le même sort. En 1415, les Portugais prenaient Ceuta; en 1471, Larache se vida de sa population à l'arrivée des Chrétiens (Zaim, 1988, p.79 - Jean Léon l'Africain, 1956, p.251 - Abitbol, 1982, p.249). Un sujet proche des Rois catholiques écrivait à ceux-ci en 1492 :

*"Il semble que Dieu veuille donner à vos Altesses ces Royaumes d'Afrique"<sup>2</sup>.*

Ainsi, durant les 15<sup>e</sup> et 16<sup>e</sup> siècles, le Portugal et l'Espagne s'emparèrent de nombreux comptoirs maghrébins, Oran en 1509, Tlemcen, Ténès, Bougie en 1510, jusqu'à ce que Philippe II réfreine cet élan expansionniste en renonçant à occuper l'Afrique du Nord (Doumou, 1988, p.15-18 - Zaim, 1988, p.77-80). Ces villes désertées ou occupées, les émigrés andalous aidèrent à les repeupler et à les défendre, avant d'être parfois obligés eux-mêmes de fuir vers des zones retirées plus sûres, modifiant de la sorte la physionomie urbaine rurale du Maghreb.

Avant même sa disparition et durant toute son existence, le Royaume nasride dont la densité, considérable, était certes constamment alimentée par l'arrivée de Musulmans des régions reconquises de la péninsule, souffrait en même temps des fuites humaines recueillies par l'Afrique du Nord. En effet, les vicissitudes politiques ajoutées à la seule crainte d'une domination chrétienne irréversible, incitèrent progressivement nombre de Grenadins, parmi lesquels des savants et des personnalités de l'élite andalouse, à quitter la terre natale pour l'autre partie de l'Occident demeurée intégralement musulmane (Arie, 1973, p.459). Les années 1492-1493 marquèrent le

2 Doumou cite Gonzalo de Raparaz, 1929 (Doumou, 1988, p.15-16).

point culminant de ce flux régulier de Grenadins vers l'Afrique. Mais il faut additionner à ce dernier l'émigration massive d'Hispano-musulmans consécutive à la perte, au 13<sup>e</sup> siècle, de provinces importantes telles que celles de Cordoue et de Séville, et les vagues de populations juives réfugiées entre le 14<sup>e</sup> siècle et le 15<sup>e</sup> siècle, qui étaient en majorité de culture arabo-andalouse (Arie, 1973, p.334 - Kress, 1983, p.130). Ce dernier mouvement d'émigrants s'est opéré en deux temps, en raison de deux événements. Le premier eut lieu au 14<sup>e</sup> siècle, lorsque les autorités chrétiennes persécutèrent la communauté juive d'Espagne, en particulier dans les anciens territoires musulmans; le massacre de Séville, en 1391, illustre sombrement cette période (Camps, 1982, p.57 - Abitol, 1982, p.239 - Laredo, 1954, p.205-206). Le second se situe au 15<sup>e</sup> siècle: en 1492, à l'époque de l'installation des Rois catholiques à Grenade, un édit d'expulsion chassa des milliers d'Israélites de la péninsule; cette action eut un retentissement au Portugal où, en 1496, les chrétiens réitérèrent un tel<sup>e</sup> ordre (Laredo, 1957, p.207-213 - Camps, 1982, p.57-59). Ces Juifs hispaniques en exode étaient dénommés, d'après Besancenot, les *Forasteros* en espagnol, qui signifie les Etrangers (Besancenot, 1953 - Mueller-Lancet, 1982, p.480). Ce fort peuplement d'Andalous au Maghreb fut bientôt renforcé par l'affluence, aux 16<sup>e</sup> et 17<sup>e</sup> siècles, des Morisques. En 1569, la révolte de ces derniers face à l'intolérance chrétienne provoqua un premier exode, suivi d'un second en 1609-1610, lors du décret d'expulsion sous Philippe III; 275.000 personnes environ quittèrent l'Espagne (Kress, 1983, p.129-130 - Latham, 1983, p.159-164). Bon nombre de Morisques parlaient le castillan ou un mélange d'arabe et d'espagnol; parmi eux se trouvaient des Chrétiens renégats.

L'installation de ces diverses populations, en diverses périodes, s'opéra de manière relativement harmonieuse. Aux 13<sup>e</sup> et 14<sup>e</sup> siècles, les premiers exilés se dirigèrent logiquement vers les grandes villes et vers les ports importants de la côte africaine, où ils comptaient reprendre au plus vite leurs activités de type intellectuel, industriel et commercial. Ils essaimèrent ainsi à Fès, Marrakech, Rabat, Tetuan, Tlemcen, Oran, Alger, Cherchell, Tunis, Kairouan, Gabès, Sfax etc. (Caro-Baroja, 1957, p. 255-257). Les affinités séculaires culturelles et politiques avec *al-Andalus* aidant, ils furent plutôt favorablement accueillis. En 1248, après la perte de Séville, les habitants musulmans s'en allèrent naturellement trouver asile dans l'Etat hafside qui fut fondé par un ancien gouverneur de cette ville, Abu Zakariyya (Marcas, 1946, p.273-275 - Kress, 1983, p.129-131). Hauts lieux de civilisations, Fès et Marrakech attirèrent particulièrement les artistes et les savants grenadins (Arie, 1973, p.459). Le Maroc mérinide constitua, en outre, un abri assez sûr pour les fuyards juifs, comparativement à

l'ancien Maroc almohade, durant la période duquel ce peuple dut souffrir les pires humiliations (Laredo, 1954, p.201-204). Les Mérinides ainsi que les Hafsides de Tunisie apprécèrent leur importante participation à l'économie nationale et se montrèrent cléments envers eux (Abitbol, 1982, p. 239 - Shatzmiller, 1982, p.295-302). Dans l'ensemble du Maghreb, les Juifs d'Espagne vinrent s'installer de préférence dans les ports et dans les zones d'implantation de l'ancienne population autochtone judéo-berbère à laquelle ils se mêlèrent (Camps, 1982, p.57). Cette dernière était fixée dans des villes côtières mais aussi dans des contrées retirées du Sud, jusqu'aux portes du Désert (Abitbol, 1982, p.229-252).

Les vagues impressionnantes des 15<sup>e</sup>, 16<sup>e</sup> et 17<sup>e</sup> siècles rejoignirent leurs coréligionnaires dans les grandes cités où ils avaient culturellement et économiquement prospéré, mais aussi créèrent des petites villes et des villages entiers (De Epalza, 1983, p.131-132 - Turbet-Delef, 1983, p. 231). En Tunisie, au 17<sup>e</sup> siècle, Utman Dey encouragea même les expulsés hispano-musulmans à s'établir dans les campagnes pour ne pas s'entasser dans les villes et, en même temps, donner une nouvelle vie aux contrées rurales (Latham, 1983, p. 161-162). A Alger, en 1776, on comptait jusqu'à 1.000 maisons de Morisques venus de Grenade, d'Aragon ou de Valence (Caro-Baroja, 1957, p.251).

Cependant, parallèlement à ce processus de peuplement par les exilés d'Espagne, un mouvement de migrations internes se produisit, grâce à plusieurs facteurs, entraînant une plus large diffusion de cette population (Kress, 1983, p.135). Tout d'abord, les ingérences chrétiennes eurent tendance à repousser vers l'intérieur les habitants indigènes et émigrés des villes côtières. Certaines d'entre elles durent même attendre de nouvelles vagues d'expatriés pour se repeupler ou recouvrer une nouvelle prospérité. Par exemple, Jean Léon l'Africain notait que Cherchell avait retrouvé sa densité avec la venue des émigrés du Royaume nasride évincé (Jean Léon l'Africain, 1956, p.178 et p. 344-345). C'est aussi sans doute en raison, en partie, de ces attaques des Espagnols et des Portugais, particulièrement virulentes au 15<sup>e</sup> siècle et sous Charles Quint, que des familles andalouses entières descendirent très bas vers le Sud du Pays d'accueil, même jusqu'au désert (Caro-Baroja, 1957, p.10-11). Mais au 16<sup>e</sup> siècle, l'entrée en scène des Turcs enraya la colonisation chrétienne en Afrique du Nord, notamment en récupérant Tunis en 1574. Un autre facteur de migration fut naturellement l'accumulation des populations réfugiées dans les villes. Ainsi, à propos des Juifs espagnols du Maroc, Besancenot précisait que:

*"Dans leur exode, les Forasteros qui descendaient dans les villes de la côte atlantique de plus en plus bas parce*

*que les mellah des villes du Nord débordés ne pouvaient plus les accueillir, n'ont pas dépassé Tiznit au Sud d'Agadir, parce qu'il était impossible d'aller plus loin. Ne pouvant plus descendre au Sud de Tiznit, les Forasteros se sont trouvés amenés à tenter de se fixer dans l'intérieur du pays, vers l'Est... En effet, de gros villages juifs s'y sont constitués, jusqu'au centre du massif (Anti-Atlas), chez les Anmeln, à Tahala, qui fut le noyau principal de l'artisanat bijoutier juif<sup>3</sup>.*

Comme on peut le comprendre à travers cette civilisation, cet exode des Andalous entraîna le transfert de leur civilisation en Afrique du Nord, en particulier la transplantation de leur technologie d'art.

### **L'Action Civilisatrice des émigrés Andalous et Morisques au Maghreb**

Arié fait allusion à l'apport civilisationnel des Andalous en Afrique du Nord :

*Ainsi, la cour de Tlemcen perdit au début du 14e siècle son caractère bédouin, grâce à l'influence des Andalous qui y vivaient" (Arié, 1973, p.458).*

Ayant vécu eux-mêmes l'expatriement, Ibn Haldun l'historien et Jean Léon l'Africain le voyageur<sup>4</sup>, issus de familles nobles grenadines, rapportent leurs observations. D'après Arié, en 1362, le premier disait avoir retrouvé l'ambiance cultivée de Grenade nasride à Tunis hafside. (Arié, 1973, p.458). Ce parallélisme entre les règnes maghrébins et le règne grenadin fut également souligné par le second personnage (Caro-Baroja, 1957, p.10-11 et p.30). Il remarque que la structure de Fès était comparable à celle de Grenade, notamment dans la séparation des corps de métiers, et que les habitudes vestimentaires y étaient quasiment semblables également (Jean Léon l'Africain, 1956, p. 157 et p. 192-193 - Caro-Baroja, 1957, p. 125-126).

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3 Mueller-Lancet cite Besancenot dans: *Documents de Besancenot*. (Mueller-Lancet, 1982, p.479-480).

4 Jean Léon (l'Africain) est le nom donné par le Pape italien qui le recueillit, au voyageur el-Hasan b. Muhammad el-Wazzan, né à Grenade entre 1489 et 1495, et réfugié à Fès avec sa famille (Jean Léon l'Africain, 1956). Il écrivit un recueil publié en 1550: *Description de l'Afrique*.

Les Andalous contribuèrent, en effet, pour beaucoup à l'évolution de l'Afrique du Nord entre les 13<sup>e</sup> et 17<sup>e</sup> siècles, dans tous les domaines, même en matière militaire; ils servirent dans les rangs contre ceux-là même qui les avaient chassés de leur terre natale et de la sorte des milices composées d'Andalous, de Morisques et de renégats castillans, jouèrent un grand rôle dans l'histoire guerrière du Maroc à la fin du 16<sup>e</sup> siècle et au 17<sup>e</sup> siècle (Caro-Baroja, 1957, p. 107 et p. 253-254 - Kress, 1983, p. 145-153).

Les émigrés de la péninsule ibérique se distinguaient par leurs grandes capacités et connaissances dans l'industrie, le commerce, l'agriculture et l'art, et étaient largement sollicités pour cela, non sans en tirer quelque orgueil et une certaine volonté de conserver leur spécificité ethnique. Ainsi, à Bougie, leur arrivée provoqua un bouleversement dans le fonctionnement artisanal indigène. Au 14<sup>e</sup> siècle, à la plainte d'ouvriers juifs locaux, un rabbin répondait de la sorte:

*"Avant l'arrivée dans votre ville (Bougie) des Juifs du pays d'Edom (d'Europe), vous viviez aisément de vos rapports avec les Arabes qui avaient besoin de votre artisanat et vous donnaient des acomptes numéraires que vous utilisiez pour votre commerce et votre subsistance. Or, comme les réfugiés étaient venus dans votre ville avec des fonds leurs permettant de vous devancer dans la fabrication d'objets artisanaux, les Arabes les préférèrent à vous, y trouvant chez eux tout ce dont ils avaient besoin..." (Abitbol, 1982, p.244).*

Le témoignage de ce rabbin renseigne en particulier sur l'apport de l'élément juif parmi les exilés d'Espagne. Les *Forasteros* prirent, en effet, une part majeure dans le développement de certaines industries, dont ils avaient le monopole dans la péninsule ainsi qu'en Afrique et dans le monde arabe en général, telles que l'artisanat et le commerce touchant au travail du métal, ou autres types de production manufacturière que les Musulmans répugnaient à exercer. Au cours de ses visites dans de nombreux villes et villages du Maroc, Jean Léon l'Africain releva que la plupart des orfèvres, des forgerons ou des cordonniers, étaient de confession hébraïque et, parlant précisément de Fès où les joailliers juifs occupaient tout un quartier neuf, il fit allusion à l'interdit canonique islamique concernant les métaux précieux (Jean Léon l'Africain, 1956, p.74, p. 81, p. 149, p. 234:

*"On ne peut travailler en effet ni l'or, ni l'argent dans la vieille ville et aucun mahométan ne peut exercer la profession d'orfèvre, car on dit que vendre les objets*



*d'argent ou d'or pour un prix supérieur à ce que vaut leur poids est de l'usure. Mais les souverains donnent aux Juifs la permission de la faire" (Jean Léon l'Africain, 1956, p.234).*

Entre l'apport des Israélites et celui des autres Hispaniques, les cités-refuges, en particulier celles de la côte, virent fleurir les négocees et les centres d'art (Kress, 1983, p. 131). Par exemple, à Alger, les Morisques étaient occupés par les métiers "traditionnels et estimés", notamment la fabrique de soieries; Diego de Haedo s'exclamait à leur sujet:

*"Todos saben algun arte"  
"Ils connaissent tous quelque'art"<sup>5</sup>.*

Au 18e siècle, à Tunis, parmi les plus riches commerçants se trouvaient encore des gens originaires d'*Andalus*. C'étaient eux qui avaient communiqué aux gens du pays l'amour du luxe, le goût de s'habiller et de se parer richement, et, en conséquence, qui avaient fait prospérer les établissements producteurs répondant à de tels besoins. Un andalou écrivit à ce sujet:

*"Il est de coutume que les plus démunis se parent avec des choses que des reines de cette terre ne portaient pas avant notre arrivée"<sup>6</sup>.*

Un autre raconta encore, lors de sa venue en Tunisie:

*"On fut d'abord prié de montrer les bijoux et les ornements dont on n'avait jamais vu de semblables et qu'on ne connaissait pas dans ce pays. Les richesses et les ornements pouvaient égaler ceux des Grands d'Espagne, principalement dans les ors des femmes"<sup>7</sup>*

Ces notes montrent bien que l'art du costume, de la parure et, en particulier, de l'orfèvrerie fine, constitua un apport notoire de la

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5 Caro-Baroja cite Diego de Haedo dans sa *Topografía e Historia general de Argel* (Chapitre XI). (Caro-Baroja, 1957, p.251).

