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Manuscripts should begin with the following **publication details**: title of the book; author; publisher; number of pages; price; and ISBN number.

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La longueur recommandée pour les manuscrits est de 2000 mots, avec d'éventuelles exceptions pour les articles critiques commandités. Les notes (qui devraient être proposées en fin plutôt qu'en bas de page) devront être utilisées de façon très succincte.

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“Africa, define yourself!” commands Thabo Mbeki,<sup>1</sup> the South African president who styles himself as the architect of an “African Renaissance”, a “pan-Africanism” by political fiat, arguably for economic ends. Given this context where the future of the continent is defined and enacted by a political elite rather than the masses who authorise their power, Mikoma wa Ngig’s *Conversing with Africa* represents an important and timely intervention. Both a philosophical treatise and a political manifesto, it – in crude summation – crafts two useful analytics: one diagnostic, the other prescriptive, for the contemporary malaise of Africa. In each of these analytics are bold claims, none more so than its conclusion – a call for a revolutionary Pan-Africanism. I argue that the political aspirations of *Conversing* are worthy of discussion; at the same time, I attempt to complicate the theoretical analysis that makes the claim possible.

In diagnosing the current and continued “haemorrhaging” (p. 8) of Africa (as *Conversing* so poetically renders it), there is a unique effort to theorise the intersections of the material and cultural, internal and external, elements in the making of the current state of African disorder. Correctly resisting efforts to see the African crisis as made exclusively by external impositions, *Conversing* recognises, on the one hand, the external forces of capitalism in its various phases, together with its political twin, imperialism. On the other, it refuses to relegate internal betrayals, of governance and the politics of race/class/, gender, from their role in the active making of the African crisis. At the same time, there is a valiant effort to theorise mutually constitutive relationships between the material desires of capital and class, and the cultural processes of race, identity, and ideology, in the making and near-unmaking of Africa.

The prescription for Africa is equally artful. Shunning contemporary intellectual fashions that denigrate the possibilities of theorising emancipation, and of politicising utopian visions, *Conversing* boldly suggests not only the possibility, but the necessity, of politically activating theories of emancipatory change. It presents a biting critique of the intellectual movement of Negritude and of Africanist intellectuals, as exemplars of the anti-revolutionary intellectual resources fuelling Africa’s continued crisis, rather than resolving it. And, it offers an equally fiery critique of political movements of nationalism, arguing that their failure as the basis for meaningful change lies in their antagonism to an authentic revolutionary consciousness and committed revolutionary theory. In this, there is a resuscitation of the voices of Fanon, Biko, Cabral, and others, rather than the invention of a new paradigm for theorising the politics of change. But *Conversing* adds itself to these voices with distinction.

In this conversation over the past and future of Africa, Mikoma wa Ngig betrays his imagination as a poet, and his politics as a radical. As a result, *Conversing* offers honest and provocative insights that suggest the dialectical relationship between political consciousness and political change. The essay begins with an important call for a historicized intellectualism informed by a conscio -usness towards change as the starting point of the diagnosis and prescription for Africa’s condition. In this, *Conversing* daringly asserts that “Africanist” scholars<sup>2</sup> “will never prescribe revolutionary action for they will never allow their consciousness of Africa to blossom to a revolutionary consciousness” (p.11).

## Conversing with “Pan-Africanism”

Shireen Ally

### Conversing with Africa: Politics of Change

by Mikoma wa Ngig

Kimaathi Publishing House, 2003, 210pp.+ xxiii,  
ISBN 0797425616

“Since the Africanist views history,” *Conversing* continues, “passively, from a tourist glass window, from a passing vehicle and is awed by the slave ships, is fascinated by the cocoa and tea plantations,” the only possibility produced by this surface-level understanding of history is that “at the end of the day they subvert consciousness towards change” (p. 11). This is offered as the basis for suggesting a re-theorization of history, a re-historicization of the present, an important theoretical move that recognises, for an essay so centrally concerned with change, the importance of producing a theory of time and the connections between the past, the present and the future.

*Conversing* then applies the logic of interrogating the binary of past/present to the binary of oppressor/oppressed, to disentangle our contradictions as Africans. In an application of Fanon’s psychology of the oppressed, *Conversing* updates the processes of psychic oppression that keep the oppressed, both materially and symbolically, in global and local contexts, tied to the oppressor; and of the complicity of local political processes and leaders in maintaining the cycle through which the oppressed are maintained as such. But, *Conversing*, in its philosophical ruminations on the processes of marginalization and subordination never descends into political inertia. “The oppressed will live to the extent that they struggle,” it declares (p. 69). And, it locates such struggle in the political theory of Black Consciousness, connecting as it did exploitation to oppression, and recognising the importance of asserting value as a material and politico-practical as much as a cultural and theoretical project. As opposed to Negritude, asserts *Conversing*, which “caught in a racialist straight jacket could not create revolutionaries” (p. 81), “could react to racism but could not answer to oppression” (p. 80), and in this focused instead on producing an “African personality” as the antidote to colonial racism “that only succeeded in denying Africans their humanity” (p. 80).

Having laid out the problematic, *Conversing* declares: “Enough Talk! Enough running around. Let us dialogue” (p. 93).

It seeks a way forward politically by interrogating the political movements we have relied on for our emancipation as Africans, and makes an impassioned call for the resuscitation of the movement argued to hold possibilities for the emancipation of Africans: pan-Africanism. First, *Conversing* suggests the failures and limitations of nationalism as the basis for both the initial betrayal of the struggle for independence, and as the “cloak” (p. 94) which shielded its continued betrayal through neo-colonial devices. Second, in this, it specifies its task as being to “take Pan-Africanism, the word that has become synonymous with nationalism, and set it back on its historical rail” (p. 94), to suggest the conditions of non-possibility of a true pan-Africanism of liberation, and to call

forth the conditions that may connect the word to a revolutionary consciousness, to a revolutionary theory, and in so doing, to the birth of a revolutionary movement.

To Mikoma wa Ngig, Pan-Africanism is, in some respects, a semantic exercise. It is about renaming, and through the act of renaming, engaging in a semiotic politics. Attaching a different referent to the same signifier, inserting a different content – a revolutionary theory – into the same word, allows for a reclaiming of the movement for radical revolutionary ends. In Mikoma’s phraseology, Pan-Africanism is a name he re-co-opts as a descriptive for an activity, an action, that defines a particular kind of revolutionary work towards change:

A name does not stand by itself...Pan-Africanism therefore has to be contextualized in order to have meaning, its ramifications drawn out and held against its service or disservice to the people...It has to be held accountable to history, oppression and resistance and service to humanity. At the end of it all, it has to be of service to the African. It cannot be benign, a name that points without demanding, that identifies without responsibility. It has to work towards liberating Africa. (p. 88)

At the center of *Conversing*’s manifesto for Pan-Africanism, therefore, is a semantic project:

To name a word, to name a thing is to contextualize it, to give it its truth – to return it to its history. And so we shall take Pan-Africanism, a word previously contextualized in a racial blackness, racialism, anti-thesis to whiteness, African Unity, African communalism, African socialism, African nationalism, African theology and spiritualism and set it back on the rails of living history...We hope to use Pan-Africanism as the name for change in Africa. (p. 93)

In this, I argue, are the hopes and limits of *Conversing*’s efforts to theorise a politics of change for Africa. The call to Pan-Africanism as the basis for change is the defining prescriptive of the essay, and will generate much useful dialogue. But, in claiming a politics based on semantic repositionings, *Conversing*’s most serious limitation is the failure to turn the same semantic project back onto itself and engage the most important naming process of the essay: its conjuring of “Africa”. There are efforts to de-territorialize Africa: for example, in the efforts to define African identity and Pan-Africanism by a commitment to the end of exploitation and oppression. And, there are similarly efforts to recognise the fluidity of the sign: “Africa is fluid, not homogeneous, with as distinct peoples as its different landscapes” (p. 84). Yet, in both the diagnostic and prescriptive analytic

employed in the essay, there is a deference to the singularity of the sign, an erasure of its polysemy, and the coercion of the continent’s diverse and varied histories into a singular meta-narrative marked by the duality of exploitation and oppression.

That different histories have been scripted for Africa’s diverse contexts, in ways that have shaped and framed its differential subjection to the forces of exploitation and oppression are not interrogated. That these differential subjections to the external and internal logics of despotism and control suggest different forms of resistance are presumably accommodated in a “Pan-Africanism” conceived broadly enough as to be only the name that mobilises these different struggles under a single banner. But to claim a “Pan-Africanism” for strategic political purposes must be under one of two conditions. Either, as Anthony Appiah does, the strategic use of the signifier “Africa” must be accompanied by a recognition that it is devoid of stable, defined content,<sup>3</sup> or, there must be mobilisation of the sign in ways that deliver it with content. *Conversing*’s prescriptive analytic claims the former, but its diagnostic analytic suggests the latter. In the very act of “*Conversing with Africa*”, a dialogical partner is assumed, or constructed<sup>4</sup>.

*Conversing*’s diagnosis of Africa’s contemporary predicament presumes the stability of the signifier, the existence of Africa as a singular entity subjected to the similarly singular logics of capitalist penetration and racial domination. Examples from all corners of the continent, indeed even from other parts of the so-called ‘post’-colonial world, are drafted to serve a singular narrative of the dispossession of Africa and Africans. That there are differences between Kenya’s entry into and negotiation of imperial imperatives, compared with South Africa’s, making their literal and figurative co-existence in a sentence increasingly tenuous, is not fully interrogated. Indeed, at the moment, with South Africa’s increased positioning of itself as, arguably, an imperial power on the continent, the use of “Africa” as a coherent diagnostic category requires more justification than *Conversing* provides. While the essay’s use of the signifier as a basis for a prescriptive manifesto is intriguing, provocative, and offers an invitation to discussion, the analytic machinery mobilised towards that conclusion presumes the existence, indeed constructs the existence, of the object Africa in ways not fully justified. In the same breath as denying the absoluteness of Africa (p. 84), as *Conversing* does, there is the very act of naming Africa. The political utility of this is defended in the essay, but the analytical utility, arguably, demands the same.

In the same way, two of the analytic constructs most forcefully mobilised in the service of the political aims of the essay are the nebulous concepts; “exploitation” and “oppression”, often used interchangeably, one often used to imply the other. In the invoking of Black Consciousness’ dualism of oppressor/oppressed, there is an assumption that these are neat categories, in ways that radical Black feminists have called into question. While *Conversing* acknowledges inspiration from Angela Davis, her reading of the dualism was inflected by a more complicated understanding of what Patricia Hill Collins calls, the “matrix of domination”<sup>5</sup>. These theoretical resources extended to *Conversing* raises key questions: Who are the oppressors? Who are the oppressed? And, do these categories neatly map onto the exploiters versus the ex-

exploited? In what ways might oppression and exploitation be regarded as collapsible, or as distinct modes of domination? This is not to object, as the preface suggests, to the “archaicness” of these terms (p.xx). Rather, it is to emphasise the continuation of the processes of subordination which they name, and the importance of using these concepts in ways that allow us a more sophisticated political vocabulary in which to rid the world of that which these words signify. While *Conversing* makes an effort to combine material and cultural analysis, a neo-Marxist, Gramscian understanding would have produced a more nuanced analysis of the fluidity of categories of op-

pressor/oppressed and coercion/consent in the making of social and political orders, and a more disaggregated narrative of the modes of domination.

Finally, *Conversing*'s most intriguing moment – the call for a Pan-Africanist politics – remains underspecified. The specific content and organisation of this Pan-Africanism, apart from the injection of revolutionary theory, is unclear. In its boldest, most hopeful claim, Mikoma wa Ngig's treatise offers the basis for a reconstructed politics, but leaves the work of completing that reconstruction to the reader. Perhaps this is the intent. Overall, in a period of history where intellectuals are reticent about eman-

atory projects, and where the political conditions for enacting utopian visions seem increasingly constrained, *Conversing*'s contribution is in offering a bold political vision, one premised on revolutionary consciousness and theory. It is not an academic book, nor does it pretend to be so. It is, as it claims, nothing more and nothing less than a conversation by one mind to wrestle with the intractable. In its boldness and its honesty, it has opened that conversation in ways that will hopefully inspire others to continue the dialogue.

## Notes

- 1 T. Mbeki, *Africa, Define Yourself*, Cape Town, Tafelberg, 2002.
- 2 Defined as those who call themselves Africanist, signalling more often than not their location outside the continent, for, argues *Conversing*, those who are intellectuals in Africa rarely claim they are “Africanist”, choosing instead to identify themselves as “political scientist or anthropologist”
- 3 A. Appiah, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture*, London, Methuen, 1992.
- 4 Interestingly, constructed as feminine.
- 5 P.H. Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, New York, Routledge, 1991.