6 Auteur Andalou cité par De Epalza. (De Apalza, 1983, p.84). Des réfugiés ont ainsi laissé des manuscrits dans lesquels ils racontent leur vie en Afrique du Nord.

7 Auteur Andalou cité par Gargouri-Sethom (Gargouri-Sethom, 1983, p.103).

civilisation d' *al-Andalus* au Maghreb; ses traces sont nettement visibles encore de nos jours (Mueller-Lancet, 1982, p.479-498 - Sugier, 1983, p. 179-193). Certaines anecdotes de Jean Léon l'Africain parlent d'objets de type mauresque:

*"A mon retour de Marrakech, je suis allé dans cette ville (Haskoura) et j'ai logé dans la maison d'un très riche grenadin qui était resté là comme arbalétrier pendant environ 18 ans... Il m'envoya donc muni de quelques jolis cadeaux qui consistaient en une paire d'étriers ornés d'un travail à la moresque d'une valeur de 25 ducats, en une paire de très beaux éperons également bien travaillés..."*  
(Jean Léon l'Africain, 1956, p. 131-137).

Ainsi, à partir du 13<sup>e</sup> siècle, avec ce cortège d'industries d'art transportées par les Andalous et les Moresques, le travail des métaux et la joaillerie ouvragée de goût hispano-mauresque devaient s'assurer une nouvelle prospérité au Maghreb. Aujourd'hui encore, une production artisanale de type médiéval, quoique assez malmenée par les exigences du modernisme, en perpétue la tradition au Maroc, en Algérie et en Tunisie. Parlant des arts industriels marocains contemporains, Milleron dit:

*"Rien ne ressemble plus à l'industrie manufacturière du Maroc que les corporations du Moyen Age en Europe (en l'occurrence en Espagne), ses moyens étant les mêmes, ses ambitions également"* (Milleron, 1954, p.39).

Ou bien, Camps Fabrer définit les bijoux berbères à émaux d'Algérie en ces mots:

*"Ces bijoux, par leur technique, leur massivité, leur mélange de raffinement et de nudesse barbares, demeurent en plein 20<sup>e</sup> siècle des oeuvres médiévales"* (Camps-Fabrer, 1970, p. 163).

On pourrait encore faire des observations analogues pour d'autres branches artisanales telles que le travail de la soie, de broderie, la céramique, l'ouvrage sur cuir, etc., qui s'inspirent de procédés hérités de l'Espagne arabo-musulmane.

En somme, l'amputation de son membre européen ne signifia pas pour l'Occident musulman la perte de la prestigieuse civilisation d'*al-Andalus*, que le Maghreb pris soin d'incorporer en son sol bien avant la douloureuse opération, grâce à l'accueil de milliers de réfugiés qui en assurèrent l'entretien sur place. Ce dernier ne pouvait qu'en tirer profit puisque, après la chute du glorieux Empire almohade, il cher-

chaît tant bien que mal à en restituer la grandeur, en tentant de mener un mode de vie dans le plus pur style princier traditionnel de l'Islam d'Occident. Qui plus que les Andalous, dont la seule faiblesse était de n'avoir plus de terre et plus de liberté, en étaient les vecteurs, encore capables, de surcroît, de le faire perdurer? Les Nord-Africains ayant offert "leur hospitalité", les émigrés de la péninsule, leurs savoirs, une partie de l'Occident musulman put ainsi retarder quelques temps l'échéance d'une décadence imminente mais, certes, ne l'empêcha pas. On peut, cependant, se réjouir que d'une telle symbiose, somme toute assez rarement réalisable entre deux pays ou deux cultures, il demeure encore un corpus de traditions vivantes, souvenir vivace d'un passé prestigieux.

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# Economie souterraine, Endettement et Finances publiques à Madagascar

Olivier Ramahatra \*

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**SUMMARY :** The relation between the underground economy (the informal sector) debt and public finance poses interesting political and economic questions. In Madagascar as well as in many developing countries, growing fiscal crisis and the increase in public debt and the attendant severe impact on society are the major characteristics of public finance. The regression of the production system results in the enlargement of sectors of distribution as the arena for accumulation of wealth develops into parallel channels to the official sector which is faced with scarcity of supply. In this context the economic base of the state, which is largely based on foreign trade tends to shrink. The volume of the underground economy and the importance of its activities are related to the weight, area of application of the fiscal system as well as the extent of control and regulation of economic activity. The shortage of state revenues, namely because of loss of opportunities resulting from the underground economy transforms the deficit into a structural one. Thus, the underground economy constitutes one of the counterparts of debt. The underground economy stands for the cost of reproduction of the productive system. In the dynamics of the relation of forces which prevails between the underground economy and the official economy which, although weakened, is largely supported by the outside world, the underground economy becomes a condition necessary for the functioning of the internal logic of the system. It also ensures the development of self centered industry.

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L'économie souterraine représente un phénomène mondial. L'économie souterraine, parallèle, marginale, diffuse, encore appelée le marché noir, ou secteur informel regroupe un ensemble d'activités plus ou moins légales ou totalement illicites qui échappent aux circuits officiels. Elle correspond à un phénomène volontaire de

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1. Tanzi V. - *The Underground Economy in the United States and Abroad*,  
Lexington Books, 1982.
2. Hart J. - *Informal Income Opportunities and Urban Employment in Ghana*,  
*in* : *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, march 1972, pp. 61-89

soustractions aux structures institutionnelles, ce qui provoque un conflit de légitimité et d'autorité.

A Madagascar, la relation entre économie souterraine et politique économique revêt une importance considérable par l'ampleur des activités cachées.

La régression du système productif provoque l'élargissement de la sphère de distribution comme lieu d'accumulation des richesses (spéculation, marché noir...) et développe, des circuits parallèles à côté des circuits officiels caractérisés par la rareté de l'offre,<sup>3</sup>

La base économique de l'Etat, largement assise sur le commerce extérieur, a tendance à diminuer du fait de l'extension de l'économie souterraine.

La relation économie souterraine - endettement - finances publiques pose ainsi une question intéressante sur le plan pratique, économique et politique. A cet effet, il est d'abord utile d'estimer le manque à gagner pour les finances publiques compte tenu du poids de l'Etat dans la vie économique avant d'approfondir l'examen de l'impact de cette économie souterraine.

**Manque à gagner pour les finances publiques du fait de l'économie souterraine :**

En raison du caractère flou de l'économie souterraine, on ne trouve dans la comptabilité nationale aucune mesure explicite de l'étendue de ce secteur ou de ses flux. Même s'il était possible pour une année de référence donnée, il serait difficile d'évaluer les mouvements annuels ultérieurs. Par convention, le PIB officiel comporte une part d'économie souterraine à hauteur de 10 pour cent.

Par nature, l'ampleur du phénomène ne peut faire l'objet que d'estimations.

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<sup>3</sup> Ramahatra, O. - Pour une politique économique au cours de la phase de réhabilitation et de redressement, in : *Les fondements théoriques des programmes de stabilisation du Fonds Monétaire International à Madagascar*, thèse Paris X, 1986.

#### Exposé des différentes méthodes d'estimation<sup>4</sup>.

La première estimation se fonde essentiellement sur la différence observée entre le nombre de personnes dont on pense, compte tenu des données démographiques, qu'elles font partie de la population active et le chiffre officiel de la population active.

Les données démographiques tirées de l'unique recensement national (1975)<sup>5</sup> attribuent 50 % de la population totale à la population active présumée (occupée ou non).

Par contre, le chiffre officiel de la population active se déduit du taux brut d'activité (population active/population totale) estimé à 30 %. En conséquence, toutes choses égales par ailleurs, la part de l'économie souterraine est estimée à 40 % de l'ensemble de l'économie. Par ailleurs, les résultats de l'étude sur le développement urbain de Grand Antananarivo<sup>6</sup> donnent une proportion de 40 % pour l'emploi informel et, par conséquent 40 % de part de l'économie souterraine dans la capitale.

Le rapprochement des deux résultats est instructif compte tenu du poids d'Antananarivo dans la vie nationale. En ce qui concerne les finances publiques, 80 % des dépenses totales de l'Etat y sont décaissées tandis que 70 % des recettes totales y sont encaissées.

La deuxième estimation se réfère à l'économie souterraine saisie à travers le besoin de financement des ménages mesuré par Dépenses - (Revenus salariaux et revenus non salariaux)<sup>7</sup>.

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4 Tanzi V - L'économie souterraine, in : *Finances et Développement*, décembre 1983, pp. 10-13.

5 INSRE - Analyse des données démographiques. Recensement 1975, Série Etudes et Analyse, pp. 1-98 - Recensement 1975, Série, Etudes et Analyse Enquête post-censitaire, pp. 1-50.

6 Aura Groupe Huit BCEOM - L'estimation de l'emploi dans la zone d'étude. Développement Urbain du Grand Antananarivo 1985 DAUH/UNCHS MAG 79009/82011.

7 INSRE - Enquête sur les budgets des ménages : en milieu urbain (1977) en milieu rural (1980).

Cette estimation procède par étapes en milieu rural et en milieu urbain.

Les hypothèses de travail retenues en milieu rural sont :

- revenus salariaux indexés au salaire minimum interprofessionnel garanti (SMIG) ou salaire minimum d'embauche (SME), soit : Revenus salariaux (1984 = SME (1984) - SMIG (1980 X revenus salariaux (1980).
- autres revenus et dépenses indexés à l'indice du coût de la vie en milieu traditionnel, soit - valeur (1984) - Indice (fin 1983) - Indice (1980) X valeur (1980).
- dépenses constituées de dépenses monétaires à 100 %.

L'économie souterraine en milieu rural<sup>8</sup> peut être estimée en valeur minorée par le besoin de financement mesuré par : Dépenses - (Revenus salariaux + Revenus non salariaux), soit en 1980 : 28 492 Fmg par ménage et en 1984 : 62 365 Fmg par ménage et en valeur totale : en 1980 : 46 648 811 920 Fmg et en 1984 : 102 107 719 900 Fmg.

En assimilant la part des ménages ruraux dans le PIB à leurs dépenses, la part de l'économie souterraine est exprimée par le ratio besoin de financement/dépenses, soit : en 1980 : 26,95 % et en 1984 : 30,72 %. En milieu urbain, des hypothèses semblables sont retenues en se référant à l'année 1977.

La proportion de l'économie souterraine en milieu urbain est exprimée par le ratio besoin de financement/dépenses, soit en 1977 : - 8,82 % et en 1984 : 25,6 %.

Au total, la part de l'économie souterraine peut être estimée en moyenne pondérée à 28,5 % en 1984.

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<sup>8</sup> Ramahatra, O. - Une estimation de l'économie souterraine d'après les enquêtes INSRE sur les budgets des ménages, in : *Les fondements théoriques des programmes de stabilisation du Fonds Monétaire International à Madagascar*, thèse Paris X, 1986.



Certains bailleurs de fonds inclinent à attribuer une sous-estimation de l'ordre de 40 % du PIB officiel du fait de l'économie souterraine hors économie de cueillette. Si tel est le cas, le ratio de base des programmes d'ajustement (déficit du compte courant/PIB) se situerait à des valeurs soutenables, bien inférieures aux 11 % (1986). La sévérité des programmes d'ajustement en serait largement atténuée.

D'autres estimations peuvent être envisagées, même si elles n'ont pas abouti dans la situation présente :

- Economie souterraine vue à travers l'évasion et la fraude fiscales par analyse des différentes catégories d'impôt. Malheureusement les statistiques fiscales sont inexploitable et le retour de l'épargne préalablement constituée à l'extérieur complique encore le problème.
- Economie souterraine saisie à travers l'examen des statistiques monétaires partant de l'hypothèse que la circulation fiduciaire hors banque est directement influencée par l'importance de l'économie souterraine. En effet, les fuites du système peuvent être appréhendées au niveau de la balance des paiements (erreurs et omissions, sur-facturation à l'importation, sous-facturation à l'exportation) et des agrégats monétaires par l'évolution de la circulation fiduciaire hors banque en valeur absolue et/ou relative à la monnaie.

#### Critique des différentes estimations

Concernant la première estimation, le chiffre officiel de la population active prête à controverse. En effet, de véritables enquêtes Démographie-Emploi n'ont pas été effectuées.

Concernant la deuxième estimation, les hypothèses relatives au réajustement des salaires apparaissent bien fragiles. En outre, si l'indexation des autres revenus et des dépenses est soutenable, il n'en demeure pas moins que l'indice du coût de la vie, seule indice disponible - n'est pas représentatif de l'espace national par exclusion des activités parallèles et de tout ce qui se passe en dehors de la capitale. L'indice est probablement plus élevé à la campagne qu'en ville. Enfin, l'hypothèse des dépenses à 100 % monétaires semble bien restrictive.

En définitive, quelle que soit la méthode utilisée, on ne peut nier que l'importance de l'économie souterraine est considérable. Il convient certes de considérer toutes ces estimations avec prudence<sup>9</sup>. Au titre d'ordre de grandeur uniquement, la part de l'économie souterraine, à l'exclusion de l'économie de cueillette sera retenue à 40 % compte tenu de la relative convergence des estimations.

### Impact de l'économie souterraine sur les finances publiques

L'extrême réglementation, l'importance du secteur public et les taux d'imposition élevés constituent autant de facteurs qui favorisent le développement des activités parallèles<sup>10</sup>.

L'économie souterraine apparaît alors comme mécanisme permettant d'échapper à l'impôt et à la réglementation. Le secteur financier non institutionnel reflète bien son fonctionnement<sup>11</sup>. Son volume et l'ampleur de ses activités dépendent du poids et du champ d'action de la fiscalité ainsi que de l'étendue du contrôle et de la réglementation dont l'activité économique fait l'objet.

Ainsi l'évaluation du système fiscal fournira une estimation du manque à gagner pour les finances publiques du fait de l'économie souterraine<sup>12</sup>.

A cet effet, les deux principaux indicateurs - pression fiscale et élasticité des recettes fiscales par rapport au PIB - évoluent conformément au tableau suivant :

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Pression fiscale (%)	13,9	12,7	11,9	11,0	11,7	12,3
Elasticité	0,7	0,2	0,7	0,6	1,5	1,4

Source : Ministère des Finances et de l'Economie.

9 Tanzi, V. - op. cit., p. 13.

10 Tanzi, V. - op. cit., p. 10.

11 Wai, U.T. - The Role of Unorganized Financial Markets in Economic Development and in the Formulation of Monetary Policy, in : *Savings and Development*, Milano, N 4, 1980, p. 259.

12 Les retombées des finances publiques sur l'économie souterraine (financement par les dépenses publiques) ne sont pas prises en compte dans cette évaluation en raison de l'indisponibilité de données. Par conséquent, l'estimation est sous-évaluée.

Deux constatations majeures se dégagent à la lecture de ce tableau : tendance à la baisse de la pression fiscale et faible élasticité des recettes fiscales par rapport au PIB.

L'évolution bien inquiétante de la pression fiscale peut provenir du rétrécissement de l'assiette fiscale du fait notamment de l'extension de l'économie souterraine (de plus en plus d'activités échappent au fisc). En ce qui concerne l'élasticité, ses faibles valeurs traduisent la rigidité du système fiscal qui reflète la non application de la législation due à sa complexité pour les contribuables et au rapport des forces qui prévaut entre l'économie souterraine et l'économie officielle.

En définitive, si l'élasticité moyenne est prise égale à l'unité, la part de l'économie souterraine estimée à 40 % du PIB entraîne une moins-value fiscale relative de 40 %.

Ceci équivaut pour les années récentes au montant des recettes du Fonds National Unique de Péréquation (FNUP)<sup>13</sup> et à près de 70 % du déficit des opérations globales du Trésor et par conséquent d'endettement intérieur net.

C'est dire l'importance et l'enjeu du rôle de l'économie souterraine pour les finances publiques à travers les liens intertemporels qui s'établissent entre déficits et dettes.

#### **Impact du développement de l'économie souterraine dans le processus d'endettement**

Cet impôt peut être analysé selon deux axes :

- structurel<sup>14</sup>.
- financier.

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13 Le FNUP créé en 1977 gère les ressources et les emplois des Fonds de stabilisation des produits - Caisse.

14 Structurel au sens de relatif à la structure, au système productif.

### Point de vue structurel

La logique de fonctionnement du système productif malgache<sup>15</sup> peut être rappelé brièvement de la façon suivante :

- La ville opère une ponction sur les ressources du monde rural par le maintien de termes de l'échange intérieurs défavorables à la campagne : Celle-ci, productrice de l'essentiel des exportations subit des pertes considérables de pouvoir d'achat (prix réels au producteur décroissants et prix au producteur/prix internationaux insuffisants). Le monde rural finance ainsi, par le jeu des termes de l'échange extérieurs, les importations en crise (biens d'équipement et de consommation intermédiaire et finale destinés principalement à la ville). A ce niveau, la crise des importations est régulée par l'économie souterraine sous forme d'"industrie auto-centrée" qui se développe principalement en ville.

A son tour, le repli des communautés paysannes sur l'auto-subsistance reporte toute la pression sur l'éco-système soumis dès lors à un vaste processus de détérioration sous forme notamment de déforestation. Le dépassement démographique qui en résulte tôt ou tard réforme alors le schéma du système productif sur la ville à travers les flux d'exode rural.

Dans ces conditions, le système productif souffre d'une grande instabilité car le repli sur l'éco-système n'est pas régulé par l'investissement agricole.

Dans ce contexte de système productif régressif, la suppression de l'impôt sur le minimum fiscal (impôt de capitation) et de la taxe sur les bovidés (1973) a desserré les contraintes d'intégration progressive des paysans dans les rapports marchands. Le système fiscal a si vite montré ses limites qu'il a fallu recouvrir depuis 1977 aux ressources du FNUP pour financer une partie des dépenses publiques.

Ainsi la capture des ressources du FNUP, indispensable à l'équilibre des finances publiques, précipite le repli des communautés paysannes, le largage des villes et en définitive le recours croissant à

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15 Ramahatra, O. - *Les fondements théoriques des programmes de stabilisation du Fonds Monétaire International à Madagascar*, thèse Paris X, 1986.

l'endettement pour financer l'économie officielle. Un espace de conflit s'établit entre le développement de la base de ressources essentiellement agricoles, et les finances publiques.

En définitive, le développement de l'économie souterraine a été favorisé par son rôle de régulateur, en termes d'emploi, à la suite de la crise des importations. Mais, se faisant, l'expansion de l'économie souterraine tend à stabiliser la base économique et par conséquent fiscale de l'Etat qui se voit contraint de recourir davantage à l'endettement (intérieur et extérieur).

#### Point de vue financier

L'augmentation de la pression fiscale et par voie de conséquence un meilleur équilibre des finances publiques n'ont pas été réalisés dans le passé.

En outre est-il réaliste d'envisager dans l'immédiat ou à terme une inversion de la tendance ?

L'insuffisance des recettes de l'Etat - notamment du fait du manque à gagner entraîné par l'économie souterraine - rend le déficit budgétaire structurel.

Or, par définition, tout déficit est financé sur emprunts intérieurs (y compris par création monétaire) et/ou extérieurs. Les dettes d'hier font les déficits d'aujourd'hui.

Jusqu'à présent, les déficits ont été jugés sur leur impact présumé sur l'activité économique courante, sur le taux d'inflation et sur la balance des paiements<sup>16</sup>.

La sous-estimation de l'effet cumulé d'une succession de déficits budgétaires provient du caractère présumé temporaire de ces effets.

Un déficit peut certes avoir un effet positif sur la performance économique de l'année en cours mais aussi des effets négatifs sur la performance économique future si l'accroissement de la dette publi-

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16 Greffe (X) : Economie publique, *Economica*, Paris, 1975.

que devient excessif, si des anticipations négatives se forment et si l'investissement diminue à terme.

Ces divers enchaînements montrent toute l'importance des liens intertemporels entre déficits et dettes.

Si les déficits étaient de nature cyclique, la dette publique n'augmenterait pas à terme et, en pourcentage du PIB, peut même diminuer si le taux de croissance est suffisamment élevé.

Cependant des situations très différentes se présentent lorsque :

- les déficits sont élevés et ne résultent pas de fluctuations cycliques de l'économie mais ont un caractère structurel.
- la croissance se ralentit
- les taux d'intérêt réels sont élevés.

Le déficit s'accumule d'année en année et la dette publique rapportée au PIB s'accroît.

Ce phénomène constitue à Madagascar comme dans beaucoup de pays en développement, un des principaux aspects des finances publiques avec son cortège d'effets sévères sur la société.

Sous les effets conjugués de la croissance de la dette publique et du niveau élevé des taux d'intérêt réels, la composante "paiement d'intérêt" connaît alors une croissance rapide.

Au total, le déficit budgétaire s'alimente de lui-même par la composante "paiement d'intérêt" des dépenses publiques.

En d'autres termes, si la pression fiscale reste inchangée ainsi que la part des dépenses dans le PME à l'exclusion des paiements d'intérêt, le déficit budgétaire augmente. Seuls un alourdissement de la fiscalité et/ou une réduction des autres postes de dépenses permettraient, à condition d'atteindre un montant supérieur à celui de l'augmentation des paiements d'intérêt, de réduire le déficit budgétaire et de contenir l'explosion de la dette publique. Plus le temps passe, plus la dette s'accumule, plus les augmentations d'impôt et/ou les réductions de dépenses nécessaires pour contenir le déficit devront être importantes.

C'est pourquoi la tentative de financement par l'inflation constitue, en dernière analyse, le danger principal de l'accumulation de la dette publique<sup>17</sup>.

**Quels sont alors les effets d'une dette publique<sup>18</sup> importante sur l'économie ?**

Cinq effets principaux se dégagent :

- sur les taux d'intérêt dont la hausse peut être freinée pendant un certain temps par des entrées des capitaux extérieurs.
- sur les déficits futurs par la composante "paiement d'intérêt"
- sur l'investissement et la consommation et partant sur la performance future de l'économie en liaison avec les deux effets précédents.
- sur le taux de change et par conséquent sur les échanges commerciaux et les mouvements de capitaux.
- sur les anticipations inflationnistes à terme qui deviennent défavorables.

En somme, l'économie souterraine, qui était apparue comme un mécanisme permettant d'échapper à l'impôt et à la réglementation représente aussi une des contreparties de l'endettement. Par contre, elle reste le régulateur de l'activité économique, au moins en terme d'emploi dans les villes par le développement d'une "industrie auto-centrée".

Ainsi se dégage la problématique de l'économie souterraine :

- Exutoire, soupape de sécurité
- ou frein à l'orthodoxie, la rigueur fiscale et financière.

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17 Carlson (K.M.) : Large Federal Budget Deficits : Prospectives and Prospects, in : *FRB of St Louis Review*, Octobre 1976.

18 La dette publique comprend la dette publique intérieure et la dette publique extérieure.

L'économie souterraine représente le coût de reproduction du système productif. Dans la dynamique du rapport de forces qui prévaut entre l'économie souterraine et l'économie officielle affaiblie mais soutenue massivement par l'extérieur, l'économie souterraine devient une condition nécessaire du fonctionnement de la logique interne du système - La survie est à ce prix. La seule stratégie possible serait un processus de mimétisme économique de l'économie souterraine par le secteur institutionnel, associé à une extension du champ d'action de ce dernier<sup>19</sup>.

En conclusion, tout le pari pour la politique économique repose sur l'intégration progressive de l'économie souterraine dans le processus de modernisation. C'est au fur et à mesure de la réhabilitation par étapes du secteur moderne en crise que l'économie souterraine s'adaptera aux nouvelles règles du jeu imposées par le secteur moderne.

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# Regional Development and the Transition's Dilemmas in the Third World: The New Debate and Search for Alternatives

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## Introduction

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**RESUME:** Les stratégies de développement ont reproduit au cours des trente années écoulées les mêmes rapports structurels d'exploitation entre les entités sociales et les entités territoriales. Dans quels types de structure politique le pluralisme régional et le développement local centralisé sont-ils possibles? La réalisation des objectifs socio-spatiaux ainsi que des objectifs de croissance et de développement passe nécessairement par un changement radical des stratégies économiques et spatiales tant actuelles que révolues.

Les nouvelles théories sur le régionalisme remettent en cause les principes fondamentaux des théories de modernisation et plus précisément la thèse de l'effet d'entraînement progressif et elles préconisent une nouvelle répartition du pouvoir entre toutes les entités socio-spatiales, que ce soit à l'échelle nationale ou sous-nationale. Le contrôle des ressources locales ainsi que leur affectation sont essentiels dans ce cadre et pour y parvenir, il est indispensable de se défaire des structures politico-territoriales centralisées et dominantes qui favorisent quelques-uns et de leur substituer d'autres structures qui garantirait des obligations réciproques entre les diverses entités socio-spatiales qui constituent une nation. Le nouveau débat est soutenu par la question fondamentale de savoir s'il existe un seul socialisme ou s'il y en a plusieurs. Au cas où il y en aurait plusieurs, lequel faut-il retenir? Quel est celui qui favorise le plus l'avènement du pluralisme et un développement local auto-centré?

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As a response to the failure of the older center-down paradigm of modernization theories at the national level and that of the growth pole theory at the subnational level, new theories of regional development and planning in the Third World emerged during the late 1970's and early 1980's.

But despite this theoretical progress in this field during the last decade or so, government policies continue generally to be based on older theories and the conventional center-down paradigm of development. Government bureaucrats, as well as most theorists in this area, still find it difficult to accept **basic needs, agropolitan development and decentralized spatial policies that advocate develop-**

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ment from below rather than from above. For many, these new theories advocating rural and regional development from below are not development, but rather, a new and unacceptable form of utopianism.

The objective of this paper is to explore some of the ramifications of this new debate about what is called in the literature the regional question, or what I would call the question of transition at the sub-national level. First, I will present a brief review of some of these new theories. Then, I will conclude by a summary of the major criticisms of these as a means to better understand why they have become (in the English speaking world at least) the object of so much criticism and even polemics.

### The Agropolitan Development Approach

One of the most popular-and controversial--alternative approaches proposed as a response to the failure of the growth pole approach is the "agropolitan approach", as is reflected in the most recent literature on the subject in the English-speaking world<sup>1</sup>. Introduced first by John Friedmann<sup>2</sup>, it was published in a more extensive form in 1978<sup>3</sup>, and elaborated further since<sup>4</sup>.