Edited by Oyeronke Oyewumi, *African Gender Studies: A Reader* features twenty-two classic and newly-minted multidisciplinary essays that explore the epistemological and ideological challenges of theorizing gender in reference to Africa.

The first section, cleverly titled: “Transcending the Body of Knowledge”, seeks to redress the undue emphasis on the corporal in interpretations of gender. The opening chapter is taken from Oyewumi's provocative book: *The Invention of Women*, the main argument of which is also the premise of this edited volume: that theorizing about gender is essentially an epistemological undertaking. Oyewumi aims to disturb the situation where research on gender in Africa takes its cues from the West in terms of theoretical concerns, concepts, problematics and methodology. Specifically, the chapter debunks the myth that “biology is destiny” (p. 3). Akyeampong and Obeng follow this up appropriately with a discussion of the metaphysical dimensions of gender, demonstrating how gender can take on different properties in the alchemy of power.

The section on “Decolonizing Feminisms” questions the assumptions underpinning the feminist theoretical and political movement. The essays draw attention to the irony that feminism pushes a global agenda of liberation and sisterhood on the back of imperialist constructions of women. Marnia Lazreg goes so far as to problematise the widely used category “women of color”, questioning whether it is not a false solidarity that rests on identities prescribed and proscribed by Western notions of race. The question that the writers grapple with in this section is how gender can be conceptualized to allow for difference and yet provide a basis for connections.

What follows are examples of works that aspire to replace universalist notions of womanhood with alternative theoretical and empirical perspectives. For instance, the chapters in “Reconceptualizing Gender” offer interesting perspectives on the foundational societal institutions of marriage and family. Busia, Fall, Gadzekpo and Zeleza are among those who attempt to (re)gender memory in “Gender Biases in the Making of History” and “Writing Women: Reading Gender”.

## Gender from an African Perspective

Nana Akua Anyidoho

### African Gender Studies: A Reader

by Oyeronke Oyewumi, ed.

Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, xiv + 433 pp.

\$26.95, ISBN 1-4039-6283-9 (pbk) and \$85.00, 1-4039-6282-0 (cased)

A book that offers an African perspective on gender would hardly be complete without some discussion of the intersection of gender and development. With the ubiquity of gender in development-speak also comes obfuscation that hinders research and action. The “Development and Social Transformation” section highlights the disconnect between the notion of empowerment through/for development and the pathological representations of women in the development literature. Another challenge that is identified in this section is how gender studies might not simply be used in the service of predetermined development agendas, but can be the basis of actual transformation of gender relations.

Despite the calls for alternative paradigms, it can be difficult to break out of the development mold, as the chapter by Banoum illustrates. The piece showcases the agency of female participants in a development project. While an uplifting representation of women, it lacks an analysis of the specific operational ideas of gender that were employed in the project. Banoum speaks vaguely of processes and principles based on “ancestral culture” on the one hand, but then states that the women strove to overcome “social customs” and other traditions. The point is made elsewhere in the section that we cannot know what gender means unless it is put in social, cultural, political and historical contexts. Pala, in a brief intervention, underscores the dynamism of women's locations, which suggests the need to perceive structures at local and international levels that position women in particular ways, and to explore women's own movements of resistance and adaptation. She provides some pointers for such an undertaking, as well as an extensive bibliography, presumably for those that would take up the challenge.

This collection of work proves that there is already rich analytical and conceptual knowledge on gender coming from an African perspective. Why then is gender still problematic in the context of work on/about the African continent? The final section, “Critical Conversations”, provides insight into the reasons for such disengagement between research priorities and research carried out; between available knowledge and the way that knowledge is deployed.

Desiree Lewis locates the problem in the fact that gender research on the continent is overdetermined by a functionalist anthropology and developmentalist orientations which limit the range of possible discourses on gender. According to her, the anthropological perspective relies on fixed and simplistic binaries that are developed in opposition to Western identities. This is especially true when “culture” is evoked as the evidence or origins of difference in a way that obscures important internal structures. This appears to be the thrust of Nkiru Nzegwu's response to a chapter from Anthony Appiah's *In My Father's House*, in which Appiah discusses a family dispute around his father's burial. Nzegwu contends that Appiah's account superimposes one (Western) tradition of family on the Asante matrilineal system, and in a way that distorts a culture that Appiah attempts to mediate for his audience.

Secondly, Lewis identifies a developmentalist dominance which reveals itself in a technocratic approach to women's lives that is driven by donor and state agencies. The resulting overemphasis on policy-making, Lewis argues, is to the detriment of “radical” and innovative intellectual engagement with gender. At the same time, policymaking on gender is inconsistent, fragmented and incoherent. Lewis' critique, in effect, is that the state

has monopolised gender because of its control of resources and discourses. Yet, it is not moving progressively on the question of gender because of a lack of vision of what a holistic, long-term gender transformation of society should look like and how it might be achieved. The consequence is the cooptation of research into predetermined development agenda, and the reduction of discussions of gender to narrowly delineated “gender issues”.

Where Lewis is concerned with what is published and how it is taken up, Godwin Murunga calls attention to how the very process of producing and disseminating knowledge is fundamentally gendered. Through a review of three books, Murunga critically assesses the race and gender fault lines in academic publishing and uncovers the systemic influences that work to exclude women.

The purpose of the reader is clearly stated at the outset: “Taking Africa seriously, it represents part of the effort to correct the longstanding problem of Western dominance in the interpretation of African realities” (p. xiv). Oyewumi signals this political act in the dedication of the book to Nobel Prize winner Wangari Maathai “who taught us that in order to make change, we must take charge”. Beyond this, the book does not attempt to push a particular disciplinary, theoretical or methodological perspective. The volume includes works by women and men in different disciplinary, national and residential locations. There are review essays, survey essays, evaluative work, and life histories. There are varying emphases on gender as concept and as lived experience; and on conceptual analysis and solution-seeking.

What is noteworthy about this collection is the contiguity of ideas even while there is no attempt at a forced consensus. (And in fact, a book that critiques essentialising notions of womanhood should not be in danger of committing such an error.) This volume clearly shows that despite a unified purpose in representing Africa, we should not be afraid of rigorous debate. It is evident that more conversation needs to happen if we are to move African gender studies forward. The *African Gender Studies* reader is an excellent jumping off point.



**C**hocolate on Trial: Slavery, Politics and the Ethics of Business is centred around the controversy surrounding the use by the British Quaker chocolate company, Cadbury Bros., of cocoa produced by slave labour on the islands of Sao Tome, a Portuguese colony, in the early years of the twentieth century. Cadbury were initially unaware of the situation, until alerted around 1904 by the vigorous agitation of anti-slavery campaigners, notably Henry W. Nevinson. They subsequently made their own investigations into labour conditions on Sao Tome. However, when these investigations confirmed that these were indeed far from free, Cadbury continued to use the cocoa beans produced on the islands whilst they lobbied the Portuguese colonial authorities and planters to make improvements, simultaneously urging successive British Conservative and Liberal governments to push them into doing so. In this way, they repudiated the pressures of the more radical humanitarian campaigners that they boycott Sao Tome cocoa in favour of supplies from elsewhere right up until 1909. Conversely, they argued the correctness of their own course in working for improvements and the implementation of Portuguese labour codes that, in theory, should have provided for the freedom of labour, and most importantly, for the paid repatriation of labourers to their country of origin at the end of their contracts. Yet in temporizing, even if from motives which they themselves deemed to be well-intentioned, Cadbury Bros. were to run into a storm which had as much to do with contemporary political controversies in Britain as it had to do with what was or was not happening in Sao Tome.

George Cadbury, paterfamilias of the family firm, was not only a staunch Liberal but owner of the *Daily News*, an influential Liberal paper which had strongly criticized the then Conservative government for allowing the import of Chinese “coolies” to alleviate labour shortages in South Africa after the Boer War. What a delight it was, therefore, for a Tory newspaper, the *Standard*, to level the charge of rank hypocrisy against Cadbury for using cocoa produced by slave labour in an editorial of 1908 (reproduced in full in Satre’s appendix). *The Standard* contrasted the company’s devotion to philanthropy and the welfare of its workforce at home to the miseries of the ‘contract labourers’ employed in Sao Tome: “It is not called slavery; ‘contract labour’ they name it now; but in most of its essentials it is that monstrous trade in human flesh and blood against which the Quaker and Radical ancestors of Mr. Cadbury thundered in the better days of England” (p.228). Cadbury sued, and a high profile trial followed, whose own drama melded with that of the simultaneous titanic struggle going on in parliament, where the Tory Lords were choosing to defeat a reforming Liberal budget (thereby setting the scene for the two elections of 1910, and the eventual capping of the right of the peers to overturn legislation from the Commons). Cadbury were to emerge formally triumphant, but a jury which they believed was Tory-inclined had the last laugh by awarding them insulting damages of just one farthing. Thereafter, to be fair, Cadbury – who were by now drawing the major portion of their cocoa supplies from the Gold Coast – continued pushing government to push the Portuguese, but it was not until the 1920s that slavery in Sao Tome wound down, as much because of the new availability of cocoa supplies from elsewhere as from political pressures from abroad.

I was presumably tracked down to write this review because, more years ago than I

## The Bitter Sweetness of Chocolate\*

Roger Southall

### Chocolate on Trial: Slavery, Politics, & the Ethics of Business

by Lowell J. Satre

Ohio University Press, 2005, ix and 298, Cloth, ISBN 0 8214 1589 1

care to recall, I wrote my doctoral thesis on *Cadbury on the Gold Coast: The Dilemma of the ‘Model Firm’ in a Colonial Economy* (University of Birmingham, 1975). This had its own dramas: I started off as a candidate in politics, but was eventually abandoned by my supervisor in horror, and ended up with a doctorate in social and economic history! The major source material for this was the same set of company records used by Satre which had been deposited by Cadbury in the Birmingham University library in 1971, and I must say that in reading the present book, memories of leafing through that mound of (as yet uncatologued!) dusty correspondence, minutes and ledgers came flooding back! As did many of the questions which I had to pose about Cadbury’s motivations in going to the Gold Coast to establish cocoa-producing and cocoa-buying operations in 1907, answers to which were provided in part by a very brief review of the Sao Tome affair which prefaced my examination of their record in colonial Ghana.

Of course, one key issue was precisely that which was posed by the *Standard* case: Were Cadbury’s commercial actions guided and constrained by the Cadbury family’s Quaker morality? Yet my own view was that for my particular story, this was a bit of a red herring. Yes, Cadbury did make some considerable efforts to pursue practices of “fair trading” with peasant producers. Nonetheless, it was all too easy to prove that Cadbury the family, and Cadbury the firm, fell short of the human perfection which both their political critics, and indeed subsequent historians, have chosen to demand of them. Hence my focus was, I am afraid, on the much more amoral one of what impact Cadbury had on cocoa production and buying in the Gold Coast. In the end my overall conclusion was that cocoa farmers played a much greater role in shaping the industry and the politics of the colony than the firm had ever envisaged! Yet the question of Quaker morality is necessarily much more central for Satre.

Satre’s book is manifestly a product of years of careful and dedicated scholarship. Paradoxically, too, while maintaining the relativism and reserve of the historian (and hence avoiding trite judgement of the social and political attitudes which prevailed in Britain a century ago), it is also commendably passionate. Passionate about detailing the realities of slavery under the Portuguese; and passionate about recording the dedication of those liberal humanitarians, individuals like E.D. Morel and Henry Nevinson, who campaigned against it. Meticulous dissection of contemporary records, pamphlets, newspapers and so on provides us with chapter and verse of the whole saga surrounding Cadbury in careful detail which I am not going to attempt to summarize. I can but point readers to the book as, apart from anything else, a well constructed tale which will also serve as a major source-book for later considerations of the morality and motivations of early colonialism. Nonetheless, there are four issues which the book brings out for me, all of which have a very contemporary relevance.

The first is, yes, that of the moral responsibility of Cadbury, and by implication, other capitalists. The fascination of Cadbury is *precisely* because, whether we think that they lived up to their principles or not, those principles *were* influential in guiding and shaping their business practices. Satre details at length how Cadbury were taken aback by the crusading zeal and “radicalism” of Henry Nevinson, whose book *A Modern Slavery*, largely a compilation of articles he had written for *Harpers’s Monthly Magazine* following his investigative trip to Angola and Sao Tome (December 1904 until July 1905) was published in 1906.

The implications of Nevinson’s evidence and of his subsequent campaigning both pointed in the direction of Cadbury boycotting Sao Tome cocoa, yet this was a conclusion that the firm was uncomfortable to draw. They argued that they wanted more time to establish the facts (which they had sought to do by dispatching their own man, Joseph Burt, and later, a couple of times, William Cadbury to Africa), and to see if by their commercial weight as significant buyers they could bring pressure to bear upon the British and Portuguese governments and the planters themselves to bring about an improvement of conditions. Was this, as the *Standard* was to allege, merely mealy-mouthed hypocrisy, a strategy to protect their immediate interests whilst searching elsewhere for more legitimate supplies of cocoa? A strategy for buying time? Or was it not only a moral but a realistic argument, which recognized that an awful situation was unlikely to be changed overnight, and that concerted pressure could lead to immediate amelioration of the condition of the cocoa labourers and their freedom in the longer term? Satre, I think, does enough to indicate that Cadbury were far from being hypocrites, that they did make real efforts on the labourers’ behalf, and that Quaker-like, they wanted to believe in the humanity of the planters as much as that of the slaves; yet, simultaneously they ducked difficult decisions for a few critical years which undid much of their good work.

I think it follows from this, and from the subsequent behaviour of Cadbury in the Gold Coast, that they were indeed morally better – far better – than most capitalists. The Cadbury family, as witness their bountiful good works and their well intentioned construction of Bournville, a model suburb for their workers in Birmingham, were solid, good and worthy citizens and employers. Yet it was their location as capitalists engaging with empire that forced them into an almost impossible situation of seeking to reconcile their commercial objectives with their ethical concerns. Ultimately, they chose to follow the right path by boycotting Sao Tome cocoa in 1909; yet, it was only after much tergiversation and anguish.

The dilemma they faced then was to be even more forcefully posed some several decades later, when the anti-apartheid movement was to demand of Western capital to withdraw from South Africa. But compare Cadbury’s significant moral

anguish in the early 1900s with the crafty and often deliberately misleading moral wriggings of firms with investments in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s. There were, indeed, one or two which chose to withdraw on moral grounds, but they were the exception. In contrast, the Barclays Banks of this world only pulled out when political campaigning began to prove too much for them and it began to damage their interests elsewhere.

Consider, again, the extremely dubious corporate morality of those companies of various nationalities which are rushing to invest in oil in, yes, today’s Sao Tome, and in other countries of western and central Africa! If only, we might say, they were run by George and William Cadbury rather than the strategic considerations of a George Bush and the material greed of anonymous corporate moguls! Perhaps I am being too harsh, but it is a pity that notwithstanding the title of his book, Satre does not provide us with any discussion of politics and the ethics of business that goes much beyond his immediate case.

The second issue which the book highlights is the undisputably important and in many ways heroic role played by the anti-slavery campaigners and, by implication, today’s activists on behalf of a just cause. Satre’s hero is William Nevinson, and it is good to see him get the retrospective praise that he deserves. Indeed, the author has effectively done for him what Adam Hochschild did for E.D. Morel in *King Leopold’s Ghost*. Nevinson, in brief, was a politically committed journalist – committed that is, to exposing the brutalities of slavery and replacing it with a more just system. Critical, too, one feels, was his belief in human equality. Unusually for his time, “he regarded the natives as hardworking and intelligent people who cared greatly for their families. He never referred to them as being inferior to Europeans. He did not wish to ‘civilise’ the natives but to free them to practice their own unique and important way of life” (p.12). In contrast, however well-intentioned, the Cadbury family was paternalist and steeped in a tradition of Quaker middle class benevolence which had strayed considerably from the radical egalitarianism of their moral ancestors, the seventeenth century Levellers.

Apparently from a lower middle class background and born of evangelical parents, Nevinson himself eschewed religious belief and opted rather for the social gospel, serving first at Toynbee Hall (the settlement for the working class in East London) and belonging to the H.M. Hyndman’s Social Democratic Federation (one of the major predecessors of the Labour Party) in the 1880s and 1890s. Teaching history and literature at a succession of schools, he wrote a number of books about the English working class before accepting invitations from the *Daily Chronicle*, a liberal newspaper, to cover the Greek revolution on the island of Crete, followed by the Spanish-American War and, in 1899 and 1900, the South African War. Thereafter, after leaving the *Chronicle* and joining a group examining conditions in Macedonia, Nevinson – by now a “recognised journalist and writer who respected the working poor and identified with the oppressed in their struggles against tyrants” (p.29) – was asked by Harpers to report upon conditions in Portuguese West Africa. He approached William Cadbury to see if he could be of any assistance to him in his own enquiries, but the latter felt that any enquiries Nevinson made would be hampered by his lack of Portuguese, and opted rather to employ Joseph Burt, a fellow Quaker, as his commissioner.

Cadbury insisted that a representative sent to Sao Tome by his company, rather

than by the humanitarian societies (the Anti-Slavery Society and the Aborigines' Protection Society), would be more acceptable to the planters. Burt himself was a decent man enough; yet, he clearly did not have the strength of character of Nevinson and was too easily charmed by the planters, too easily committed to presenting a "balanced" case. It was Nevinson's passion for justice, combined with the concerted activism of the likes of Thomas Fowell Buxton and Henry Richard Fox Bourne ("a stubborn, pugnacious and single-minded man who devoted himself to helping the oppressed") of the APS, who "confounded the British government" (p.12) and in the end provided the wealth of information which forced Cadbury to defend themselves in a court of law. These are names which are as deserving of mention in Africa's roll call of honour as any of the later activists for the struggle for freedom of Africa with which we are more familiar today.

The third point which Satre (almost brutally) drives home is the pusillanimity of governments when moral imperatives impinge upon their political and material interests. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, all European powers were seeking regular and inexpensive labour for their colonies. The formal ending of slavery and the slave trade (in *part* the triumph of yet earlier humanitarians) meant that they had to look to other schemes, notably indentured labour and the employment of appropriate tax regimes, to force Africans into colonial employment. The difference between such schemes and slavery may not have been wholly evident to the labourers so employed, for the majority of whom the increments in freedom which were registered by various international conventions and different labour codes were often effectively irrelevant. Yet the differences were, in fact, fundamental in the sense that they drew a principled distinction between "slave

labour" (which guaranteed no rights or privileges at all) and supposedly "free labour", which (at any rate in legal terms) did (such as that of repatriation to their home country at the end of their contracts). Naturally, this fundamental difference in the legal status of labour was trumpeted by colonial governments and their apologists and allies, even as they used it as a fig leaf to cover the continuing abuse and brutal oppression of labour. Yet, simultaneously, it provided an opening for humanitarian campaigners, who were not shy of pointing out not only the limited empirical differences between, say, indentured labour and slavery, but also the miserable failure of governments to compel the implementation of the most limited labour rights.

And so it was with the situation in Sao Tome. The Portuguese proclaimed free labour but kept Africans in shackles. Humanitarians exposed abuses and called for action, but successive British governments, although fully cognizant of the reality of the situation, were never prepared to call a spade a spade lest it disrupt their alliance with Lisbon (even while they schemed with Germany to divide the Portuguese colonies between themselves). The tragedy, perhaps, is that the most culpable of British governments were the Liberal governments from 1906 onward. Domestically, these were some of the most radical that Britain had ever seen, laying the foundations of the welfare state and asserting the supremacy of the Commons over the Lords.

Yet, in the scheme of things, the continuation of slavery in Portuguese Africa mattered little. This was certainly the case with the long term Liberal Foreign Secretary, Edward Grey, who cared far more about maintaining the balance of power in Europe, although, as Satre notes, he has been strongly criticized by historians for failing to spell out to other powers, particularly Germany, how Britain would

respond in the event of a conflict (p.214). While his role in the conflagration of Europe that followed in 1914 will continue, inevitably, to be the major focus of scholarly interest in his years of office, this book will further batter his reputation. Even if Grey was merely the instrument of greater forces (Hobsbawm, for instance, argues that by the early 1900s war was in effect unstoppable<sup>1</sup>), his role in the Sao Tome affair cautions us to take what governments say with a very large dose of salt. To return to the present, is it mere coincidence that the G8 is promising debt relief to the poorest countries, and Tony Blair's Commission for Africa is calling for massive increases in aid, at a historical juncture when the great powers are embarking upon a new scramble for the scarce oil and other mineral and energy resources that the continent possesses? We should not mechanically repudiate the professed good intentions of our present politicians, just as we should not discount those of the Cadbury family years ago. Yet again, as with the most noble professions of Edward Grey, we would be very foolish if we take them at face value.

The final marker laid down by Satre concerns the continuation of slavery. To be sure, Satre gives the book an appropriate conclusion in which he narrates how in 2000 he abandoned the archives for a first trip to Sao Tome, where he explored the harbours, railways, buildings and plantations he had been writing about. Most, he says, are still in existence, and some are even still functioning. But slavery has long been abolished, and for this we must pay due homage to the efforts of the humanitarians. Nonetheless, for all that, freedom has brought little but a poverty which is unrelieved by the idyllic beaches for tourists which are as yet largely "undeveloped". In short, the cocoa industry, for all the pain that it has inflicted on Sao Tome, has left little that is worthwhile behind it, and hopes for the development of the islands now rest fairly and squarely (and probably

misguidedly, given experiences elsewhere) on a potential oil bonanza.

Sadly, it is necessary for the work of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines' Protection Societies to live on in the continued commitments of Anti-Slavery International, which still fights against slavery just as its forerunners did in the early twentieth century. This body reported in 2002 that an estimated 284,000 children work in West Africa's cocoa industry, with between 2,500 and 15,000 of them working in conditions of slavery (p. 222). Elsewhere, of course, in a continent which is now ironically desperately short of employment, reports emanate continuously of children being recruited as child soldiers or sold into bondage as sex slaves. Nevinson, notes Satre, would expect organizations like the United Nation's Children's Fund and Anti-Slavery to keep this issue before the public, lest interest dissipates in a (even more) "modern slavery".

Satre's book is concerned with too particular a matter to attract a wide readership. And even those specialists of African history who pick it up will be distressed by the lack of an index which is a huge drawback in a book which is so densely detailed. And why on earth do publishers continue to provide pages of endnotes wherein the chapters are numbered but not titled, and the wretched reader is forced to scurry back and forth between notes and text to find out what chapter he or she is reading? Nonetheless, this text is a major contribution to the study of slavery and serves to remind us of the bitter roots of chocolate in sin.

## Notes

\* An earlier version of this review was first published online in the EH-Net Review.

<sup>1</sup> E. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire 1875-1914* (London: Phoenix Press, 1987), pp. 302-327.



## Let the People Speak: Tanzania Down the Road to Neo-Liberalism

Issa G. Shivji

"This is an extraordinary record of one country's descent into 'neo-liberalism', which roughly translated means socialism for the rich and capitalism for the poor. Issa Shivji's shrewd eye concentrates on Tanzania, but his stories could be from almost anywhere in Africa, if not the world".

John Pilger

This book of 90 critical and thought-provoking essays written between 1990 and 2005 captures the richness of Shivji's contributions as a public intellectual. It deals with the period when Tanzania under external pressures from donors and financial institutions was forced down the road of neo-liberalism. The local compradorial elites whose economic appetites had been suppressed under Nyerere's radical nationalism now openly flexed muscles to get a place under the capitalist sun as nationalism, radical or otherwise, was abandoned, and neo-liberalism uncritically embraced.

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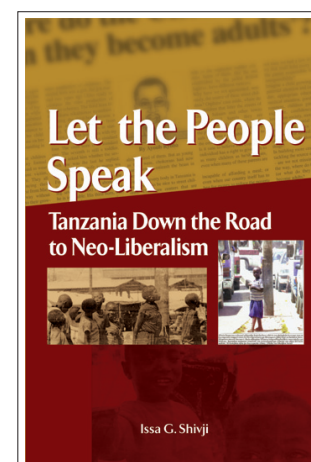
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The title of this book cleverly conveys its central concern: the changing class composition in contemporary South African classrooms across the spectrum, whether funded by the state or privately. This focus on social class marks a timely return to a crucial concept, generally neglected in post-apartheid scholarship (Alexander 2002; Hendricks 2003). After a decade of democracy in South Africa, there is a need to review the extent to which the plethora of policy enacted by the democratic government has succeeded in changing the extremely unequal socio-economic conditions inherited from apartheid. South Africa's gini co-efficient of 0.64 in 2003 (Tempest 2004) suggests that we are still far from redressing the deep-seated problems of inequality. Moreover, the racialised inequalities of the education system are also regionally biased, with rural areas remaining the worst off (De Souza 2003). A growing black middle class is widely regarded as one of the successes of democracy in South Africa. However, though the black middle class may have doubled in size (Southall 2004), it remains small numerically and its existence has had little impact on a national unemployment rate of 41, per cent (Tempest 2004). Central to an analysis of educational change is the issue of whether the presence of an enlarged black middle class has affected the quality of education across the system, especially for the majority of children with working class or unemployed parents. The education system plays a central role in producing and reproducing the status quo and my own interest is whether this book provides an analysis of difference as well as an explanation for the persistence of profound social inequality in education.