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- 1 See for example: A. Gilbert and J. Gugler, *Cities, Poverty and Development, Urbanization in the Third World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982); Ch. Gore, *Regions in Questions: Space, Development and Regional Planning* (London and New York: Methuen, 1984); E.W. Soja, "Regions in Context: Spatiality, Periodicity, and the Historical Geography of the Regional Question", *Society and Space*, No 2 (1985) pp 175-90; idem. "Territorial Idealism and the Political Economy of Regional Development", *City and Region: Journal of Spatial Studies*, N 6 (1983) pp. 55-73.
  - 2 J. Friedmann, "A Spatial Framework for Rural Development: Problems of Organizations and Implementation", *Economie Appliquée*, Nos 2-3 (1975) pp. 519-44.
  - 3 J. Friedmann and M. Douglas, "Agropolitan Development: Towards a New Strategy for Regional Planning in Asia", in L. Fu Chen and K. Salih (eds.) *Growth Pole Strategy and Regional Development Policy: Asian Experience and Alternatives Approaches* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1978) pp. 163-92.
  - 4 J. Friedmann and C. Weaver, *Territory and Function. The Evolution of Regional Planning* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979); J. Friedmann, "Basic Needs, Agropolitan Development, and Planning from Below", *World development*, No 6 (1979) pp. 607-13; Idem., "The active Community: Toward a Political-Territorial Framework for Rural Development in Asia", *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, No 2 (1981) pp. 235-61, Idem., "Urban Bias in Regional Development Policy", *Working Paper*, 29, School of Architecture and Urban Planning, UCLA (1981); Idem., "Regional Planning for Rural Mobilization in Africa", *Rural Africana*, Nos 12-13 (1982) pp. 3-20, and idem, "Political and Technical Moments in Development: Agropolitan Development Revisited", *Society and Space*, No 2 (1985) pp. 155-67..

As a strategy of "accelerated rural development" designated originally for rural areas in Asia<sup>5</sup>, the approach is an attempt to deal with all the problems, the practical as well as the political ones, created by the transfer of the growth pole approach in developing countries<sup>6</sup>. And in this respect, the approach is in complete opposition with the growth pole approach.

In order to understand this fundamental opposition, it is important to understand, I think, the whole philosophy upon which the agropolitan development approach is based. To begin with is the rejection of the old paradigm of development, the unmodified pursuit of which would be "suicidal"<sup>7</sup>? This rejection is, of course, concerned with the spatial as well as with the non spatial dimensions of development. Second is the adoption of the basic philosophy of the emerging new paradigm of development, which is "no longer economic growth but social development, with focus on specific human needs"<sup>8</sup>. Also, according to the new paradigm, priority attention must be given to rural development; the planning for this rural development "must be decentralized, participatory and deeply immersed in the particulars of local settings". This planning, therefore, "will have to be based on qualitative judgments as much as on quantitative techniques, and qualitative judgements as much as on quantitative techniques, and its style will have to be transactive"<sup>9</sup>.

Based on, these premises; J. Friedmann and M. Douglas's objective "is to propose a spatial policy for the emerging paradigm"<sup>10</sup>. After a survey of past development strategies in several Asian countries and an analysis of their failure, Friedman and Douglas propose a new approach, of which the major features can be summarized as follows:

-Contrary to the growth pole approach, and this is one of the most important features of the agropolitan approach, basic needs are given an absolute priority rather than a "complementary" role. Related to

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5 And subsequently for Africa (Friedmann, "Urban Bias...") and all agrarian societies of the Third world (Friedmann, "Political and Technical Moments...").

6 For an overview of this issue, see: E. Moudoud, "The Fall and Rise of the Growth Pole Approach", *Discussion Paper, N 89*, Department of Geography, Syracuse University, November 1986.

7 Friedmann and Douglas, op. cit., p. 164.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

this, and although the diversification of the rural economy through the development of rural industries is required<sup>11</sup>, the development of agriculture is central to the strategy.

-These two socioeconomic objectives are related to a third objective: the stabilization of the rural population and the reduction therefore of rural-urban migrations. In order to do so, an attempt is made to transform the countryside by introducing and adapting elements of urbanism to rural areas. This can be done by redirecting investments in urban centers to these rural settings transforming them in "agropolises" or "cities-in-the-field".

-The spatial framework of the strategy is organized upon these "agropolises" or villages. Above the village, there is the central territorial unit of the agropolitan approach: the "agropolitan districts". The agropolitan districts are constituted as a collection of adjacent villages and are centered on an existing market town. Above the agropolitan districts there are the multidistrict regions, which constitute the national territory. The population of each agropolitan district varies according to local conditions from 50 000 to 150 000 people and at the multidistrict region level from 0.5 million to 5 million people<sup>12</sup>.

-Finally and most important of all, each agropolitan district is treated as a "single, integrated, and self-governing unit" which has "sufficient autonomy and economic resources to plan and carry out its own development"<sup>13</sup>. Thus, self-sufficiency and self-government are considered the keys for the success of the agropolitan development approach. These two basic requirements are needed to protect the districts from any form of external exploitation. Here again the approach is in complete opposition with the growth pole approach. Since disparities exist not only between core and periphery itself, a policy of "selective territorial closures" is needed. This policy is defined as

*... a policy of enlightened self-reliance at relevant levels of territorial integration: district, region and nation. This condition flies straight in the face of the ideology of free trade and comparative advantage and the attempts of transnational enterprises to organize a functionally integrated world economy under its tutelage... It means to*

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11 Friedmann, "Active Community...", p. 164.

12 Ibid, p. 252; and Friedmann and Douglas, op. cit., p. 185.

13 Ibid.

*rely less on outside aid and investment, to involve the masses in development, to initiate a conscious process of social learning, to diversify production, and to pool resources. It means to say 'we' and to assert a territorial interest<sup>14</sup>.*

This policy of "selective territorial closure", however, does not mean that the approach advocates a pure policy of "autarky". Friedman is very clear about that: "Closure' does not mean, 'autarky', but would help protect weak, peripheral regions against their domination and ruthless exploitation by more powerful core region interests<sup>15</sup>". In other words, this does not mean that the agropolitan district

*...has complete autonomy over its own affairs, something close, say to political sovereignty. It is not, after all, a closed social formation, even though a large and perhaps a major part of its basic needs are furnished from its own production... The idea is not to create miniaturized agropolitan states (the classical anarchist solution) but a robust, humanly adequate, interdependent, and articulate political community --a social formation that gives full scope to individual and collective powers<sup>16</sup>.*

In this scheme of development, "which is rooted in the household economy, the village, and the agropolitan district", the role of central government is defined as follows:

*... central government must act to inspire, to empower, to guide, to facilitate, to promote, to assist and to support. It must not plan, command, administer, or implement projects of its own unless in support of the entire effort and therefore beyond local capacity<sup>17</sup>.*

Here are very briefly, what seem to me the major features of the agropolitan development approach, which as a strategy of rural and regional development has its roots in a "federalist" political philosophy. It is interesting to note in this respect that in arguing that "in agropolitan development the age-old conflict between town and

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14 Friedmann and Weaver, op. cit., P. 195.

15 Friedman, "Urban Bias...", p. 18.

16 Friedmann, "Basic Needs...", p. 610.

17 Friedmann, "Active Community...", p. 267.

countryside can be transcended", Friedmann and Douglas in a footnote state:

*This is not as crazy as it sounds. Under a capitalist framework, it has already been achieved in countries such as Switzerland and Germany, where the contrast between rural and urban has virtually disappeared. Rural, or rather "agropolitan" life there has become simply another "lifestyle"<sup>18</sup>.*

The two countries given as examples both have a federalist political system. But Friedmann is aware of the problems that could face the approach in countries with "Jacobin", very centralized administrative and political systems, such as almost all former French protectorates and colonies. In countries with this type of administrative and political systems, the success of the strategy will depend on the good will of central governments as Friedmann observes:

*Those who look for simple answers will be disappointed. Though necessary, the agropolitan framework does not, by itself, ensure results for accelerated rural development. A framework provides the context within which development occurs; it is not itself that development. The framework, of course, should be facilitative, and it should direct the stream of development activities in the desired direction. But how well it does its work will depend on other circumstances, not least on the commitment of the central government. Action must be locally based and motivated, but the state must prepare the right environment for action<sup>19</sup>.*

In another paper, Friedmann expresses, however, a much more skeptical, even pessimistic view :

*Unfortunately, political approaches to development are not particularly welcome. Because they assume a different distribution of power, they challenge the existing structures. And since they are merely the writings of scholars, politicians can safely ignore them<sup>20</sup>.*

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18 Friedmann and Douglas, op. cit., p. 183.

19 Friedmann, "Active Community...", p. 260.

20 Friedmann, "Urban bias...", P. 18.

### The Territorial Development Doctrine

Following Friedmann and Douglas, the agropolitan development approach has been expanded by different authors such as Lo Fu-Chen and Kamal Salih<sup>21</sup>, and in a more historical perspective, by Walter Stohr<sup>22</sup>. But it is Clyde Weaver who, after a first contribution<sup>23</sup>, has transformed the approach into a political model of regional development. Using a "quasi-anthropological perspective"<sup>24</sup>, Weaver elaborates in fact a new doctrine: "the territorial development doctrine"<sup>25</sup>. Weaver's main objective is to provide a new framework for rethinking the "regional question" and his central argument follows:

My basic theme is that continued functional integration of the space economy, with its attendant territorial division of labor and polarization of economic and political power, is a major cause of such problems as urban congestion, regional inequalities, rural poverty and political rebellion. Despite the conventions of inherited regional development theory, and the emphasis of recent neo-Marxist criticism, I will argue for the potential benefits of territorial development through selective regional closure. Growing regional consciousness, major settlement pattern changes, and the proliferation of regional liberation movements may well provide the necessary incentives, if

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- 21 L. Fu-Chen and K. Salih, "Growth Poles, Agropolitan Development and Polarization Reversal: The Debate and Search for Alternatives", in W. Stohr and D.R.F. Taylor (eds.) *Development from above or below? The Dialectics of Regional Planning in Developing Countries* (New-York: Wiley, 1981) pp. 123-52.
- 22 W. Stohr, "Development from Below: The Bottom-up and periphery-Inward development Paradigm", in Stohr and Taylor (eds.) *op. cit.*, pp. 39-72.
- 23 Friedmann and Weaver, *op. cit.*
- 24 W.J. Coffey and M. Polese, "Local Development as Element of Regional Policy: An Exploratory Analysis" (paper presented at the Sixth Annual Meeting of the Canadian Regional Science Association, University of Ottawa, 7-8 June 1982).
- 25 C. Weaver, *Regional Theory and Regionalism: Towards Rethinking the Regional Question*, School of Architecture and Urban Planning, UCLA, 1978, *idem*, "Development theory and the regional question: A Critique of Spatial Planning and its Detractors", in Stohr and Taylor (eds.) *op. cit.*, pp. 73-105; and *idem*, *Regional Development and the Local Community: Planning, Politics and Social Context* (New York: Wiley, 1984).

*properly perceived and acted upon, to usher in a new era of decentralization and regional self-determination*<sup>26</sup>.

As we can see, Weaver is going far more of what Friedmann and Douglas have proposed in terms of decentralization. Based on the premise that "regional development is above all an ethical/political question<sup>27</sup>", territorial development is defined in these terms:

*Territorial development simply refers to the use of an area's resources by its residents to meet their own needs. The main definitives of these needs are regional culture, political power, and economic resources. Territorial development can be compared and contrasted to the idea of functional development, i.e., the narrow exploitation of a region's potentials only because of the role these play in the larger international economy*<sup>28</sup>.

Now, how can this be achieved? Weaver's response: "The animating force behind territorial development -the thing that makes it possible - I have called wilful community<sup>29</sup>". But what does this mean?

*This means clarifying and transforming the shared heritage within regional communities in regard to the things they value and want to accomplish, and using this new feeling of purpose and unity as the basis for bold new initiatives and actions. Two of the major substantive components of territorial development are selective regional closure and strategic regional advantage*<sup>30</sup>.

As we can see we have here a political doctrine of regional development, the heart of which are: "wilful community action" and "selective regional closure". But why is this so important for Weaver? Weaver's response:

*Trade theory, one of the foundations of regional science, makes the presumption that transactions between economic actors take place on the basis of equal ex-*

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26 C. Weaver, *Regional Theory and Regionalism...*, P. 2 (emphasis in the text).

27 C. Weaver, *Development Theory and the Regional Question...*, p. 93.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.



*change. Even the briefest reflection upon the daily newspaper will quickly dispel such quaint notions, however, and this acceptance as the basis for self-interested economic policies is only in the advantage of those in favored positions of economic and political power. Regions cannot specialize in "what they do best" and expect to get equal return for their efforts, because the "resources at the disposal of some other areas and the transnational corporations give them an undeniable bargaining edge. So for the weak, the "lagging", the disinherited, the only feasible solution is to refuse to play the game by rules that, by definition, will beat them"<sup>31</sup>.*

Now, how can the territorial development doctrine, in terms of regional planning, be applied? Weaver provides a list of some of the key components that such an approach should include. Here is a brief summary of these actions:

- the creation of jobs through meeting regional needs;
- the use of residential activities as the key to growth;
- the development of region-serving infrastructure and community facilities;
- the development of a network of services and community institutions;
- the promotion, and this is crucial in the approach, of regional identity and historical regional values through education; (there is no room here for "Jacobin", centralist education systems that teach all children of France, for example, that they are all descendants of the Gaulois!
- the development of local control and a decentralized political system, too, are of a crucial importance in order to insure that the concepts of wilful community and territorial control of the regional economy (this means a control over the capital accumulated in the region and over the multiplier effects of economic activities, as well as the control over extraregional linkages) are a reality;
- at the spatial level, decentralization is also necessary in order to achieve a spatial mix of rural-urban activities. A growth centers doctrine must be replaced by a model of overall territorial development.
- Finally, for natural resource development to contribute to territorial development, three conditions must be met: (1) the proportion of resources allocated to earning foreign exchange should be

31 Ibid.

critically scrutinized and regulated; (2) the bulk of resources should be used to meet regional production needs; and (3) restraint and conservation should be the bywords<sup>32</sup>.

We have here the whole argumentation of the approach and of the philosophy upon which it is based. And as we can see, it is in fact a political project. But it is not however, as the agropolitan approach, a "classic anarchist solution". Weaver does not neglect the role of central government, although "regional development is a regional project"<sup>33</sup>. And in this respect it is clear that his theory is deeply influenced by the work and ideas of Patrick Geddes, Peter Kropotkin and of course Pierre-Joseph Proudhon<sup>34</sup>. Weaver himself recognizes the "utopian" character of his theory, given the nature of most political regimes in developing countries. He argues, however, that:

*It is no use trying to dream away the power of transnational corporations. They exist. It is no less futile attempting to deny the realities of the centralizing nation-state. But accepting their ideologies is a matter of belief. There are many worlds and many realities - it is for us to choose - and this choice is the paramount fact of regional life. Functional power is dependent upon suppression of regional consciousness and the will of territorial communities. The fate of a community of destiny lies in the common beliefs and values of its people. To mention only a few striking examples, think of the Irish in 1920, India in 1945, Algeria in 1960. Who would predict their success? Their political victories were a matter of will. What has not been sufficiently recognized is that the economic world is analogous. All technocratic propaganda notwithstanding, economy is, indeed, political economy<sup>35</sup>.*

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32 For further details, see Weaver, *Development Theory and the Region Question...*, pp. 93-98; and idem, *Regional Development and the Local Community*, chap. 8, pp. 140-59.

33 C. Weaver, *Development Theory and the Regional Question...*, p. 95.

34 C. Weaver is the only American regional scientist I know, who has tried to integrate in his work the great heritage, but completely unknown, of Proudhon in the American tradition of regional development and planning; see Weaver, *Regional Development and the Local community...*, see especially chapter 3, pp. 31-56.

35 C. Weaver, *Development Theory and the Region Question...*, pp. 96-97.

And then he concludes:

*In its broad outlines territorial development through wilful community action cannot help but appear less "practical and realistic" than the established orthodoxies... But this apparent utopianism will quickly fade as more information comes to light on the history of regionalist thought and the numerous regional movements now in full swing in many parts of the world come to fruition. As it becomes more fully elaborated the territorialist doctrine can provide a vital response to the regional question and a workable strategy for development from below*<sup>36</sup>.

### **The Transformational Development Approach**

The third major new approach I would like to review is Dennis Rondinelli and Kenneth Ruddle's regional development strategy<sup>37</sup>. In line with the "development from below" school, Rondinelli and Ruddle, as a response not only to the failure of the growth pole approach but to the whole traditional economic and spatial strategies of the past, propose a strategy that advocates economic and spatial integration from below. Rejecting the assumptions of conventional economic theory, they express the central argument upon which their strategy is based.

*For us, the essence of development is expansion of participation in economic activities through the creation of social and economic systems that draw larger numbers of people into processes of production, exchange, and consumption, that involve greater numbers in entrepreneurship and employment, that increase levels of income for the poorest group and reduce disparities between rich and poor so that a larger majority of people can obtain basic goods, save and invest, and gain access to services necessary to enrich the quality of their lives. Development is a process of expanding the productive capacity of public and private organizations, large and small firms, rural and urban regions of a country at a steady pace*<sup>38</sup>.

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36 Ibid. p. 98.

37 D.A. Rondinelli and K. Ruddle, *Urbanization and Rural Development: A spatial Policy for Equitable Growth* (New York: Praeger, 1978).

38 Ibid., p. v.

Based on this central idea, the strategy calls for local participation and a "deliberate policy of economic intervention and spatial planning of investment" in order to reduce social and spatial disparities<sup>39</sup>. What characterizes first, Rondinelli and Ruddle's regional development approach, is that, as noted by Friedman, "The authors go further than almost anyone in advocating a regional approach to rural development"<sup>40</sup>.

And indeed, chapter after chapter, Rondinelli and Ruddle provide in a very detailed manner all the social, economic and political - institutional components of their approach. Here is a brief summary of some of them:

- The socioeconomic components include: the rationalization of marketing structures; the development and improvement of agricultural credit and financial institutions in general; the development of basic physical infrastructure; the development of community service; the development of rural industrialization in combination with farming development; the use of appropriate technology; and the development of education and training.

- The political-institutional components are: the development of local organizational capacities and local support services; the development of local capacities of project planning and implementation through the creation of local implementing organizations and managerial and technical labor power; the existence of real political commitment to decentralization and local participation; finally and most important of all, the use of regions as the base for national development is seen as the sine qua non condition of the approach's success.

Here are then, very briefly summarized, some of the major nonspatial components of the approach<sup>41</sup>.

But although rural development is the central component of the approach, it does not neglect urban development. Contrary to the growth pole approach, an attempt is made here to integrate rural-urban development in a unique regional economic policy. That is why special attention is paid to all the linkages between economic activities, social, physical infrastructures, and rural-urban settlements at different levels. And the concept of "transformational development

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39 Ibid., p. 58.

40 Friedmann, "Urban bias..."; P. 9.

41 For further details, see Rondinelli and Ruddle, op. cit., chapters 4, 5 and 6.

approach" is used here as the process of a gradual and continual economic and spatial integration of existing human communities and their productive activities<sup>42</sup>. Contrary to the growth pole approach as well as to the agropolitan approach, the approach of Rondinelli and Ruddle in avoiding the "urban-industrial" bias, does not fall in the "trap" of what can be called the "rural bias"<sup>43</sup>. Rondinelli and Ruddle express this position in these terms:

*Large cities and rural communities both play crucial roles in the development process. The whole spectrum of human settlements-villages, market towns, intermediate cities, and metropolitan areas-must be strengthened and integrated into a mutually sustaining network of national production, distribution, and exchange centers. Basic structural imbalances are the primary obstacles to achieving growth with greater equity, and the dualism that now characterizes most developing societies must be radically reduced<sup>44</sup>.*

So here, as a "bottom-up" approach and although special attention is given to lower order spatial units such as villages, market towns and small cities, their strategy does not neglect the developmental role of larger urban centers such as intermediate cities or regional centers.

Continuing his efforts, Rondinelli, in several other publications, focuses his attention on these intermediate cities, which play a crucial role in the spatial strategy he advocates with Ruddle<sup>45</sup>. It is in the frame of that strategy that Rondinelli develops further his research on the different factors and dynamics of the growth of these cities and the ways of strengthening their role in regional and national

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42 Ibid., P. 159.

43 See Gilbert and Gugler, op. cit.

44 Rondinelli and Ruddle, op. cit., p. 52.

45 See D. Rondinelli, "Intermediate cities in developing countries: A comparative Analysis of their demographic, social and economic characteristics", *Third World Planning Review*, N 4 (1982) pp. 357-86; idem, "The Dynamics of Growth of Secondary Cities in Developing Countries", *The Geographical Review*, No 1 (1983) pp. 42-57; Idem, *Secondary Cities in Developing Countries* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1983); Idem, "Towns and Small Cities in Developing Countries", *The Geographical Review*, No 4 (1983) pp. 379-95; Idem, "Population Distribution and Economic Development in Africa: The Need for Urbanization Policies", *Population Research and Policy Review*, No 2 (1985) pp. 173-96; and idem, "The Crisis of Urbanisation in Asia: Finding Alternatives to Megapolitan Growth", *The Journal of Social, Political and Economic Studies*, N 1 (1985) pp. 69-86.

development. It is in that frame that their role has to be understood. In this respect, Rondinelli observes that

*Secondary city development strategies are also a reaction to the failure of growth pole policies that attempted during the 1950's and the 1960's to transplant modern, large-scale export-oriented, capital-intensive industries in a few regional centers. Programs for strengthening the network of secondary cities seek instead to build on the existing economic base and reinforce the dynamics of development in intermediate urban centers*<sup>46</sup>.

So, here, a regional policy based on an integrated rural-urban development and focusing more specifically on the crucial role of these intermediate spatial units of the spatial system, is not a simple replication of the growth pole approach. What Rondinelli advocates here, is a secondary city development strategy, which

*... must go beyond creating a few urban "growth poles". Unless development policies seek to strengthen indigenous economic activities and to diversify them in appropriate ways, they will either have little impact or be perverse. Unless the economies of secondary cities are integrated with those of their regions, through appropriate linkage with small cities, towns, and rural villages, their growth may generate strong "backwash effects" that drain their hinterlands of resources*<sup>47</sup>.

In brief, what Rondinelli advocates in the framework of the development strategy he has proposed with Ruddle is a more balanced and integrated spatial development strategy, in which secondary cities and towns could play, through appropriate economic and spatial linkage, their development role. Writing about Africa, Rondinelli, after having analyzed the failure of past economic and spatial development policies in the continent wrote:

All of this suggests that widespread economic growth, a more balanced distribution of population, and more diffuse patterns of urbanization, are unlikely to be achieved by investing heavily in a single metropolitan area and expecting spread and trickle-down effects automatically to raise average levels of income and reduce high levels

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46 Rondinelli, *Intermediate Cities*, P. 1.

47 Rondinelli, *Secondary Cities...*, p. 14.

of poverty throughout the country. If African governments want geographically widespread economic development and a more balanced distribution of the population, they

*will have to invest in a more geographically dispersed manner*<sup>48</sup>.

## Conclusion

As a response to the failure of modernization theories in general and growth pole theory in particular, new theories of economic and spatial development in Third World countries have emerged during the late 1970's and early 1980's. This paper presented a brief review of some of them.

In this review, I have tried to show how some authors, who are in the forefront of the current debate about regional development and planning in the Third World, have tried to address the problems created by past and present economic and spatial development strategies. Despite their divergences, all of them, it is important to stress, agree on one basic fact: that past and present economic and spatial strategies must be radically changed if both social and spatial, as well as growth and development objectives are to be achieved.

Now, one may ask: why these three alternatives? Why has the focus been on so limited number of alternatives? The focus on only these three alternatives has two reasons: (1) these three alternative approaches are the only most comprehensive and most elaborated alternatives. They deal with economic, political and spatial problems in a holistic and integrated manner. All other propositions I can find in the literature, although very useful, are, however, partial, fragmented and deal with one or few aspects of the problem<sup>49</sup>; (2) As attested to by the literature of the last five or six years, the alternative approaches reviewed here have become, in the English-speaking world at least, the base for the current debate and even for controversies

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48 Rondinelli, *Population Distribution...*, pp. 187-88.

49 See for example: Fu-Chen and Salih in Stohr and Taylor (eds.) op. cit.; D.R.F. Taylor, "The role and Functions of Lower Order Centers in Rural Development" *Working Paper*, No 79; UNCRD, Nagoya (1979); and his attempt to conceptualize his propositions in "Conceptualizing Development Space in Africa, *Geografiska Annales*, No 63 (1980) pp. 87-93.

on regional development and planning in the world in general and in the Third World in particular<sup>50</sup>

I have no desire here to get into these controversies. But I have to discuss, even very briefly, this very important aspect of this new approach about the question of the transition at the subnational level and therefore some of the criticism addressed to the alternative approaches reviewed here and state in few words my own position.

The criticism I mentioned came, interestingly, from both non-Marxist and Marxist (I would say "classic" Marxist) side. The agropolitan development approach, for example, was dismissed as "Utopian" and "naive and superficial"<sup>51</sup>. Its main author was accused of liking "to dream and romanticize". Marxists critiques - and these are I believe the most serious and powerful critiques - on the other hand dismissed the "new territorialism" for its:

*overly romantic and utopian presentation of regionalism, regional planning and the territoriality of social life, and for its obfuscating interpretation of the history of capitalist development, the role of the state, and the nature of territorial politics*<sup>52</sup>.

Another author simply dismissed all three new approaches as "neo-populist". Because, it was argued, they failed to deal with class interests and because their objective, in focussing on spatial rather than on social change, is to maintain the "status quo"<sup>53</sup>.

As I said I have no desire here to get into these controversies. But this criticism, and this is the least I can say, is not only unfair, but and most important, misleading. It is a simplistic interpretation of the fundamental key elements of these new approaches. Moreover, it is a dangerous "obfuscation" of the real nature of the debate on the regional question in general and that of the question of the transition at the subnational level in the Third World. As we have seen, in all the new approaches the issue of power (I mean by this political as

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50 Again, I would like to stress that I am aware of the work of other researchers in other parts of the world: Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe. It is, however, beyond the scope of this paper to review all the current literature on this question (in different languages) in the world. Secondly, and despite all my efforts, it is almost impossible to keep track of all the newly published work - in at least the francophone world - from the United States.

51 See Friedmann, "Political Technical Moments...", op. cit., p. 156.

52 Soja, "Regions in Context...", op. cit., p. 176.

53 See Ch. Gore, op. cit., chapter 5, pp. 146-171.



well as economic power) is central. By challenging the basic tenets of modernization theories and more explicitly the trickle-down doctrine, they assume a redistribution of power between all socio-spatial entities at the national and the subnational levels. So here the control over local resources and their allocation is fundamental. Again, it is not my intention to engage in polemics. And in fact, the authors of the new approaches have responded themselves to these accusations<sup>54</sup>. My comments are addressed to the heart of this new debate. And I would in this respect limit them to Marxist criticisms. And my own answer would be this very simple question: "Comrades, Marx or Proudhon?". In other words: "Comrades, do we need, when For all those who are familiar with the debate that has and continue to oppose "Marx and Proudhon", and are still concerned about the forms of the transition towards a genuine and democratic socialism - a feasible socialism - the answer to these questions are of a vital importance for the clarity of the debate on the question of "planning" the transition today in the Third World and this at the regional as well as at the national levels<sup>55</sup>.

I have recently by analyzing the historical and political roots of regional disparity in an African country - Tunisia - over the last 100 years, attempted to show that the real issue behind this new debate is not to replace "Humpty Dumpty by Dumpty Humpty" (or "Bonnet Blanc" by "Blanc Bonnet"), but rather, and especially, to find the ade-

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54 See Friedmann, op. cit.; D. Rondinelli, "Regions in Questions; A Critical Review", *Third World Planning Review*, No 3 (1985) pp. 263-68, and Weaver's review of "Regions in Questions", in *Society and Space*, No 2 (1985), pp. 265-70.