The book consists of 16 chapters, each written by well-known specialists. It surveys essential education sectors like schooling and tertiary education, as well as the more marginalised sectors of adult basic education and early childhood education. In the introduction, the editor, Linda Chisholm, explains the intention of the volume: "[B]y analysing change, the areas of continuity become visible; by analysing continuities, the areas that have changed are highlighted" (p. 2). I found an emphasis on **change** in the education system in the first ten years of South Africa's democracy, rather than **continuity**. Most contributors review policy and synthesise existing research in order to point to trends. Only four chapters (10, 12, 14 and 16) provide new empirical information. The 16 chapters are fairly evenly spread across three sections: the first section (chapters 1-5), called "Changing Contours", deals with the shape, outline and character of the education system as a whole; the second (chapters 6-11), called "Changing Landscapes", deals with the shifts in curriculum, school classrooms, teacher unions and the tertiary sector; and the third (chapters 12-16), called "Changing Margins", reviews the state of education sectors like early childhood development, adult basic education and education non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

In chapter 1, Haroon Borhat analyses Statistics SA (South Africa) survey data on employment, unemployment and economic growth to argue that what we have is a problem of unemployable people, who need to be disaggregated from the unemployed. This chapter also demonstrates the dilemmas around interpreting official statistics. Borhat claims that the economy has grown, but that too few jobs have been generated to stave off rising unemployment and that "the majority of the unemployed with university degrees are in the Education, Training and Development field" (p. 45 and also Table 1.10 on p. 46). However, this interpretation is suspect because there is no con-

## Education and Social Differentiation in South Africa

Monica Hendricks

### Changing class: education and social change in post-apartheid South Africa

edited by Linda Chisholm

HSRC Press and Zed Books, 2004, 448 pages, R190,  
ISBN 0 7969 2052 4 PB (in South Africa ) and ISBN 1 84277 590 1 HC  
(in the rest of the world)

sensus about statistics on teacher supply and demand. The accuracy of Statistics SA figures is disputed by various interest groups. For instance, provincial education departments, higher education institutions and teacher unions claim a shortage of teachers and education officials.<sup>1</sup> Yet the National Treasury, like Statistics SA, points to survey data showing unemployed graduates with educational qualifications. It is difficult to know whether unemployed graduates have teaching qualifications in the 'wrong' subjects or whether they are job-hunting in the wrong geographical areas. A study commissioned by the Education Labour Relations Council due to be released in July 2005 should provide a more accurate answer to the seemingly simple question of whether there is an over-supply or shortage of teachers in South African education in the mid-2000s.

Edward Fiske and Helen Ladd in chapter 2 examine the effects of the democratic government's policy of encouraging public schools to charge school fees at primary and secondary levels. They find that fees have significantly affected the formerly racialised enrolment patterns among schools, though they do not appear to have reduced the overall enrolment rate. Their finding, that the policy of charging fees has "induced middle-class families to keep their children in the public school system ... [but has done] little, if anything, to help the historically disadvantaged schools" (pp. 80-81), contributes to the overall argument of the book that education has become class-rather than race-based, as was the case in the past.

The following chapter, by Crain Soudien, explores the nature of the shift in enrolment patterns among schools. Though he refers to constituting class, Soudien does not offer a definition of class but works with common-sense categories, like middle class and working class, without justifying the boundaries distinguishing these classes or considering how the use of a term like "elite" fits into a class analysis. To get around the problems of analysing the shifts in learner demographics, Soudien takes school fees as a proxy for social class and employs the notion of "scapes" to understand "how domination is being *rearticulated* in an extra-race way around integration" (page 105, emphasis in the original). In a spot-on analysis of the effect of the South African Schools Act of 1996 and the primary organ that it established for parents' participation in schools, the School Governing Body, Soudien argues (page 108) that "The Act projected parental identity around a restrictive middle class notion of who parents were and how they functioned ... The upshot of the practice was that in black schools, SGBs continued to be dominated by their principals or their teachers. In formerly white schools, middle class parents dominated". While the race scape showed that black children are assimilated rather than integrated in schools with culturally diverse learners, the class scape enables Soudien to demonstrate the middle-class position naturalised by the South African Schools Act of 1996.

The bias of the first section of the book is on the decisive impact of middle-class interests on education policy and schooling. Working class and especially rural schools, which cater for the bulk of children, are neglected. Thus, there is one chapter dedicated to the issue of educational equity (chapter 4) and another to private, or independent, schooling (chapter 5), even though the independent school sector caters for "only 2.1% of learners overall" (p. 143). On the issue of educational equity, Suzanne Grant Lewis and Shireen Motala (page 116) find that "the goals of decentralisation for improved equity, expanded democracy and improved quality have not been met, except in resource-rich contexts". There is no chapter dedicated to resource-poor black urban and rural schools, to demonstrate how the ongoing inequality of resources structures the poor quality of schooling for the majority of South African children. It is telling that two US researchers who also contributed to the present volume, Fiske and Ladd, published a book in the same year, 2004, specifically on education and equity. They argue that, "although formerly white schools are now racially integrated, most African and coloured students continue to attend schools that are essentially all black. ... racial integration will never play more than a minor role in determining the quality of the educational opportunities available to black students. ... the main determinant of educational opportunities and outcomes for black students will be the quality of the schools formerly designed to serve African and coloured students" (2004:99).

The second section deals with shifts in curriculum, teacher unions and the tertiary sector. Unlike the chapters in the first section which can be read sequentially, I found most chapters in the second and third sections to be unconnected. The benefit of these stand-alone chapters is that they provide a comprehensive review of their respective topics. In chapter 6, Thobeka Mda provides a summary of the evolution of language-in-education policy in the post-apartheid period which has sought, with little success, to promote indigenous African languages – both as media of instruction and as additional languages. Mda refers to and endorses PRAESA's<sup>2</sup> advocacy of African languages and the realisation of the aims of language policy. However, she does not acknowledge the distinct lack of government will, demonstrated in the dominance of English in Parliament. Yet the importance of the government's political will to promote the use of African languages for official purposes, and thereby to challenge the currency of English in the educational arena, cannot be ignored.

Ken Harley and Volker Wedekind in chapter 7 review research on the extent to which the new curriculum, Curriculum 2005, has been realised in classrooms or represents a "symbolic" break with the past that has yet to be actualised. Their conclusion (p. 211) is that "C2005 as a pedagogical project is working counter to its transformatory social aims. It is widening, not narrowing, the gap between the former historically advan-

tagged and disadvantaged schools. Social class reproduction (with some reconstitution in terms of its composition) is clearly taking place".

Johan Muller, in chapter 8, argues that tension between centralising and decentralising tendencies shapes assessment policy as it does curriculum policy. Muller proposes three distinct shifts in his analysis of the policy struggles around assessment and qualifications: a period of relative stasis (1980-1994), followed by a period of increased tension because of reform initiatives (1994-2000) and a third period (2000-2002) of systemic reform and quality assurance. As a drive for quality assurance continues to define assessment and qualifications reform, I am unclear why Muller does not extend this period to the present. One of his central conclusions (p. 240), that "without the data provided by systemic assessment, the learning gaps in the system can't be known", echoes the call by Grant Lewis and Motala (in chapter 4) for more and new empirical research into the quality of learning achieved through educational reform.

There is quite a degree of overlap between chapters 9 (by Yusuf Sayed) and 11 (by Jonathan Jansen) as teacher education, the topic of chapter 9, has become part of higher education, the topic of chapter 11. Interestingly, while Sayed reads the shifting of teacher education to higher education as extending the possibility for curricular autonomy, Jansen makes the point that higher education institutions' traditional notions of autonomy have been challenged by government policy during this time. For Jansen, the new government's intervention to reduce the number of higher education institutions through mergers, and the Minister of Education's new power to remove an academic leader and appoint an administrator, can be understood as "the concept of autonomy ... [being] fiercely juxtaposed with the requirement for accountability" (p. 297).

One of the few chapters to include fresh data is Logan Govender's analysis of the different, sometimes competitive, roles that the three main teacher unions have played in policy processes in the post-apartheid period. A useful insight (p. 274) is that "approximately 97 per cent" of teachers were union members in 2001, making education a highly unionised sector. The biggest union (SADTU – South African Democratic Teachers' Union) is tied, through the tripartite alliance of the union federation and the Communist Party, to the new African National Congress government. Govender shows that SADTU's close ties to the present government have not prevented it from embarking on a joint strike with other teacher organisations for the first time in 1999.

In the last section, Sean Morrow (chapter 12) and John Pampallis (the final chapter 16) examine education NGOs and how their roles and functions have changed after 1994, providing a frame for the middle chapters. Both point to concurrent trends: the ANC government's lack of capacity to deliver educational services and the demise of many education NGOs as foreign donor funding shifted to the new democratic government. Morrow traces the changing role of education NGOs from one of opposition to the apartheid government to one of advocacy in relation to the new government or an ancillary role of service delivery, while Pampallis shows that the Education Department relies on outsourcing aspects of service delivery to local NGOs and increasingly to consortia of local and global research organisations. I agree with their view that in the process, the "ethos of NGOs ... [has become] more entrepreneurial" (p. 431).

Margaret Perrow's case study in chapter 14 of a youth development NGO, Joint

Enrichment Project (JEP), exemplifies the trends identified by Morrow and Pampallis. Perrow uses discourse analysis to show how JEP repositioned itself in a changing social and political context. From a stance of resistance to the apartheid government initially, in the mid-1980s to the early 1990s, it re-oriented itself as a “capacity-building” and skills development youth organisation running its own programmes in the 1990s. By the late 1990s and early 2000s, JEP had re-invented itself once more and was mainly tendering for government contracts to provide services in youth employment programmes. This trajectory is common of NGOs and raises the question, unfortunately not considered in this volume, of the independence of NGOs from the government or whether most NGOs in fact function as another arm of government service delivery.

Chapters 13 and 15 review early childhood development (ECD) and adult basic education (ABE), education sectors that historically and currently still are dominated by NGOs. Kim Porteus problematises commonsense notions of what ECD means, arguing that as a policy question it has to be informed by a human rights approach. She concurs with others (e.g. Weber 2002) that a crucial reason for post-1994 ECD policy not measuring up to the pre-democratic vision is that “the parameters of possibility for education policy ... lay not with educationists but rather with economists in the Department of Finance and the Treasury” (p. 360). She also suggests four additional reasons (pp. 361-2): the ECD sector is

largely feminised and thereby “weak in the policy process”; ECD is less organized than schooling, with neither practitioners nor learners having “a socially-organised voice”; a Reception Year attached to formal schooling was regarded as best practice in the mid-1990s by the World Bank and in industrialized countries; more innovative approaches based on community-level care and children’s rights were “beyond the bureaucratic transformations realized in this period”. She cautions that changing ECD policy will depend on “civil society [mobilizing] around pro-child social developments” (p. 363).

In a similar vein to Porteus, Ivor Baatjies and Khulekani Mathe conclude that promises from the Education Minister with regard to adult literacy have not materialised because of the shift to the right in developmental and financial policies. Baatjies and Mathe, however, do not consider the issue of whether poor financial management of some NGOs involved in ABE also contributed to the present sorry state of ABE in South Africa.

I noticed only a few typographical and factual errors, which do not, however, detract from the quality of the book. In Table 3.4 on page 99, the 40 per cent of learners indicated as white (W) at Ruby Primêr should in fact read coloured (C) and there are percentages missing for Marula Primary and Basildon Primary. Soudien’s claim, in the same chapter, that “the new government has officially abolished racial categories” (p. 96), is inaccurate. Not only does the government

continue to use apartheid racial categories to monitor employment equity, for instance, but the national Department of Education itself does indeed systematically collect statistics about learners’ race in Grade 9, for the school-leaving certificate.

Sayed’s statement (p. 256) that “This [the incorporation of teacher colleges into universities] reflects a direct reversal of about 90 years of apartheid teacher education policy” is misleading. Apartheid was not in existence for 90 years; previous teacher education policy that was also racist and divisive simply demonstrates that institutional racism in South African society pre-dates apartheid. Apartheid racialised state institutions and social relations more extensively, but it did not introduce racism.

The short answer to whether this volume produces an analysis of difference as well as of the persistence of profound educational inequality is that, in focusing on the role and interests of the burgeoning black middle class, the book prioritises change in the education system rather than the inequitable continuities. While *Changing class* does not adequately highlight the negative impact of the ongoing educational inequities, its broad scope makes it a valuable reference. Readers who want an overview of educational change in the first decade of democracy in South Africa will find it a comprehensive and accessible resource.

## Notes

- 1 For instance, according to the Superintendent-General of the Eastern Cape Education Department “The province needs 600 education development officers – also known as subject advisers – to roll out outcomes-based education. There are only 34” (Mkokeli 2005:2).
- 2 PRAESA, the Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa, is based at the University of Cape Town and for many years it has researched and advocated the use of indigenous African languages in education and in society.