55 For further discussion on this so vital question, see among others: H. Lefebvre, *La Proclamation de la Commune* (Paris; Gallimard, 1965); G. Gurvitch, *Proudhon, sa vie, son oeuvre* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965) and Idem, "Proudhon et Marx", *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie*, Janvier-Juin (1966) pp. 7-17; B. Veyenne, *Le Fédéralisme de P.J. Proudhon* (Paris; Presse d'Europe, 1973) and idem, *Histoire de l'Idée Fédéraliste: Les Lignes Proudhonniennes* (Paris; Presse d'Europe, 1981), J. Langlois, *Defense et Actualité de Proudhon* (Paris; Payot, 1976); La rue (Revue Culturelle et Littéraire d'Expression Anarchiste) *Autogestion* (Special Issue) No 29 (1981); Pierre Kropotkine, *l'Etat: son rôle dans l'histoire* (Paris; Publico, 1983); Fédération Anarchiste de Paris, *Centralisme et Fédéralisme* (Paris; Publications de la Fédération Anarchiste, 1983); C. Weaver, "Romance of the Roses: A Discourses on the Path to Regional Reconstruction", *Society and Space*, No 2 (1985) pp. 239-58; R. Williams, "Towards Many Socialisms", *Socialist Review*, No 85 (1986) pp. 45-65.

quate political structures within which regional pluralism and decentralized local development can be achieved<sup>56</sup>. This can be done, I argued, only by the redistribution of power between the state and the region and all other socio-spatial entities from the urban communes to the rural communes. This, of course, was not intended to suppress the state, but to reduce it to its necessary, and unfortunately inevitable, minimum. The fundamental objective of my propositions in this study was to create a political-territorial structure of a federalist type that would guarantee, first, a system of reciprocal obligations between the different socio-spatial entities that constitute nation, as well as the stability of the whole system by getting rid, once and for all, of centralized and centralist political-territorial structures that began, in most francophone Africa, for example to seriously threaten the stability and unity of many countries despite now more than three decades of development and "nation building". It is up to each country, to each society, to find the ways to build these new political foundations. And these, as Ahmed Baba Miske has superbly put it in his "Lettre ouverte aux Elites du Tiers Monde", must be "rooted in the way of life of this society, in its realities and felt as its own"<sup>57</sup>. By adopting the ideological, political, economic and spatial tenets of modernization theories - and this is whether these come from Moscow or Washington, D.C. - most development strategies adopted during the last 30 years or so perpetuate the same exploitative structural relationship between social and territorial entities. And that is the fundamental merits of the alternatives reviewed in this paper. They don't propose recipes, magic formulas or a kind of a blueprint applicable universally, but a new analytical framework and a new basis upon which, and according to each context, something new can be build. In this new framework, everything starts, and not ends, when we get rid of "centralization" and all "hegemonic" structures that favor the very few, the elites. And this is whether these adopt "capitalist" or "socialist" rethoric.

Now, and I can hear it, "Jacobism" and "Stalinists", alike will oppose the same old argument: "You Prodhonists are hopeless! Always coming up with the same eclectic "foolishness"; or that "...regional equality requires a strong centralized socialist state with strong redistributive powers"<sup>58</sup>. I really don't know how to explain to the

56 E. Moudoud, *Modernization, The State and Regional Disparity in Developing Countries: Tunisia in Historical Perspective 1881-1982* (Boulder: CO, Westview Press, Special Studies on Africa, forthcoming).

57 Ahmed Baba Miske, *Lettre Ouverte aux Elites du Tiers Monde* (Paris: Editions Le Sycomore, 1981) p. 87.

58 Weaver, "Romance of the Roses...", op. cit., pp 244 and 249.

"unshakable" Jacobin-Stalinist that the issue here is not to replace the capitalist state by the socialist state (I say this at the risk of playing the devil's advocate!!!), but to have a genuine and truly democratic socialism. Is a "strong centralized state" a guarantee to more justice, to self-regional and local development and above all to what John Agnew has called a "strong democracy"<sup>59</sup>?

Furthermore, the final question I would like to ask (because it addresses the fundamental underlying issue of this debate - a very old debate, indeed) is this: is there only one socialism or many socialisms? If there is only one, and only one, then, there is no debate at all. But if, as I believe, there are many, the questions to be asked, then, are: which one to choose? Which one is more conducive to regional pluralism and self-local development? That of Marx or that of Proudhon?

The debate will continue. But and whatever my "Proudhonism", I cannot think in this regard, of a better conclusion than Hermassi's remark, more relevant than ever in his *The Third World Reassessed*, that

*It is no longer possible to claim with any plausibility that the industrial societies hold up to the Third World the image of its future; the future of the Third World remains to be invented and in this endeavor, the need for an imaginative social science is as compelling as ever. What is in part expected of it is neither to simply layout the failings of non-western cultures nor to merely decry the overwhelming constraints of the world capitalist system, but to show how, despite inner flaws and outer assaults, Third World people are still capable of making their own history<sup>60</sup>.*

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59 See John Agnew, "The Intellectual Devaluation of Place and the Possibility of "Strong Democracy", *Occasional Papers Series*, N 5, Center for the study of Citizenship, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University, October 1985.

60 E. Hermassi, *The Third World Reassessed* (Berkeley: University of California, 1980) p. 209.

# Debates

## Comments on Democracy and Political Instability

T. Mkandawire \*

Anyang's writing on problems of democracy, authoritarian rule and presidentialism in Africa constitutes one of the most refreshing writings on Africa. This is especially true when the options suggested for Africa are generally grim and authoritarian. My comments are largely confined to the article in *Africa Development* which is, in a way, a neat summary of his reflections on these matters as he has discussed them in a number of his publications.

Anyang makes a link between democracy and development, which is at the same time useful and problematic. It is useful because it constitutes part of the long overdue reaction to a "consensus" that over many years theoretically lent support to nondemocratic rule and relegated the lives of much of humankind to various forms of authoritarian rule because that was the only way they or their countries could ever "develop". The new approach, for which Anyang has been the most ardent spokesperson in Africa, turn the tables against this approach and instead posits "developmental democracy" as a more viable and efficacious route. It is this that constitutes the problematic half of Anyang's views because his discourse in political

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- 1 In the last few years he has extensively written on the subject. See, for instance, "State and Society in Kenya: The Disintegration of the nationalist Coalitions and the Rise of Presidential Authoritarianism" *Africa Development* Vol. x1 no. 4, 1986; Introduction to P. Anyang Nyong'o (ed) *Popular Struggles for Democracy in Africa* (London: Zed Press, 1987); "Fighting for Democracy" (a review of Shivji's monograph "Fight my Beloved Continent: New Democracy in Africa") and the Review of Richard Sandbrook's book "The Politics of Africa's Stagnation" both in *Southern African Political and Economic Weekly*, March 1989.
- 2 Peter Anyang "Political Instability and the Prospects for Democracy in Africa", *Africa Development*, vol XIII n°1, 1988

regimes is still cast in purely instrumentalist terms and within an essentially "developmentalist" perspective.

Let me start by a brief presentation of Anyang's central thesis. "Democracy..is important to Africa's development in and of itself. At the centre of the failure of African states to chart viable paths for development (or industrialisation) is the issue of lack of accountability, hence of democracy as well"<sup>3</sup>

Lack of accountability leads to gross misuse of public resources and hence low levels of accumulation. Presumably, democracy, with its in-built accountability can lead to more responsible use of public resources and hence, high levels of development.

More categorically, Anyang states:

*"There has thus emerged a definite correlation between the lack of democracy in African politics and the deterioration in socio-economic conditions"*<sup>4</sup>.

*"...the issue of democracy is not only at the centre of the daily affairs of governance, it also influences the extent to which surpluses can be generated in the sphere of public ventures to ensure some accumulation"*<sup>5</sup>.

A second virtue of democracy as an instrument for development is that it ensures stability. Not only do the nonparticipatory structures lead to non-accountability and therefore misuse of surplus, they are "by their very nature, unstable" (p 75). Anyang then cites the case of Kenya and Ivory Coast as evidence of this salutary effect of participatory systems. The inclusion of Malawi among the "success stories" spoils the neat correlation, but this is treated as a more or less freaky case.

First, correlation does not suggest causation. It could be equally argued that the high rates of growth provided the state more room for making material concessions to a broader range of interests and could therefore permit the open articulation of these interests. Second, it is doubtful that such a correlation exists in Africa. The case of Malawi is not merely a quirk, as Anyang suggests, but typical

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3 *Africa Development* Vol. XIII n° 1

4 *Ibid*, p. 72.

5 *Ibid*, p. 73

of a number of cases in which high rates of accumulation have taken place under extremely repressive regimes. There is no *prima facie* case why democracy should lead to higher surplus generation. One could plausibly argue that since accumulation means postponed consumption and calls for "sacrifices", it will call forth authoritarian rule which has the "political will" and the military wherewithal to impose "austerity" or "discipline". It is no mere accident that the "libertarians" that call for "freeing" the economy are rarely at pains when that is accompanied by the chaining of the polity.

Anyang argues that the faith placed in developmental dictatorships by the Huntingtons and other "modernisers" turned out to be unfounded "because governing elites have chosen to privatise the state and personalize political power so as to meet their very narrow and private needs over and above any public good." This may be true but the answer may not be democratic rule but the replacement of existing "personal rule" with other types of "personal rule" or bureaucratic-authoritarian rule. These are the explicit suggestions of people like Ergas and Ekeh<sup>6</sup> and the implicit "realism" of people like Richard Sandbrook and Hyden.

For Ergas the bureaucratic-authoritarian option is suggested for Africa.

*Some students of the present economic crisis in Africa have wondered about the relevance of the Latin-American model of "bureaucratic authoritarianism" - a model based on a "dominant coalition" of high level technocrats, senior military officers, and powerful multinationals in a partnership with local entrepreneurs. The prevalent wisdom appears to be that the appropriate conditions do not yet exist, at least in most of the African continent, to enable that model to work. However, as an indication of what is involved - in terms of problems and promises - it is a concept well worth studying on a comparative basis, in preparation for the not-too-distant future when such a system may become relevant for some*

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6 Peter Ekeh, "Development Theory and the African Predicament", *Africa Development*, Vol XI, vol no. 4 1986

*of the larger African countries."*<sup>7</sup>

For Sandbrook, the solution is the one nondevelopmental "personal rule" (Bokassa, Idi Amin) with a developmental one Houphouet-Boigny, Kenyatta):

*"Realistically...our analysis does not suggest that democracy has any real prospect in the limiting conditions of contemporary Africa. What is the best feasible alternative? Decent, responsive and largely even-handed personal rule".*<sup>8</sup>

The fact that repression has not led to rapid rates of growth may only have shown that particular form of repression is not sufficient and perhaps even not necessary for capitalist accumulation. In itself, the failure of one form of repression does not establish the proposition that democracy might be better. The failure of one style of repression might strengthen the argument for trying something else including "developmental democracy"<sup>9</sup> but it says nothing about the possibilities of success of other alternatives. It could be that there are other "structural constraints" that would thwart accumulation in a country regardless of the political regime. Except among the fascist types who place high value in repression itself, most people would of course argue: "Better stagnation under democratic rule than stagnation under totalitarian rule". for this has so far been the real choice in Africa.

Were the choice simply more democracy the higher the accumulation, the social choice would be relatively easy, given the high value that many people place on both these goals, . Problems arise when there is a trade-off (real or imagined) between democracy and accumulation as has been suggested in the literature.

However, my main concern with Anyang's approach is its extremely instrumentalist view of democracy. Democracy is seen as an efficacious political means to development because: (a) Democracy will

7 Zaki Ergas, "Reflections on African Development", *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, Vol 5, No. 1/2 1986. Ergas adds in a footnote: "The question of the relevance of the Latin-American model is a popular theme among Africanist scholars" p. 33

8 Richard Sklar, "Developmental Democracy", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 29 No. 4, 1987.

9 Ibid

ensure accountability and therefore optimum use of surpluses and (b) it will ensure stability and thus once again, development.

A number of political scientists have felt outdone by economists who have developed "economic means" for development. Sklar has explicitly called for political scientists to also develop "political means" for development. Sklar, like Anyang ends up extracting from democracy - accountability:

*"The norm of accountability appears to be the most widely practiced of democratic principles; it is by far more prevalent in the world than freedom of association to compete for governmental office, or popular participation in authoritative decision-making, or the right to dissent from official policies without fear of retaliation. These principles, which underlie constitutional forms of democracy, appeal to broad sections of the population in all countries. But they are rarely established all at once. Democracy comes to every country in fragments or parts; each fragment becomes an incentive for the addition of another".<sup>10</sup>*

Sklar here leaves us with a highly truncated "democracy" reduced to the notion of "accountability" which can apparently be sustained even in the absence of the most elemental aspects of democracy - "freedom of association to compete for governmental office,... popular participation in authoritative decision-making, ... the right to dissent from official policies without fear of retaliation". The issues that he is willing to temporarily suspend on the hope that other "fragments" will come have a "pie-in-the-sky" ring to them and besmirch, or at least, compromise the whole notion of "developmental democracy".

High growth rates require high levels of savings and both these can be achieved in extremely undemocratic ways with accountability intact. "Savings" of one social group can be transferred to one group that may use these resources in an efficient way to enhance its private property. The state overseeing this process may be "accountable" to the small group and may even pride itself of high levels of probity in the management of public resources. The case of Malawi that Anyang cites may fall into this category.

The arguments advanced in favour of any political system, including

10 Ibid



democracy are derived from questions that give primacy to "development". However, within the "developmentalist" discourse, these arguments are extremely fragile, being essentially instrumentalist and therefore easily replaceable by other more efficacious instruments of development. This is particularly so given the conjunctural nature of capitalist accumulation. Thus while some phases may accommodate democracy others may call for "shock treatments" in which democratic rule is suspended in the name of development, adjustment or stabilisation. Exercise of democratic rights would assume a conjunctural character, reflective of the vagaries of the developmental or accumulation path to which the rights will have been harnessed.

Hence once the question of democracy is subsumed under the "developmental problematique" then it can be easily challenged by the evidence of rapid growth under fascist rule. Within that problematique, the characterisation of states is whether they are "developmental" (good) or "non-developmental" (bad). Among the "developmental states" are listed Taiwan, South Korea, Brazil in the sixties and seventies. The "developmental" label immediately overshadows other unsavoury characteristics these states may have. Indeed once so described, it becomes "idealistic" to point to the authoritarian structures of these regime.

"Development" is too precarious a concept on which to hang democracy. The struggle for democracy must be for democracy in its own right. This is not to deny that democracy may have instrumental value in the development process. Indeed, when development is described broadly to include equity and participation, and not in the simple GDP-growth version that Anyang adopts, democracy may provide the political scaffolding for the policy instruments compatible to this broader concept of development. However, I would rather see these benefits of democracy as windfall gains, albeit extremely important ones, given the wretched material conditions of our people.

I believe the question of democracy in Africa must be raised in its own right. Democracy should be on the agenda, not because of its instrumental, developmental impact, but because it is the recognition of the legitimate rights of the African people to democratically map the destinies of their countries, to determine the rates and types of development they want etc. It should be an object of value in itself. It alone should provide the set of values against which to assess policies and economic performance and should not merely be judged by its facilitation of developmental policies and economic performance. If democracy can also accelerate accumulation so much the better but that should not be its fundamental premise.

# A Rejoinder to the Comments on Democracy and Political In- stability

Peter Anyang Nyong'o \*

As usual, Thandika has, with wit and sharp observation, poked some holes into my argument. In essence, Thandika accuses me of making an "instrumentalist argument" by associating democracy with development, or making a case for democracy because it leads to, or is correlated with, development. Logically, argues Thandika, "correlation does not suggest causation." Further, it is doubtful whether such a correlation exists in Africa. Perhaps much more damaging to my thesis is that higher rates of growth have been achieved under dictatorial and authoritarian regimes than democratic ones. Finally, Thandika concludes that democracy is good in itself, period. A conclusion we also arrived at in our book, *Popular Struggles for Democracy in Africa*.

While I would find it difficult to disagree with Thandika's lucid argument, let me take this opportunity to do two things: (a) elaborate on some of the points he has raised, and (b) remind the reader, who may not have read my essays referred to, about some of the key issues raised so that some of Thandika's points can be seen in their appropriate contexts. If Thandika's points are read in isolation, they may easily be subject to misinterpretation; in the context of the essays referred to they not only make a lot of sense, but they help us carry the arguments a little further--and in the process get rid of some foggy ideas in our minds.

## Instrumentalism

My writings on democracy and politics in Africa raise historical and contextual issues, not merely logical ones. In doing so, of course, I do not want to defy logic, but I also do not want to read history in which some kind of logic "straight jackets" my arguments. In the article on the "Disintegration of the Nationalist Coalitions", I make a statement which is worth recalling if we have to confront this charge of instrumentalism in our historical context:

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*"..whereas the authoritarian presidency may be said to have ensured reasonably stable periods of accumulation evidenced by high growth rates almost throughout the 1960s and 1970s, this has not necessarily been accompanied by a stable political process. Intra-bourgeois conflicts have, as a result of the brittleness of the authoritarian presidential system, been settled very violently; and although such violence has not led to a complete rupture of the system, there is no guarantee that these conflicts may not lead to such rupture in the future if the system does not change (through some democratic opening)"<sup>1</sup>.*

Africa, since independence, has had more than her fair share of repressive and undemocratic regimes. Even in the "democracies within one class" that Thandika refers to in the case of Malawi, one wonders whether the "one class" really participates in policy formulation and policy options as the "one race" does in the "apartheid democracy" in the Republic of South Africa. One cannot deny that Banda's reign has been accompanied by some economic growth in Malawi. At the same time, one cannot deny the brittleness inherent in the political regime. In other words, in the case of South Africa, the apartheid state is accountable to white society--particularly the white bourgeoisie. The state cannot therefore impose on society any crazy model of political domination or economic disaccumulation. In the rest of Africa, however, under the various types of repressive and authoritarian regimes, we have examples galore of such models imposed or "impossible" from above because the narrowly based political regimes have little compunction--at least in the short run--not to do so. Were they to have more sense of accountability they would, *logically*, be less liable to imposing such models of political repression and economic disaccumulation. It is perhaps appropriate to hear, at this juncture, what a former African Head of State, retired General Olusegun Obasanjo, recently said on this issue at his Africa Leadership Forum in Ota, Nigeria:

*"Once in power, some of our nationalist parties began to behave as if they were what they had never been - the sole*

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1 Peter Anyang'Nyong'o "State and Society in Kenya: The Disintegration of the Nationalist Coalitions and the Rise of Presidential Authoritarianism, 1963-78", *Africa Development*, Vol. XI, no. 4, 1986, p. 179.

*embodiments of the social will and purpose of our countries. In time, power came to be concentrated not so much in one party as in one man, coadjuted by a phalanx of sycophants. Dissent, for which there had always been a secure and honoured place in traditional African society, came to be viewed with ill-conceived hostility, almost as if it was treason. The result of this political rigidity was to shut off the springs of creativity in our people. The men and women of spirit who are the leaven of every society either began to go into exile (of which Thandika is a living example) in foreign countries or withdraw into a stultifying private life; to their own loss, yes, but to the even greater loss of society at large (the disaccumulation of human resources). Our recovery must therefore begin with a recuperation of those values which are the foundation of every true humane society which is in turn the foundation of social creativity."*

I have no doubt in mind that part of the "foundation of every true humane society" that Obasanjo refers to is "democracy"; and the "foundation of social creativity" or the "foundation of development" in the modern world must, of necessity, be found in democracy.

Thandika, like a good product of bourgeois economics, sees development in very narrow terms: economic growth. Those other values that even men like Dudley Seers associate with development--in and of itself--such as equity, social justice, human creativity, etc do not seem to bother him very much. If that is so, how would we explain what is happening in China today? Obviously repressive regimes have ensured periods of economic growth: Franco's Spain is a quotable example. But that does not really mean that democratic regimes would not have done equally well. In Africa, at this point in history, there are many social forces completely disillusioned with the balance sheet of repressive regimes--either as guarantors of economic growth or of political freedoms--that their thirst for democracy is a thirst for both better economic living conditions as well as freer political system.

Yet Thandika says that it is quite possible--and indeed logical--that if one model of authoritarianism or repression has failed to ensure high rates of growth, then it could as well be the case that another model--perhaps much more efficient--would do so. But even models of authoritarianism, in order to ensure high rates of growth, *have to be class based*. In our analysis of the disintegration of the nationalist coalitions" in Africa, we have established the class base of the authoritarian presidencies, and the extent to which it is alienated

from the nascent bourgeoisie to the extent that its politics could, under certain conjunctures, easily go against the interests of this bourgeoisie--or important fractions thereof. This is one of the reasons why we find the concept of "bureaucratic authoritarianism" rather inapplicable--so far--to the African situation. The class base of bureaucratic authoritarianism (BA) in Latin America has not, as yet, found its counterpart in Africa. The absence of this class base, and the alliance of social classes that provide the basis for BA, is what leads us to look into the social basis of other models of authoritarianism in Africa.

Wherever we encounter presidential authoritarianism in Africa we also encounter different forms of popular pressures for democracy. These pressures arise, no doubt, out of the economic and political inadequacies of presidential authoritarian states to ensure what has increasingly now been called "sustainable development", but that we, in the social sciences call "viable social reproduction with industrialization." I find it difficult to support Thandika's notion that, in our context, democracy may not necessarily lead to viable social reproduction with industrialization.

### **The High Growth Rate Thesis Revisited**

The countries which have had high growth rates in Sub-Saharan Africa since independence are Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire and Malawi (of the non oil producing countries). These also happen to be countries where there have been more accountability of the state to its social base--however narrow this is--when compared to the other military dictatorships and no-party regimes. There is therefore a prima facie case, in the context of Africa of the post-independence period, to argue that where there has been more respect for democratic practices (however minimal) higher rates of growth and more successful models of accumulation have been ensured.

Further, to think that Africa could have "benevolent dictators" or "nation-building emperors" such as were to be found under the Meiji Restoration in Japan is to ignore the major factor behind the emergence of such "great individuals": their social base. To have an authoritarian political will to accomplish the heroic tasks of rapid accumulation for industrialization, accompanied, no doubt, by appropriate social reorganization of society, is to be ready to count on some substantial social machine and support. Given where we are now in Africa, few people would entrust any single individual with this kind of responsibility. The history of African political leadership is strewn with too many adventurous destroyers rather than makers. The Gorbachevs of Africa will have to emerge from within the

popular movements for democratic societies rather than self appointed messiahs filled with authoritarian political wills. The less participatory political systems have become in Africa, the more politically decadent and economically backward they have tended to become. I happen to see no exception to this rule as of now.

# Review Article

Babacar Sall \*

## History and Historical Consciousness in the Philosophy of History in Cheikh Anta Diop's works.

The link between history and consciousness in general is historical consciousness, a notion which lends itself to determining, defining and identifying what is in Cheikh Anta Diop's work which implicitly or explicitly expresses the - or one - philosophy of history - or rather which expresses an African school of History. This involves identifying the following in Diop's work:

- 1 - what the nature of history is;
- 2 - what the end or ends of history are.

Our search for an answer to this two-pronged question must take into consideration the contexts of Diop's rearing and education and of his life and combat. I shall begin by recalling something about the man.

*When I discovered that the ancient Egyptians were Black and became convinced that Egyptian and Kushitic civilization was Negro-African, I was at first stunned. I set about learning more and became fully aware that this relationship could be proven historically<sup>1</sup>. The first of my conclusions constituted the substance of my work entitled *Nations nègres et culture*.<sup>2</sup>*

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- 1 He will say later: "Thus for us, the considerable new feat is less having stated that the Egyptians were a black people in accordance with the classical writers, one of our principal sources, than having contributed to making the idea a fact of African and world historical consciousness and, above all, an operational scientific concept. This is what our predecessors failed to achieve" (Diop, C.A., *Civilisation et Barbarie*, 1981, p. 10)
- 2 Diop, C.A., *Nations nègres et Culture: de l'Antiquité nègre égyptienne aux problèmes de l'Afrique noire d'aujourd'hui*, Présence Africaine, Paris, 1954

This is what Cheikh Anta Diop told me when, in September 1979, I interviewed him about his intellectual journey. This discussion, my first with him, seemed necessary if I were to put his work in context and understand it better, for placing it in context would make it possible to separate out the scientific dimension from ideological elements and from things in his work which make sense only as polemics. Only afterwards did I go back and closely re-read Diop's books from the beginning, starting with *Nations nègres et Culture*.

In *Nations nègres et Culture* the author develops three main themes:

*a - The civilization of Pharaonic Egypt was Negro-African*

- because the ancient Egyptians perceived themselves to be and represented themselves as Blacks;
- because the Greeco-Latin sources stated this unambiguously;
- because the Bible attests to it
- because the debate between anthropologists (Massouard, Fawcette, Thompson (A), Randall, McIver, Keith (D), Fulkenburger, Petrie, etc.), confused though it was, none the less shows that the skeletons and mummies of ancient Egyptians were Negro ones.
- because all aspects of pharaonic culture are to be found among Negro-African peoples, from ancient to modern times, which are so similar as to be almost identical. Examples are totemism, social and political structure, circumcision, cosmogony, etc.

*b - The origins of pharaonic civilization lie in southern Egypt and southwards in the Nubian Sudan*

- because the ancient Egyptians said that the Delta (Lower Egypt) was only a sea when they migrated into Upper Egypt<sup>3</sup>.
- because the technological evolution and progressive cultural refinement which was to give rise to pharaonic civilization can be traced without discontinuity in Upper Egypt, and there only, from prehistory to the advent of monarchy, sometime before 3000 B.C.
- because pre - and protodynastic Nubio-Theban archeology attests to the cultural unity between Upper Egypt and Nilotic Nubia and the Sudan<sup>4</sup>.

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3 Herodotus, II, 15; Diodorus of Sicily, I, 10 and III, 3.

4 Cf. *Africa in antiquity: the arts of ancient Nubia and the Sudan*, Exposition of Brooklyn Museum. New York, September 30 December 31, 1978. 2 volumes.



- because the Nubio-Sudanic cultures are prior, in their elaboration, to those of Egypt.

*c - Nubia and the Sudan - the crossroads between southern Africa (the Great Lakes region), central Africa (the Nile/Chad basin) west Africa (Sudan and the western sahel), the Mediterranean periphery and Arabia - constitute the cradle of civilization, which, from there radiated towards all of Africa and, through Egypt, to the northern Mediterranean, and the Asian Near East.*

This accounts for pharaonic Negro contributions to the Greeco-Latin, Canaanite, and Arabic civilizations and the similarities between Egypto-Kushitic pharaonic civilizations and the civilizations which spread in Black Africa from antiquity to the birth of modern states in the sixteenth century A.D.

From these theses he draws a certain number of conclusions:

1 - Pharaonic Egypt, humanity's first great cultural achievement in historic times, was a Negro-African civilization. It left a deep impression on later civilizations in Africa, southern Europe, and the Asian Near East. It determined the cultural shape of all of the rest of Africa to such a degree that post-pharaonic Negro-African cultures, until the sixteenth century A.D. were neo-pharaonic.

2 - The Upper and Middle Nile valleys, center of diffusion for technology and men, explains Egypt, Africa south of the Sahara, and the relationship between the two. Africa's modern Black populations came from the Nile valley both in prehistorical and in historical times.

3 - This Black world has civilized humanity in ancient times. Africa's contribution to humanity is inestimable, from prehistory to the beginnings of modern times. Africa played a role, still not analyzed, in the emergence of the Iberian peninsula at the beginning of modern times, Diop said. It played no less important a role than the expansion of Christianity, Islam and Judaism<sup>5</sup>. Examples from all periods could be multiplied, up to the period of primitive accumulation of capital. More, from the neolithic to the 16th century A.D., Africa led the world in terms of socio-political organization and technology.

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5 Accordingly as Diop declared, no thought, no ideology is essentially foreign to an African, the important thing for him is to mind one's ideological training (cf.: Introduction to *Nations nègres et culture*).