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## Human Rights, Regionalism and Democracy in Africa

Edited by Lennart Wohlgemuth & Ebrima Sall

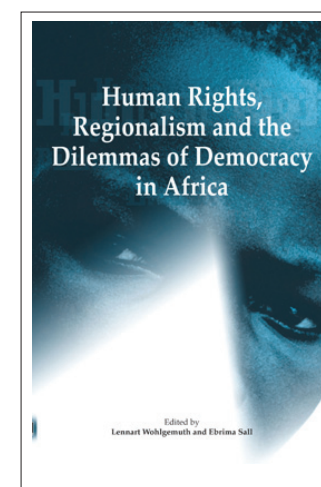
‘This is a major contribution to ongoing efforts to raise awareness on the functioning of the African human rights machinery. With the recent election of 11 Judges to the African Court on Human and Peoples Rights, accessibility to the African human rights system is even more essential to ensuring respect and recognition of human rights for Africa and its people.’

**Evelyn Ankumah**, Executive Director of African Legal Aid, Ghana.

‘Wohlgemuth and Sall have put together a timely publication that presents admirably critical assessments of the role and relevance of the twenty-year old African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, its structure, mechanisms, resources and institutional autonomy, while locating the general discourse on human rights and democracy in Africa in its wider political and socio-economic contexts. These discussions will provide scholars, policymakers and practitioners with useful insights into the continuing challenges and opportunities for human rights promotion and protection in Africa.’

**Tijanjana Maluwa**, Pennsylvania State University Dickinson School of Law, USA

The issue of human right in Africa is as much about the dignity of Africans as it is about the responsibilities and commitments of others towards Africa. In this light the fight for human rights in Africa and the creation of the African Commission for Human and People’s Rights are of utmost importance for making true this double aspiration. It discusses the achievements of the African Commission and suggests ways of strengthening and making the commission more efficient in advancing its goals and objectives. The volume points at the new institutional changes on the African scene with the African Union and its many new organs and the importance for the Commission to come to grips with this in the interest of relevance and hope for human dignity in African.



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## War and Photography

Charlie Kimber

### Amulets and Dreams: War, Youth and Change in Africa

edited by Omar Badsha

photographs by Guy Tillim and Omar Badsha

text by Julia Maxted

UNISA Press, 2002, 162pps, £38.95, ISBN 1868882306

I live in Britain. So, for the most part, there are two sorts of photographs of Africa that I see in the mass media. They may be described as the horrific and the terrifying. The first category is made up of pictures of famine or disease or the effects of war and mass murder. The second consists of pictures of men (it is usually men, although for added spice it is sometimes women) with guns, knives, ammunition belts, axes and—for real commercial possibilities—some elements of “traditional magic”.

Pictures that broadly fall into these categories can sometimes be powerful and valuable. There is a basic witnessing of events (including famine and war) which, even if in an unclear and partial way, heightens our awareness of the world. I think of the photographs of the atrocities committed by Italian and US troops in Somalia during 1993–4, or some of the pictures from Rwanda in 1994, or some of the pictures of the impact of HIV/AIDS. At the pinnacle of achievement in these categories are, for example, Sebastiao Salgado's pictures of the Malian famine. These are pictures of solidarity rather than of charity that do so much more than make you feel sorry for, and superior to, the subjects.

But if such images are all you see, then there is a huge void. Africa can seem to be a continent of unfathomable horror, a place only of endless barbarity and universal torment. Wholly absent is the element of African people living their lives in the context of “normality”—the twenty-first century reality shaped by history and present-day globalisation.

I do not mean of course that I crave twee domestic scenes, or just idyllic landscapes. What's missing is photography which intertwines the “ordinary” and the way that the ordinary is violated.

There are masters to draw on. The South Africans who worked for *Drum*—people such as Bob Gosani, Peter Magubane, G.R. Naidoo and Lionel Oostendorp—produced brilliant work in the 1950s and 1960s. Their stories on prisons, mineworkers, a children's hospital and the drowning of a “Coloured” boy were based on hard work, persistence, wonderful pictures and questioning politics. Jurgen Schadeberg has also produced decades of wonderful work. More recently Santu Mofokeng, Makgotso Gulube and Taryn Miller can be added to the list.

But there is not nearly enough of this. Far too often, Africa is represented by pictures which have been grabbed by a photographer stepping from a helicopter without any background or understanding or empathy. And it shows. I am often reminded of Brecht's quote from 1931:

The incredible development of the picture reportage has hardly been a victory for truth about the conditions in the world: photography in the hands of the bourgeoisie has become a cruel weapon against the truth. The immense picture material that is spewed out by the printing presses every day and that seems to have the characteristics of truth, serves, in reality, only to obscure the facts. The camera can lie as well as the linotype machine.<sup>1</sup>

Brecht also wrote that “You should make the instant stand out without in the process hiding what you are making it stand out from”.

In this context, the work of Guy Tillim, of which this book is an excellent example, is hugely welcome. Tillim, born in Johannesburg in 1962, went to the University of Cape Town and graduated in 1983. He soon began working as a freelance photographer

and then joined Afrapix, the progressive photographers' collective. He has worked for Reuters and Agence France Presse and received numerous awards, including most recently the Leica Oskar Barnack Award for his work, *Jo'burg*. This book brings together some of his work of the last five years from Sierra Leone (2001), Angola (2001/2), Mozambique (2001), Eritrea (2000) and Burundi (2002).

Tillim's picture of a school in Koidu in Sierra Leone is one of the most effective pictures. In a shattered garage, a class of around sixty children sits on the floor in front of their teacher. The view is from behind the children, so we cannot see their faces but we can sense their rapt attention from the angle of their shoulders and their heads. In the foreground is the garage's floor—dark, dirty and covered with pieces of debris. At the other end of the room the blackboard and the teacher are framed in the sunshine from outside, an image of hope and enlightenment but also of great defiance and of seizing every opportunity to develop.

These themes of ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances continue in Tillim's Angolan pictures. “The War Damaged Ministry of Education in Cuito” shows a boy climbing upwards towards a hole in the ceiling, the opening bathed in light while everything else is in darkness. It is not an easy climb, but his body is straining powerfully and we have no doubt he will succeed. It is an image of resolve, effort and hope.

This sense of hope has frequently been noticed in Tillim's work. Peter Machen for example has analysed it and located it in the fact that much of Tillim's work is of immediate post-war scenes, places where there is a sense of deep relief that the conflict has ceased. But Tillim does more than show people glad that they have seen the worst of a war. It seems to me that he deliberately stresses moments of struggle, individual or collective, in desperate situations. And these moments of resistance are extraordinarily uplifting.

The picture “Isoble Diolino, Teacher at Kuito Primary School”, shows a pupil holding up his work to the magisterial figure of the teacher in a classroom whose walls are pockmarked with bullet holes. But there is another child, who, arms splayed wide, looks to be celebrating (or is it just stretching?) in front of the blackboard. It can be read as a feeling of rejoicing at the possibility of a new life and the magic of learning. Note also that we learn Isoble Diolino's name. She is not a nameless teacher but a real person, with dignity and a thereness.

One of Tillim's pictures from Mozambique, “War Veterans Near Beira”, has a similar quality. Two one-legged men converse in the left side of the picture. In the right side two men, each with an arm amputated, walk hand in hand along a path. These are not figures of pity but of survival.

But Tillim does not ignore the continuing suffering and difficulties in people's lives. The picture of “Belavista, Luanda” centres on a young figure in the landscape of a squatter camp. It has defiance, but also

shows extreme poverty, the toughness of people who own nothing. The picture “Street Children at Their Shelter, Luanda”, has the power of a man's arm filling a third of the frame, but in the centre are the bodies of two men (sleeping? drunk? dead?) lying on the ground—and their bedding is the thin sheets of cardboard from packing cases.

One of the most disturbing pictures is “Sex Worker and Her Boyfriend, Luanda”. A young woman's face is full of deep sadness, not simply of grief at her situation but a pent-up anger and resentment and not a little fear. We can see only part of her boyfriend but can imagine his feelings of bitterness and anger.

The pictures from Eritrea are brutally realistic about the waste and cost of war. The corpse in “Battlefield, near Adi Quala” focuses on a single body, merging in his camouflage into the rocky background, but unmistakably dead.

In “Refugees Displaced by Fighting to ‘Safe Area’ Camp, Kuito”, Tillim takes a fairly standard “African disaster” scene and gives it a powerful twist. The picture oozes with anxiety, the child slung on his mother's back is awkward and almost corpse-like, several figures are captured in jerky movement, on the move and unrelenting. And there is also the profound ordinariness of the people. Many of them look alike, and are dressed alike, people I might find in my road in Hackney, east London. It says, “They are like you, imagine yourself and your children here.” That's powerful.

Tillim's pictures of Sierra Leone show a development in his pictures of child soldiers. In some, taken at wide angle, emphasise the painfully young fighters and their weaponry. In some the rifles and munitions utterly dominate. But in others, cropped much more tightly, the weapons are hardly visible or are completely absent. I find these much more compelling images. I look at the child's face and am much more aware that this is indeed a child. In other photographers' work the focus is on the weaponry carried by the child soldiers and this distracts from the message. It is interesting that Tillim's later work (for example of the Muji Muji militia in the Democratic Republic of Congo) employs the same close-cropped technique to emphasise the vulnerability of the children.

One of my favourite pictures is from the Angola series. “Wedding, Luanda” shows a beautifully dressed couple in all their finery processing past a watching group of ordinarily dressed people. They are not smiling. They are blank-faced, perhaps resentful of those with enough money for such show. It is not an image of everyone uniting to wish the happy couple all the best. It crackles with the sense of class, of rich and poor.

There are also two “television pictures” which are very effective. “Residents of Keren Watch the News Announcing the Fall of Barentu” from the Eritrea series has a family looking at a television where a newsreader is announcing a turn of events which might transform these people's lives. The caption, which tells us that Barentu is just 80 kilometres away, helps us to share their

sense of foreboding and worry. The other, utterly wonderful, picture is from Angola and is called “September 11, Tete”. An adult and two children are involved in their own concerns, their own problems. In the background, a television is on and shows the tower of the World Trade Centre on fire after one of the planes has crashed into it. For these Angolans, who have suffered so many years of war and brutality, 9/11 is nothing remarkable, nothing particularly arresting.

I must also mention the contribution to the book of the editor, Omar Badsha. He was born in Durban in 1945 and grew up in a Gujarati Muslim family. His grandparents emigrated to South Africa from India in the late 1890s. A self-taught artist and photographer, Badsha played an active role in the South African liberation struggle, as a cultural and political activist and trade union leader.

Badsha's political activism began in the early 1960s while at high school and he was in the forefront of all the major anti-apartheid campaigns in Natal and the Western Cape for close to four decades. He suffered periods of detainment, harassment and was denied a passport for close to 25 years after the banning of one of his books.

In 1987, he established the Centre of Documentary Photography at the University of Cape Town. In the Cape, he was one of the founding members and chairperson of the Cultural Workers Congress, an affiliate of the United Democratic Front (UDF). After the unbanning of the ANC, Badsha served in a number of capacities in the ANC and was head of the ANC Western Cape Department of Arts and Culture. He was instrumental in establishing Afrapix, the photographic agency and collective.

He edited what is perhaps the seminal book on life in South Africa in the 1980s: *South Africa: The Cordoned Heart*. He has much fewer pictures in the book reviewed here than Tillim, but they still add to the whole product.

A photographic book cannot be judged simply on its pictures. This is because photographs are incomplete. They do not tell us everything about the world. It is true of even the best photographs that they are fragments of a wider truth and cannot show fully why something is occurring. A picture of a starving child does not tell us about the structures of power which created famine. A picture of a sorrowing family does not tell us that the victim they mourn is a war criminal or a popular hero—or perhaps both. Therefore the most creative photographers have always tried to see the way that pictures and words interact. Richard Cross, the photojournalist who died in 1983 on the Honduras/Nicaragua border, put this well:

I think photographers sometimes are very short-sighted in looking at causes. They are interested in the more dramatic symptoms of the problem rather than the cause of the problem. I would opt much more for telling the story with a lot of images and text that tries to relate what has been going on in El Salvador with what has been going on in the last 50 years in the world. This requires good in-depth photojournalism. Which means that a person has to be dedicated enough to spend quite a long time with a story. And photographers have to take the initiative to try to have more control over the use of their photographs and they have to get more interested in the potential for combining images to make stories and to combine images with text.<sup>2</sup>

## Notes

Viewed from this perspective, I found the book less interesting. The text is adequate to describe some aspects of these conflicts but does not really mesh with the pictures in an effective way. It could have been stronger. Nevertheless, this book, symptomatic of work we need to see much more, is a milestone for the future.

- 1 B. Brecht, "An der Schwelle des zweiten Jahrzehnts," in H. Willmann, *Geschichte der Arbeiter-Illustrierten Zeitung, 1921-1938*, (Berlin: Dietz, 1975), p. 125.
- 2 *Ibid.*



## Men Behaving Differently?

Sindre Bangstad

### Men Behaving Differently: South African Men Since 1994

by Graeme Reid & Liz Walker (eds.)