Not satisfied with an argument based only on written testimonies, Diop trained himself in other disciplines in order to study his theses from other perspectives. In *Antériorité des Civilisations nègres: Mythes ou Vérité historique?*<sup>6</sup>, Diop had recourse to paleontology, physical and cultural anthropology, chemistry and archeology and defended positions drawn from paleoclimatology and paleobotany. The study deepened and refined the arguments for the points made in *Nations Nègres et Culture* by drawing different disciplines into the service of approaching knowledge from a historical perspective. The paleontological and anthropological dimensions of the argument added to the subtlety of the perspective and completed the epistemological break<sup>7</sup>. The author argued for monogenetism and monocentrism against polygenitism and polycentrism, using as support the discoveries of Professor Leakey<sup>8</sup>. He traced humanity from its appearance in the Great Lakes region through its early development into homo erectus who, as a migrator, went on to conquer western and central Europe through Gibraltar, Italy via Sicily as well as Asia via the Suez region<sup>9</sup>. Here Diop demonstrates the anteriority of sapienization among African hominids and the development of an African neolithic to point out the role of Negro-African communities in the emergence of civilization, the first light of which was planted in Egypt<sup>10</sup>.

In *L'Afrique noire précoloniale and L'unité culturelle de l'Afrique Noire* (1960), which are the published versions of the principal argument (a comparative study of European and African political systems from antiquity to the formation of modern States) and complementary argument (domains of patriarchy and matriarchy in classical antiquity) of C.A. Diop's Doctorat d'Etat thesis, the author demonstrates the differences between Europe and Africa in their

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6 Diop, C.A., *Présence Africaine*, Paris, 1967.

7 The first part entitled "Approche paléontologique" of *Civilisation ou Barbarie*, is some sort of summary of this approach as elicited in *Nations nègres et culture* and *Antériorité des civilisations nègres*. Under the title "*The african origin of civilization*", Mercer Cook translated some parts of these two works which are both run through and united by the same approach.

8 Diop, C.A., *Civilisation ou Barbarie*, 1981, first part "*Approche paléontologique*".

9 Coppens, Y., *Le singe, l'Afrique et l'homme*, Fayard, 1983, p. 99-144.

10 Diop, C.A., *Histoire primitive de l'humanité. Evolution du monde noir*. BIFAN, Série B, tome XXIV, N 3-4, 1962, p. 449-541.

cultural features. He shows the very strong influence of Black Africa and of Blacks (who were in Greece before Greeks set foot in Africa)<sup>11</sup>. on the Greco-Hittite and Semitic areas, on the civilizations of the northern Mediterranean. He analyzes the historical continuity of African societies and the cultures they created from the civilizations of the Egypto-Kushitic Black Africans up to the end of the great empires, explaining recurring and permanent features. In these two works, Diop breaks with Marxism. Clearly he was not a Marxist. But he was not anti-marxist either. He drew fully upon the conceptual apparatus and even the spirit of historical materialism. It was Engels whom he criticized for the vision reflected in *The Origin of Family, Property and the State*. His "informant", Morgan, having led Engels astray<sup>12</sup>.

An emphasis on historical permanence and continuity constitutes the thread of C.A. Diop's last ... works, *Parenté génétique de l'Égyptien pharaonique et les langues négro-africaines* (1977) and *Civilisation ou Barbarie* (1981). The basic idea is that post-pharaonic Negro-African civilizations (or institutions) are explained by Egypt, in that they are neo-pharaonic. A profound cultural unity exists between Black Africa and Egypt. This unity exists in itself, rarely for itself. Hence Diop could warn that "African history will remain something suspended in the air and cannot be written correctly for so long as African historians fail to relate it to pharaonic Egypt"<sup>13</sup>. This relation is a relevant classificatory criterion which reconciles African civilizations with history. It is also a necessity, because it makes it possible to re-establish the continuity of the cultures created by Negro-african societies and the unity of Negro peoples and civilizations. It is a necessity because it provides a purpose for history as a discipline, a science, a way of thinking, a product, a discourse and an ideological argument; a necessity for achieving the intellectual breakthrough we vitally need. Thus we see that Diop's purpose for history in Africa is the restoration and strengthening of historical

11 Bourgeois, A., *La Grèce antique devant la négritude*, Présence Africaine, Paris, 1970. One can also note that Ulysses's companion, named Eurybates is a black man. Cf Homer's *Odysseus*

12 Morgan, L.H., *Ancient society*, 1877.

13 Diop, C.A., *The african origin of civilization*, Westport, 1974, p. XIV. *Civilisation ou Barbarie* p. 12, "Hegel and Mark did not pick a "German Quarrel" with St Thomas or with Heraclitus the Obscure, because without the rambling of the latter they would never have built their philosophical systems" (id. *ibid.* p. 13).

consciousness. For Diop, history serves to restore, structure, and dynamize the historical consciousness of peoples. Historical consciousness is the bulwark against alienation, fatalism, and submission. But what is history for Diop?

Throughout his work, history is the study of the rules and general laws of social evolution, of social movement. The past is a field into which history meets myth and collective memory side by side. In Diop's work, the long term is emphasized by studying social movement through the past, i.e., the solidified part of time. Diop was an historian of civilizations. Periods of accelerated change did not interest him much, though he did attempt to theorize about revolution in *Civilisation ou Barbarie*<sup>14</sup>. What interested him was the comparative history of socio-political institutions, their successive forms, the generative factors rather than the evolutive ones. This is doubtlessly explained by that part of the historical field in which he specialized, "Antiquity", the period of the genesis of institutions. Thus he was able to describe, by region and by period, the institutions which arose through invasion, those resulting from diffusion, and those which were the fruit of internal evolution. The dimension of diffusion appears to have had great explanatory power for Diop as regards the history of institutions in Africa from antiquity to the beginning of modern times.

For C.A. Diop, history does not aim solely at the structuring of time. It does aim at this, but not only at this. History does not aim solely at relativizing judgment. It is one of the humanities, but that is not all. For Diop, history attempts to fix, to restore knowledge of a special relationship with social movement, and this in the interests of immediate acts, of dynamizing and reorienting social evolution. History is consciousness -- consciousness of what one was, is, and will be, in movement and in evolution, as individual, class, socio-juridical category, nation, or race. History, throughout C.A. Diop's work, is a level of knowledge, knowledge of the present situation of what to support among the options available for development of the one which will be most beneficial. Which are the options Africa should choose? Diop sees the necessity for federation, discussed in *Les fondements économiques et culturels d'un Etat fédéral de l'Afrique noire* (1960). He also sees the necessity for promoting Negro-african lan-

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14 Cf. Chapter 12 of *Civilisation ou Barbarie*.

guages, the theory for which position is in "Comment enracciner la science en Afrique"<sup>15</sup>.

But, before Black peoples can meet their societies needs for fundamental change, they must have confidence in themselves, they must be convinced of their own ability to create and innovate and assimilate. Their consciousness must be liberated through historical consciousness; for consciousness in general, this conviction of their own abilities, depends on their relationship with their history, with the history of others, and with the history of humanity in all periods of social movement. In Africa, historical thought and scholarship must fulfil these missions. The African school of history must make these demands upon its own philosophy. After all, history plays these roles among the liberated peoples of Europe and America. It shows these peoples that they created values and instruments for liberation and for living in the past, that history is not linear, that the most backward peoples of one period have been able to become great creators in others, that their backwardness is historically explicable and that they can once again become first-rate creators and innovators. It is when the history of a dominated people is written by the dominators that all this is hidden and falsified in order to prolong the domination<sup>16</sup>.

By showing Africans that Blacks created the first great human cultural achievement of historical time, that this black civilization inspired those (later in terms of their elaboration and expansion) of the peoples of Europe and the Near East, one provides them with this special relationship with social movement, i.e., one restores to them their historical consciousness. This liberates their general consciousness, galvanizes them, makes them creators once again. And, says Cheikh Anta Diop, all liberated peoples are equipped and ready to promote their national cultures by adapting -- re-adapting -- historical reflection and scholarship to the relevant classificatory criteria which emanate from their daily lives, their ambitions, their dreams, their utopias, even their fantasies. But Diop also notes that, for African peoples in particular, it is the West which has heretofore written the greater part of their history -- "Africanism". This historical thought and product is oriented towards serving the historical consciousness of the West, which sees Africa as a museum, the

15 Diop, C.A., BIFAN, Série B, tome XXXVII, N 1, 1975, p. 154-233.

16 Diop, C.A., *Nations nègres et culture*, Paris, 1979. Tome I, chapters II and III, p. 49-203.

image of what humanity was in primitive times, enabling the West to measure and take pride in the distance it has covered and, what is more, to convince the West that the creation of values, instruments, and tools for living is its own prerogative, inducing it to consider itself naturally entitled to dominate the world.

In other words, "Africanism" does not favor Africans: the old adage goes, "What's done for you but without you is done against you". The proof is that when an African speaks of African history aiming to restore Africans' historical consciousness, all westerners, from the ultra-royalists to the hard-line marxists ally in attempting to banalize and marginalize his ideas -- generally deliberately but sometimes unconsciously. It is said that conditions do not yet exist for a real dialogue between the West and Africa. Well, says Diop, let us act conservatively. No field of knowledge must be ignored, all means of acquiring knowledges must be explored. One must be capable of revealing scientifically what the truth is if the debate is to be raised to a higher level. Autonomy of scholarship must be gained by doing without the approval of the other<sup>17</sup>.

This attitude of Diop's must be linked to the fact that, in his view, "Africanism" is part and parcel of that logic which tends to dilute Africans' historical consciousness and elevate that of Westerners. For does not "Africanism" teach Africans.

- 1) that they have always stood outside the movement of history
- 2) that they are condemned and cursed,
- 3) that they are destined forever to need tutors,
- 4) that they know only how to dance and sing,
- 5) that they never, in all history, invented anything,
- 6) that they have contributed nothing to humanity and owe all they have to the West, which took upon itself a civilizing mission<sup>18</sup>?

Diop stresses that the tragedy lies in the fact that Blacks in Africa and in the Diaspora, have adopted these "Africanist" postulates, i.e., these ideas produced by non-African schools of history, ethnology and philosophy even when they concern the evolution, structure, and life of Black societies. One Black writes of Blacks "who have invented neither compass nor rudder nor cannon powder" (A. Césaire). Another goes farther, claiming that "emotion is Negro, reason Hel-

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17 Diop, C.A., preface to *"l'Afrique noire dans l'Antiquité"* written by Théophile Obenga, Présence Africaine, 1973.

18 Hegel, G.W.F., *La raison dans l'Histoire*, translated by Kostas Papaioannou, 1979. - Gobineau; G.A., *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*.

lenic" (L.C. Senghor). All this was inculcated by the work of "Africanists", and we see where it has led.

Diop emphasizes that such attitude and ways of thinking have been possible only because the West destroyed Black historical consciousness by falsifying history -- (all achievements realized in the course of time). Let it be known that history is not neutral. It is a tool, a weapon, a way to live, to dominate, to subjugate, to create, to innovate, and to assimilate.

It has to be recognized that the nature and purposes attributed to historical reflection and scholarship depend upon the life experiences and utopias of the societies which produce them, of the men who formulate them, produce them, and diffuse them by various means. It must be recognized that "consciousness is not an objective image of the milieu" (K. Marx), but rather the expression of relationships between the milieu and men, a perception of these real and virtual relationships which is determined by human needs. Speaking of the crisis of reason, Diop remarks that consciousness depends upon the conditions of the agent, the expression of the importance any given object holds for him. History establishes as well a relationship with social movement, determines the significance of this movement for those who produce, or for whom, a historical work is produced. Hence those individuals called "objective africanists" are, with some exceptions, those for whom description is the final end of historical reflection.

These "Africanists" have educated a mass of Africans who pass most of their time splitting hairs. They have "fabricated" conscious or unconscious structuralists. So this tradition must be broken with (do without the approval of the other)<sup>19</sup> and Black historical consciousness restored in order to liberate Africa by taking over historical scholarship, once Africans achieve the ability to establish truth scientifically.

The man with historical consciousness is a free man. He will endeavor to live and will struggle to live according to different bases for decision, among which *class consciousness*. This free man is the creator of civilizations. And, Diop adds referring to young africans, each of them contains the makings of an empire builder of the stamp of Tutmosis III, Samori Touré, Shaka, or Abdel Kader. It is merely a matter of awakening this creative force by restoring historical consciousness. In taking over the production of history, the Africans

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<sup>19</sup> Diop, C.A., *Civilisation ou Barbarie*, p. 13.

(historians, philosophers, etc.) must accentuate historical and cultural continuity in Africa, so that this might pass from existence "*in itself*" to existence "*for itself*"

### .Conclusion

This is how, today, I read the assumptions and theoretical implications of the scholarly work of Professor Cheikh Anta Diop, from whom I began to learn the usefulness of thinking, writing, and teaching history. This seems to be Diop's philosophy of history and the spirit he wished to infuse into an African school of history. He hoped that this school, which he did not have the time to found but whose foundations he elaborated and laid, would be armed with this philosophy for the greater good of the Black people of Africa and the Diaspora.

To do this, historians of Africa must stop believing (without writing or saying it) that the centuries before the sixteenth century A.D. were "Africa's Dark Ages"<sup>20</sup>. For so long as they believe this, they will fail to contribute to linking post-pharaonic Negro-African civilizations to their Egypto-Kushitic ancestors; they will neither re-establish the historical continuity of African civilizations nor give Black Africa's cultural unity an existence "*for itself*". Cultural renaissance in Africa presupposes, among other things, that Egypto-Kushitic pharaonic civilizations be elevated, in Negro-African humanistic studies, to the status held by Greco-Roman humanities in the West. It is this latter need which explains the fact that demonstrating that Egyptian pharaonic civilization was Negro-African is a topic in nearly every one of Diop's studies, while the neo-pharaonic perspective is muted in almost every page of Diop's works.

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20 This is the title of Raymond Mauny's book, published in 1975. Original title: *Les siècles obscurs de l'Afrique noire.*



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