Double Storey Books, 2005, 236 pp., ISBN 1919930981, ZAR 154,-

More than ten years after the first democratic elections in South African history, violence against and abuse of women and children would unfortunately appear to be as endemic as ever in South Africa. But, as pointed out by Posel in her contribution to this book, it is not clear whether this is a function of changed legislative environments, higher expectations with regard to legal protection against violence and abuse on the part of black South African women, or an actual increase in violence against South African women. Niehaus' contribution to this volume would seem to point to the latter, as he identifies highly publicised rapes in his fieldwork site in the province of Mpumalanga as a function of the increasing marginalisation of men through unemployment and crime (a pattern replicated elsewhere in South Africa, as unemployment among unskilled black men has increased dramatically as a direct result of the policies of trade liberalisation pursued by a neo-liberal ANC since 1994).

There are official protestations to the effect that claiming that violence against women is more widespread in South Africa than in most countries for which reliable statistics are available, represents an attempt to stigmatise black African men as sexually deprived.<sup>1</sup>

Nonetheless, there is no doubt among serious analysts of this problem that violence against and abuse of women, and the persistence of patriarchal attitudes and ideas which provides legitimacy to such human right abuses, represent significant developmental challenges for South Africa. It is with this background, as well as a reflection of international academic developments, that South African academics have come to take an increased interest in the topic of masculinity, as evidenced by this edited volume, which should be of interest to researchers in the fields of gender issues and development throughout the region.

The theoretical framework provided by the editors in the introduction, leans heavily on an earlier edited volume on Southern African masculinities by the historian Robert Morrell of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, namely, *Changing Men in Southern Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2001). In his introduction to that volume, Morrell noted that there is no such thing as an homogeneous masculinity in Southern Africa, and this provides a basic guideline for the contributions to this book. A problem with Morrell's book, which is replicated in this volume, is that there is little in the way of theoretical consistency between the editors' introduction and the individual contributions, nor between the individual contributions themselves. For instance, in the editors' introduction to this volume ("Masculinities in Question") we find them cautioning against the popularised trope of a "masculinity in crisis", which they - in line with Posel's contribution - would appear to read as a reflection of a "moral panic" more than anything else, only to be rebutted by the empirically based findings of Sideris, Niehaus and Walker in subsequent chapters. Their findings can not be read as anything else than a reflection of masculinities in deep and profound crisis.

In her chapter, "Baby rape": Unmaking Secrets of Sexual Violence in Post-Apartheid South Africa", Deborah Posel, a Professor of Sociology at the Witwatersrand Institute for Social and Economic Research (WISER), reflects on the implications of a new legal framework provided by the South African Constitution of 1996, which in principle guarantees the rights of South African women and children to protection from the State against abuse; and changing sexual mores in a society which in terms of its purposed public morality has undergone an extremely rapid process of what one, for want of a more adequate term, may define as secularization. She analyzes the public debates around sexuality and rape of women and children perceptively, and interprets the developments in the late 1990s as part of an increased moral panic about violence and abuse of women. In the new legal framework, rape within the context of marriage and relationships has for the first time been defined as the criminal acts that they are, whereas under apartheid law, rape could not happen within the context of marriage at all, and women who laid charges of rape against their husbands were often returned to their husbands, or labelled as morally suspicious.

Clearly, there has been progress in terms of the law after 1994. But the problem, which Posel points to but otherwise fails to reflect sufficiently upon, is the simple fact that as with many of the other rights guaranteed by the Constitution of 1996, the right to be protected from violence and abuse for many South African women and children is still very much a legal fiction. This is due to inadequate police resources to enforce those rights, the persistence of patriarchal attitudes within the reformed South African Police Service (SAPS) itself, and the failure to bring more than a minuscule proportion of those charged with violence against women and children to successful convictions. In a landmark ruling, the Minister of Justice was recently held directly liable for the failure to protect a citizen, a young woman who had been raped by the three male police officers whom she had approached for assistance against a potential abuser. That story is not an isolated one, and the lack in Posel's chapter of empirical data on the relation between a changed legislative framework and gender relations at ground level (except for sourced newspaper articles, which hardly constitutes primary and unfiltered data for research) is unfortunate.

There is also a tendency among social scientists in post-apartheid South Africa, to attribute societal changes somewhat

monocausally and simplistically to the advent of a post-apartheid society; Posel's assertion to the effect that the domain of sex was "modernized and liberalized with extra-ordinary rapidity" after 1994 (p. 47) at least left this author wondering how it could then possibly be that as early as 1990, 44 per cent of all coloured babies in Cape Town were born outside of wedlock.<sup>2</sup>

More on the side of empirical research is the contribution of Professor Isaak Niehaus of the University of Pretoria, who pursued research on a small rural community in the South African Lowveld, only referred to as 'Impalahoek', throughout the 1990s. In a very disturbing and direct representation of rapes of women in this community in the 1990s, based on interviews with many of the male perpetrators, Niehaus illustrates how unemployed and marginalised young men, who fail to enact the traditional roles as male providers for reasonably stable households and families through employment in the mining sector before 1994, have used rape as a way of humiliating assertive and strong women in their community.

Where Niehaus's contribution becomes problematic, however, is when he extrapolates general theoretical considerations from the limited number of interviews he has done with this particular category of male rapists in Impalahoek. Niehaus thinks that his data raises questions about the persistence of patriarchy in such a community as an explanatory factor for male rape against women, and about the ubiquity of such notions in popular and academic representations of the problematic of rape throughout South Africa. But this is simply not a conclusion warranted by the empirical data he has at his possession. Firstly, the starting point for Niehaus has been highly publicised rapes in the community, many of which were reported in local newspapers and eventually brought to trial. A general pattern in these rapes was apparently that the perpetrator (a young unemployed, and often socially and relationally dysfunctional male) was more or less a stranger to the female victim (often assertive, powerful and financially independent women, such as teachers, nurses, ANC-counsellors) and so forth.

But the fact of the matter remains that most South African women are raped by a person whom they know very well, and most often a person they have previously been sexually intimate with, in Impalahoek as elsewhere. But at the same time, these are the rapes that are most unlikely to be talked about in public or reported to the police,<sup>3</sup> often because of the shame entailed in such action (given that this is a patriar-

chal setting, in which women are likely to be seen as the possessions of the men they are intimate with), or (quite possibly) because marital or relational rape in this setting is so much taken for granted. What the notion of the rapist as a stranger and as a sexual predator does for this and most other communities is to provide a convenient way of exteriorizing its own problems with regards to marital and relational rape of women and children. What it manifestly fails to do, however, is to provide sufficient grounds to warrant Niehaus' conclusions in this book. The rapes committed in Impalahoek in the period took place against a background of patriarchal values and attitudes, and attempting to exclude this as an explanatory factor sets us as analysts upon a dangerous path in which some of the popular myths of rape are accepted as facts. But it is commendable of Niehaus to have attempted to link male unemployment and marginalisation to seemingly increased levels of violence against women, since this surely must count as one of several important explanatory factors in the developments of the 1990s.

Marc Epprecht is that relatively rare creature, a straight man researching homosexuality in southern Africa. In "Male-male Sexuality in Lesotho: Two Conversations", he notes that he first became interested in the topic during a stint as a historian at the University of Zimbabwe at the time at which its president Robert Mugabe lashed out against homosexuals as engaging in "un-African" acts. In this contribution, and in his book *Hungochani: A History of Dissident Sexuality in Southern Africa* (Kingston: McQueen's University Press, 2004), Epprecht provides a poignant critique of the many homophobic post-colonial Africanist scholars and politicians who have repeatedly tried to deny the existence of homosexuality in pre-colonial African societies, and blame colonialism for the importation of this so-called "ill". He does so through some informal interviews with homosexual males in Maseru, Lesotho, a socially conservative and traditionally patriarchal society in which few observers have previously noted the existence of homosexuality. Whilst lacking somewhat in methodological rigour and consistency, Epprecht proves the point that if there were anyone importing anything with regards to homosexuality in colonial Africa, it was post-colonial African leaders such as Mugabe, who imbibed many of his ideas through his schooling at colonial schools and universities heavily imprinted precisely by the Western and Victorian moralities reigning at the time.<sup>4</sup>

Liz Walker's chapter, "Negotiating the Boundaries of Masculinity in Post-Apartheid South Africa", based on primary research in Alexandra township in Johannesburg, charts the struggles of a group of largely unemployed, religious black men who have mostly been perpetrators of violence in their relationships with women, and who are trying to come to terms with different ways of being male in an environment of deprivation and marginalisation which would appear to put a premium on violent and promiscuous behaviour on the part of males. As a reader, one wonders, however, how much of their professed adherence to ideals of gender equality and non-violence against women are reflected in practice, and

whether their responses, commendable as they are, might not be the unintended effect of interacting with a white middle-class feminist and her NGO associates. In practice, and in my own research experience from South Africa, male violence based on patriarchal understandings may be more difficult to unlearn than what Walker seems to allow for.

"Men Behaving Differently" also contains contributions from Sasha Gear on sex and rape among male inmates in South African prisons; Mark Hunter on historical shifts in conceptualizations of masculinities among young Zulu males in KwaZulu-Natal; Tina Sideris on rural masculinities in Mpumalanga, and Graeme Reid on the gen-

der imaginaries of male homosexuals in Mpumalanga. This volume will stimulate debate and reflection among academics in the years to come, and, my caveats notwithstanding, that is perhaps as much as one could ask for in a book of this kind.

#### Notes

1 This was the general tenor of President Mbeki's attack on the South African reporter Charlene Smith, herself a rape survivor, in 2004. She was accused of racism, and of defining every African man as a potential rapist. In 1999, Mbeki accused her of spreading "untruths" by providing inaccurate statistics on the incidence of rape in the country. Mbeki's comments had the unfortunate effect of shifting the whole debate away from rape to racism, an explanatory category often

employed as a political tactic in contemporary South Africa. Cf. "Mbeki slammed in race row", BBC News Online 10.05.04 at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3716004.stm>, Lisa Vetten, "Mbeki and Smith both got it wrong", *Mail & Guardian* 29.10.04 available at <http://www.csvr.org.za/articles/artvet15.htm> and Natasha Erlank, "ANC Positions on Gender, 1994-2004", in *Politikon* 32 (2) 2005: pp. 195-215.

2 Cf. Sandra Burman & Eleanor Preston-Whyte, *Questionable Issue: Illegitimacy in South Africa* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 21.

3 A national survey of female victims of violence in South Africa from 2002 found that women who had been sexually abused by people who were close to them were much less likely than those abused by a stranger to report it to the police (39 per cent of those abused by a relative did so, and 45 per cent of those abused by

spouse or sexual partner, as compared with 69 per cent of those abused by a stranger). Cf. Shahana Rasool et al, *Violence Against Women: A National Survey* (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies 2002), p. xvi.

4 Along with post-colonial African leaders such as Nelson Mandela, Robert Mugabe was in his early youth a student at Fort Hare in South Africa, then a "Native College" closely linked to the "civilizing mission" of Anglican Christian missionaries in Southern Africa.



## Nationalisme, panafricanisme et reconstruction africaine

Sous la direction de André Mbata Mangu



176 pages; ISBN 2-86978-165-2  
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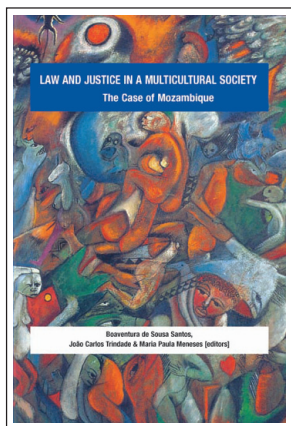
«Le panafricanisme est le nationalisme de l'après-guerre froide en Afrique tout comme l'indépendance fut le nationalisme de la période après la seconde guerre mondiale. Dans cet ouvrage, des intellectuels africains traitent précisément de la question du panafricanisme et de son renouveau. Il s'agit d'une grande avant-première qui, espérons le, deviendra un Grand Débat au sein de la communauté intellectuelle africaine »

Issa Shivji, Faculté de droit, Université de Dar es Salaam, Tanzanie.

«Riche, captivant et audacieux, cet ouvrage interpelle le moi collectif et individuel de l'être intellectuel africain. Il pose également le problème de la responsabilité sociale des intellectuels dans la renaissance africaine tout en s'efforçant de rassurer les masses des déçus de 'l'indépendance de drapeau'. La persistance de l'impérialisme requiert une continuité de lutte dans le cadre des régimes véritablement nationalistes et panafricanistes. Ce livre démontre à suffisance que même à l'heure de la mondialisation capitaliste, le nationalisme et le panafricanisme ne sauraient être perçus comme des vestiges du passé et les replace fermement au cœur du discours intellectuel et politique africain comme des éléments complémentaires d'une armature indispensable pour la reconstruction africaine ». Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, PNUD (New York, USA).

## Law and Justice in a Multicultural Society: The Case of Mozambique

Edited by Boaventura de Sousa Santos, João Carlos Trindade & Maria Paula Meneses



CODESRIA, CES & CFJJ 2006  
 266 pages; ISBN 2-86978-191-1  
 Africa: CFA 125000;  
 non-CFA zone: \$25;  
 Elsewhere: £16.95 /\$32.95

'Boaventura de Sousa Santos and his colleagues have produced an excellent account of Mozambique's legal system, relying not only on legal texts but also on historical and empirical investigations of the working of that system, based on an impressive sociological theory. The book is salutary reading for those proposing or engaged on legal reform in developing countries, who often operate on wrong theories and assumptions, and for those who wish to understand the complexity of the African state'.

Yash Ghai, Sir YK Pao Professor of Public Law, University of Hong Kong.

In socio-legal terms, Mozambique is a complex web of interlocking legal orders. Such condition, which is typical of colonial societies, has continued, in different forms, in the post-colonial period. This book aims at analyzing such legal pluralities and the ways they are managed by the Mozambican state, conceived by the authors as a heterogeneous state, a complex and conflictive institutional setting in which several distinct legal (and even political) rationalities coexist. The broad view of law and of the judicial system adopted in this book brings into the same analytical framework unofficial local or indigenous customary legal practices, state official law and courts and, as a kind of a legal hybrid, the community courts.

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L'art nègre demeure une production artistique incontestable<sup>2</sup>. La principale occupation de cet art vise la recherche africaniste car c'est un aspect pertinent de la culture noire ; il est d'autant plus précieux qu'il est illustré par des objets qui, par le biais de l'interprétation d'un message sculptural, musical ou théâtral qu'ils portent, constituent un des moyens de pénétrer les conceptions originales des civilisations africaines.

La négritude est un fait rejeté par les anglophones. Ces derniers sont fortement marqués par la pensée pragmatique anglo-saxonne, et sont soucieux de définir leur propre nature et d'exprimer autrement leur essence.

En effet, la négritude est âprement contestée par les intellectuels noirs anglophones. Auteur de la célèbre citation «le tigre ne proclame pas sa tigritude, il saute sur sa proie», le nigérian Wole Soyinka se fait le porte-parole du groupe de «African Personality».

### Soyinka, critique de la négritude

De ce fait, nous avons choisi le roman des *Interprètes* ; dans un premier temps les personnages des *Interprètes* souffrent du regard de l'autre, ils vivent une sorte de mal-être de par leur différence. Ils ne cessent de faire des rapprochements entre le monde des blancs et celui des noirs ; la citation suivante est à ce titre significative : « Tu sais une femme blanche de cette taille serait complètement amorphe ; écœurante. Mais une noire, et bien [...] elle est féminine. »<sup>3</sup>

Parallèlement, une autre vision est véhiculée, dans le sens où chaque personnage tient à détruire ce cliché. Ils ne sont plus sous la domination des blancs, mais ils revendiquent le droit de s'approprier la modernité du blanc : « Il faut aller à l'école, comme un être civilisé. Ce grand-père païen que tu as ne saura pas t'apprendre autre chose que de compter les épouses. »<sup>4</sup>

Il s'agit de cette attitude positive qui ne s'aperçoit plus en terme de carence. Chaque personnage tente d'adopter une attitude le plus souvent constructive ; en ce sens qu'il utilise des données occidentales qui sont destinées à réduire et à briser le stéréotype de la négritude. L'illustration suivante est en ce sens plus significative : « L'électricité appartient au gouvernement, nous savons ça les blancs connaissent ça, et l'un d'eux est venu ici et nous l'a dit. Ils savent ce qu'ils disent »<sup>5</sup>

C'est Sekoni, l'un des principaux personnages, l'ingénieur qui tient ces propos, il tente de rentrer dans une autre optique. Il ne s'agit plus de cette confrontation entre blanc et noir ; il est question d'une autre perception.

Selon Aimé Césaire la négritude est : « la conscience d'être nègre et la volonté de l'être et l'obligation de produire des œuvres nègres. »<sup>6</sup>

Ainsi, les personnages des *Interprètes* franchissent le pas qui sépare la révolte de la révolution en prenant position sur le problème de la condition humaine tout en inscrivant leur actions dans le monde contemporain. Ils vont donc se fonder en tant que système de valeurs culturelles et s'imposer sur le plan politique sous le nom de panafricanisme.<sup>7</sup>

Donc, le continent noir anglophone passe d'une négritude subie à une négritude assumée et revendiquée. En fait, Soyinka dépasse la question raciale et sa négritude devient le pouvoir d'intégrer les valeurs de l'autre (celles des blancs) à ses propres valeurs (celles du noir). Il développe ainsi, une attitude qui rejette la notion de carence.

## L'impact de la culture africaine à travers une lecture des *Interprètes*<sup>1</sup> de Wole Soyinka

Kahina Bouanane

### Les interprètes par Wole Soyinka

Présence Africaine (France), 1975, L'original, *The Interpreters* (1965)  
413 pages, 10.93 euro, ISBN : 2-708705547.

En somme la négritude est tenue à être dépassée en terme de valeur propre au patrimoine négro-africain. Selon Aimé Césaire la négritude est la « conscience d'être noir, la simple reconnaissance d'un fait, qui implique une acceptation, une prise en charge de son destin de noir, de son histoire et de sa culture »<sup>8</sup>.

Le passage suivant des *Interprètes* est significatif dans le sens où le personnage tient à dépasser la question raciale : « Mon objection serait contre : nègre, coloré, pigmenté ou n'importe quels euphémismes idiots [...] Pourquoi les gens sont-ils si susceptibles ? »<sup>9</sup>

### Les personnages des *Interprètes*

Wole Soyinka, l'écrivain nigérian est sensible à un autre style d'écriture. Il donne la primauté à ses références culturelles qui émanent de sa tribu Yoruba<sup>10</sup> tout en intégrant ses connaissances sur la littérature et surtout sur le théâtre dramatique anglais. Le texte des *Interprètes*<sup>11</sup> exprime cet imaginaire mythique gouverné par le sacré tout en étant caractérisé par une écriture théâtralisée, c'est-à-dire mise en scène.

Le sacré est vécu dans sa totalité, en ce sens que l'homme et les divinités ne font qu'une entité. La pensée africaine considère l'homme unit au cosmos. L'être humain et la nature vivent en parfaite harmonie. En effet, cette pensée reste coexistante aux données mythiques. Elle est même sa raison discursive.

Notre corpus d'analyse est produit à partir d'une réalité, une trame socio-historique, culturelle et même politique. De ce fait l'écrivain nigérian projette la représentation de cette réalité et tente de l'organiser en une fiction où la dimension mythique et symbolique est dominante.

Une brève présentation des corpus permettra de mieux comprendre comment le thème du sacré est abordé dans cette production africaine.

Les *interprètes* de Wole Soyinka (re)présentent un groupe de jeunes intellectuels nigériens qui essayent de donner un sens à leur vie et à leur talent dans une société où le cynisme et l'ascension sociale les poussent au désespoir. Ces six intellectuels nigériens commentent leurs expériences africaines, confrontés à un climat confus et ambigu : Sagoe le journaliste, Sekoni l'ingénieur, Egbo le fils d'un pasteur et d'une princesse, Bandele le professeur d'université, Lasunwon l'homme de loi et Kola le peintre.

Tous sont des amis d'enfance qui se retrouvent au pays, après avoir terminé leurs études à l'étranger. Ce petit cercle d'amis, marqué de personnalités si diverses, laisse apercevoir entre eux un lien existentiel : ils sont tous à la recherche d'eux-mêmes et forment une génération spirituelle dont l'idéal serait la synthèse entre la tradition, le sens de la race et le développement moderne de l'Afrique. Tous sont brûlés d'une énergie intérieure, mus par un élan vital qui s'infléchit suivant les obstacles et crée un monde bouillonnant dans une atmosphère à la fois burlesque et poignante.

Wole Soyinka, l'auteur des *Interprètes* a avancé ses personnages comme pour déconstruire une idéologie et (re)construire une organisation plus profonde c'est-à-dire plus ancrée dans sa culture Yoruba car ce roman est pertinent à un double point de vue : d'une part il est écrit par un homme particulièrement sensible au théâtre dramatique et d'autre part, il est engagé politiquement. Ces personnages ne traduisent-ils pas leur propre sens ? Un sens corrobore à l'intérieur d'un autre vécu différent du leur, d'où probablement le sens de l'ambivalence. Ces mêmes personnages sont interprétés en une sorte de crise spirituelle car souvent leurs esprits s'identifient à des divinités et chacune d'elles tient à défendre une idéologie, un sens visiblement ancré dans leur tribu Yoruba.

Ainsi, toute la lisibilité du texte de Soyinka tourne autour de la lecture/écriture du monde sacré des divinités. Le texte des *Interprètes* semble fonctionner dans un imaginaire symbolique et mythique.

Le monde des divinités se dispute l'espace de l'imaginaire africain qui exprime une certaine conception du monde et rend compte avant tout de l'insertion d'un groupe donné dans un espace donné.

Dans cet imaginaire, l'auteur glisse dans son propre délire spirituel, et la culture participe au mouvement du vécu et ne peut être isolée du quotidien. Il en est ainsi pour Wole Soyinka.

Avec *Les Interprètes* de Soyinka, nous allons habiter une réalité africaine fondée sur une tradition immuable. Cependant nous voyagerons avec ces personnages dans une mouvance évolutionniste. Avec cet évolutionnisme, les principaux interprètes véhiculent la présence à part entière des divinités dans la société africaine. Celles-ci postulent « l'unité même de l'espèce humaine », et l'origine commune des peuples africains.<sup>12</sup>

### Le sacré dans la culture Yoruba

En fait, le sacré est l'épistème de l'identité nigérienne. La présence de la divinité est riche d'images et de symboles dans la littérature africaine noire. Elle impose le statut existentiel de la culture noire.

Wole Soyinka tente de mettre à travers *Les Interprètes* en lumière sa culture «Yorouba»<sup>13</sup>, une culture qui baigne dans la sphère du sacré, considérée comme étant «la foi dans la permanence des valeurs»<sup>14</sup> d'où le jeu lointain d'être ludique des forces divines.

Parler du sacré dans *Les Interprètes*, serait une force voire une puissance de la société nigérienne, il est perçu avec raison par ses membres comme conscience des ressources de la tradition noire.

Ce sacré qui est le fondement culturel de la société nigérienne, est vécu dans une symbiose du visible et de l'invisible, de l'homme et du cosmos. Cette conception de symbiose fait que tous les contraires s'allient. Cette réalité instaure un caractère harmonieux dont le fonctionnement induit une volonté de « changer le monde ».

En fait, cette forme scripturale nous conduit à une réalité ethnologique africaine. Cette dernière est marquée par une logique particulière véhiculant « une relation ontologique entre les divinités intermédiaires, les esprits et les hommes vivants ou morts ».<sup>15</sup>

Dans *Les Interprètes*, le rapport au sacré nous conduit vers le pôle où tout converge. Il annihile les contraires qui créent une unité hors norme. N'est-ce pas la définition même du surréalisme ?

Cette supra réalité est donc de nature divine : les personnages vivent avec l'esprit des dieux. Elle se manifeste également dans le phénomène de résurrection où la vie et la mort ne forment qu'une entité.

Avec les personnages des *Interprètes* nous vivons cet espace qui englobe les vivants et les morts, le visible et l'invisible, les ancêtres proches et lointains. Tous les personnages du roman vivent dans cette surréalité. Celle-ci ne peut se concevoir hors de ce système des divinités.

En fait, l'ordre du discours des *Interprètes* tient de la logique et de l'imaginaire. Cette rencontre installe le sacré comme structure épistémologique de l'œuvre.

Nous définissons l'espace du sacré comme « la pierre d'angle de l'expérience religieuse »<sup>16</sup>. L'approche touche un point pertinent lorsqu'il dit que l'homme africain n'a conscience du monde réel que dans sa liaison avec le sacré, car seule « cette expérience permet de comprendre et de vivre [...] elle est la source même de la conscience même de l'existence. »<sup>17</sup>

L'homme africain vit dans ce mystère sans se poser de questions, tout comme dans le passage ci-dessus, il implique des non-dits dans sa tentative de transcender le temporel et d'entrer en contact avec des forces invisibles : « Il avait déjà échappé une fois, peut être pensait-il que je serais toujours là pour le sauver ? »<sup>18</sup>

Il va sans dire qu'il s'agit évidemment des réalités sacrées, celui-ci est le réel par excellence, le surréel dans le sens des surréalistes. L'homme négro-africain, plus il s'inscrit dans l'optique sacrale tout en faisant honneur à ses croyances et à ses divinités, et plus il disposera de modèles exemplaires pour ses comportements et ses actions et c'est dans ce sens qu'il s'insère dans le réel.<sup>19</sup>

L'homme africain ne peut prendre conscience de la réalité qu'en faisant appel au sacré. Les personnages des *Interprètes* vivent un «entre-deux» en faisant appel à la connaissance du surnaturel sans rejeter la logique, l'un n'exclut pas l'autre.

En fait, bien que les personnages des *Interprètes* demeurent profondément imbibés dans leur croyance Yoruba, il n'en demeure pas moins qu'ils souhaiteraient se détacher de cette obligation. Seulement, ils craignent un plus grand châtement s'ils décidaient de briser certaines lois sacrales.

Les deux personnages sont pris entre les deux formes de pensée ; ils ont l'inconscient de l'homme noir tout en ayant l'expérience de l'homme blanc. Cette expérience leur dicte souvent le rejet de la forme de pensée de l'homme noir que leur inconscient maintient avec force.

Ainsi, le monde des *Interprètes* est ce monde harmonieux dans lequel vivaient les hommes et le cosmos. Celui-ci est à la fois « un organisme réel, vivant et sacré »<sup>20</sup>. La démarche d'Eliade s'inscrit dans ce hors norme qui est indissoluble de la norme : « Vous travaillez sur une énorme toile qui contiendra tous les Dieux [...] Elle n'est pas arrivée au point où le sens est clair. »<sup>21</sup>

Avec le personnage de Kola, l'artiste peint une toile qui contient tous les Dieux et tente de mettre en relief deux points de vue.

Le premier tient à réactualiser des figures divines comme pour assumer une humanité qui a un modèle trans-humain d'où le phénomène hors norme est en parallèle, c'est une façon de maintenir la sainteté de la communauté. Le second point de vue s'exprime dans le fait que Kola, cet artiste peintre n'arrive pas encore à donner un « sens clair »<sup>22</sup> à sa toile ou encore à sa pensée, car il semble trouver des difficultés à éclaircir son sens entre sacré et réalité.

Le sacré dont il est question désigne aussi, tout ce qui est vénéré par l'homme. *Les interprètes* vivent justement dans un monde saturé de valeurs sacrales. Ils introduisent des mises au point de la connaissance négro-africaine. Ces valeurs tournent autour du rituel, du sacrifice, et de la résurrection.

### La normalité africaine

Toutes ces thématiques sont vécues comme une normalité qui explique l'existence même de l'individu africain noir. Le passage suivant met en relief la première thématique, celle du sacrifice. Il s'agit de cette offrande destinée à acquérir la faveur des dieux ; il est question de cette action d'immolation réelle :

« Pourquoi avez-vous besoin du bélier ? Vous avez déjà eu votre sacrifice. Et pendant un moment, il avait semblé qu'Égbo allait plonger le couteau dans sa gorge, et ils étaient tous restés horrifiés ; entourant les relents du sang et les artères battantes de la gorge tranchée.

Mais Égbo fait un mouvement badin avec le couteau, dans sa direction, et un mince filet de sang laisse une marque au travers de la chemise de Bandele. Aussitôt l'atmosphère se détendit, et le rire remplaça ce moment irraisonné d'antagonisme ; l'idée d'un bélier noir et son sang coagulé, Bandele sourit se souvenant qu'après tout cela était aussi pour Sekoni. »<sup>23</sup>

Ce sacrifice a eu lieu pour deux raisons : la première se formule dans la célébration qui concerne l'exposition de « Sekoni » [un personnage mort].

La seconde est un hommage pour le même personnage, c'est-à-dire à la mémoire de Sekoni. La seconde thématique est celle du rituel ; une sorte de cérémonie dans laquelle l'homme imite « les gestes exemplaires des dieux »<sup>24</sup>.

Simi est une déesse qui a aussi son rituel ; pour assurer l'atmosphère de l'amour elle a recours, elle aussi à des cérémonies : « Simi avait aussi son rituel, solennellement, elle enfermait d'abord son pantalon à lui dans l'armoire et suspendait la clef à un long fil qui pendait presque jusqu'au sol. »<sup>25</sup>

Cette activité cérémonielle relève probablement d'un des « vestiges de structure qui met en évidence les exigences de socialisation »<sup>26</sup> éprouvées par les personnages du texte. Par le biais de Simi nous (re)découvrons les habitudes et les besoins quotidiens du peuple africain.

Le rituel entretenu par Simi semble avoir un but précis car elle utilise le « pantalon d'Égbo pour réaliser et exécuter un comportement. Aussi, elle semble réactualiser des gestes autrefois utilisés par

des modèles divins. Autrement dit Simi relève en quelque sorte « les archétypes » de sa croyance qui se « déroulent dans une atmosphère imbibée de sacré. »<sup>27</sup> Nous supposons que l'acte entrepris par Simi reflète la pensée profondément ancestrale.

Discourir sur le sacré sous-entend notamment la vie et la mort. Avec *Les Interprètes* nous sommes frappés par le phénomène de résurrection : une vie, une mort ensuite une autre vie sous un autre aspect. Pour les personnages des *Interprètes*, vivre c'est participé à la vie sacrée des ancêtres.

La dernière thématique, celle de la résurrection, est perçue comme une vraie continuation de l'individu après la mort. Bien que ces interprètes aient une formation occidentale<sup>28</sup> il n'en demeure pas moins qu'ils ont gardé cette pensée traditionnelle. Le passage suivant est à ce titre fermement significatif : « Lazare, sous l'arc d'un rayon de lune traversant le ciel et la terre, tenu comme un fantôme et las comme la résurrection. »<sup>29</sup>

Le personnage de « Lazare » laisse entendre qu'il a le pouvoir de faire revivre l'âme ; en parlant de la mort définitive de Noé. D'ailleurs, il est convaincu de sa puissance hors norme, et pense même qu'il aurait pu le sauver s'il était arrivé plutôt sur les lieux : « Pensait-il que je serais toujours là pour le sauver. »<sup>30</sup>

Ce que l'on constate dans l'œuvre des *Interprètes* c'est la perspective mythique qui décrit l'irruption du sacré dans le réel africain. Cette vision demeure encore dans l'imaginaire négro-africain, car le monde existe avant tout parce qu'il a été créé par les Dieux.

Tous les dérivés du sacré semblent encore une fois confirmer l'imaginaire originel de l'expression négro-africaine.

La particularité de cette œuvre, c'est que Soyinka installe la pulsion de la mort comme une expression sacrale qui pèse sur l'être et fait obstacle au néant, à l'ombre de la vie ; la mort se trame.

La vie des personnages de Soyinka témoigne de cette constante interaction entre la vie et la mort, le réel et l'irréel, le naturel et le surnaturel, le profane et le sacré.

Nous tiendrons compte du personnage en tant que signe fondamental, stratégique et constitutif de la fiction participant au code général de l'œuvre qui nous préoccupe.

Le personnage peut se définir comme une sorte de morphème doublement articulé : il peut être « référentiel », en ce sens qu'il renvoie à un sens immobilisé par une culture et « dont la lisibilité dépend directement du degré de participation du lecteur à cette culture ».<sup>31</sup>

### Un effet de réel

Les personnages des *Interprètes* renvoient à un sens fixe, immobilisé par leur culture. Ils serviront d'ancrage référentiel qui renvoie à une idéologie propre au Nigeria. Ils assurent donc ce que Barthes appelle un « effet de réel ».<sup>32</sup> Les personnages des *Interprètes* appartiennent à cette catégorie de personnages embrayeurs. Ce sont des porte-parole, ils tissent dans l'énoncé un réseau d'appel et de rappel causal. Cela nécessite la connaissance des présupposés et du contexte. Selon Philippe Hamon, le

personnage est ce « faisceau de relation de ressemblance, d'opposition de hiérarchie et d'ordonnement (sa distribution) qu'il contracte, successivement ou/et simultanément, avec les autres personnages et élément de l'œuvre ».<sup>33</sup>

En fait, tous ces personnages tissent un sens, celui de mettre essentiellement un lien entre tradition et modernité. Le roman des *Interprètes* contient des personnages qui se caractérisent par ce pouvoir de symboliser la réalité et la pensée.

Les personnages des *Interprètes* représentent la forme la plus haute d'une faculté qui est inhérente à la condition humaine, la faculté de symboliser. Il s'agit de cette faculté à représenter le réel par des signes à interpréter.

Ces signes sont fortement connotés : leurs signifiants prennent l'allure de masques, dont le rôle est le même que celui des masques au théâtre. Une des définitions du masque africain est celle de W. Fagg : « tous les objets auxquels le nom de "masque" doit être attribué peuvent se définir en deux mots : ils masquent. Cela signifie qu'ils cachent ou suppriment l'identité. »<sup>34</sup>

Ils masquent au sens propre et aussi au figuré : celui qui le porte l'aide à personifier une force, un esprit ou un dieu. Et cela est d'autant plus vrai que Wole Soyinka est un homme de théâtre par excellence. Il a écrit une quinzaine de pièces théâtrales, dont certaines ont été jouées dans plusieurs pays.

Il est plus facile de lire le texte des *Interprètes* comme une pièce dramatique appartenant au théâtre africain (sachant que Wole Soyinka est un homme qui donne une étendue au monde du théâtre) qui emprunte des masques cachant pour mieux dénoncer une réalité. Le port du masque est d'abord une nécessité : il donne à chacun le sentiment de son appartenance au groupe ; il permet de consolider l'ordre de la communauté véhiculant des messages voire des codes indispensables à celui qui porte le masque.<sup>35</sup>

Ensuite, le masque nigérian apparaît comme un instant d'éternité permettant la rencontre des personnages avec des divinités. Il a une puissance magique ; le porteur « est prêt à recevoir son Dieu dans son âme »<sup>36</sup>. Ce roman met ainsi en place un jeu centré autour de l'identification et de l'union avec une divinité.

Enfin, la portée de ce rôle masqué dans *Les Interprètes* est de nature spécifique, en ce sens que les personnages tentent de résoudre le conflit culture africaine/acquis occidental qui les mine, n'enlèvent pas le masque mais lui donnent une profondeur en l'intégrant à ce qu'il cache : leur nature profonde. Le masque n'est pas supprimé, mais son port participe à la résolution du conflit. Nous sommes donc loin du sens qu'on lui donne habituellement. Comme l'a noté Fagg, il cache l'identité seulement chez Soyinka et participe en même temps à la découverte de cette identité. Il est fait d'absence présence.

L'auteur anglophone Soyinka est fortement marqué par la pensée pragmatique anglo-saxonne d'où le souci de définir sa propre nature et d'exprimer son essence. Le recours à l'histoire des divinités a pour but de mettre en avant la création de mythes qui « galvanisent le peuple et le portent en avant »<sup>37</sup>.

Lalèyé écrit à propos des Yoruba : « Ce qui est sacré dans l'être humain c'est la vie. Le souffle de vie que Olodumar a pu mettre en lui. La personne est donc une valeur sacrée pour cette première raison. »<sup>38</sup>

Le monde des divinités est indissociable de celui des hommes, le fait d'utiliser des figures hors norme n'exclut pas un discours chargé de sens raisonnable.

### Notes

- 1 Texte traduit de l'anglais au Français par Frédéric Reglain/Liaison Agency Etienne, *The Interpreters*, London, 1965. p.300.
- 2 L'art africain, principalement la sculpture est connue en Europe depuis le XV<sup>e</sup> siècle, mais n'a acquis son expression artistique authentique qu'après 1906 lors de la découverte de la peinture cubiste d'où le véritable art nègre. cf., *Art Negro-Africain*, in Encyclopédie Universalis, 1996.
- 3 Wole Soyinka, *Les interprètes*, Présence Africaine, 1975. L'original, *The Interpreters*, 1965, London. p.p 31.32
- 4 Ibid, p.68
- 5 Ibid, p. 38
- 6 cf., in *L'univers philosophique* Paris, André Jacob, PUF, 1998
- 7 Cf., *La négritude : Essais et définition*, in *Littérature nègre* Paris, éd, Albin Michel, 1984.
- 8 *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, Présence africaine, Paris.
- 9 *Les Interprètes*, p. 60
- 10 C'est une langue, un peuple, une culture.
- 11 Wole Soyinka, *Présence africaine*, 1975. L'original, *The Interpreters*, London, 1965. (les initiales INT seront citées pour cet ouvrage)
- 12 Lire C. Bachès -Clément, *Anthropologie et psychanalyse*, in *L'Anthropologie*, Paris, Denoël, 1971
- 13 C'est une langue, une culture, un peuple
- 14 Le sacré est la manifestation de forces psychiques inconscientes où se mêlent le divin et l'humain, le rationnel et le non rationnel : le sentiment du mystère.
- 15 K.C. Anyamwu, cité dans Masson, J., 1988.
- 16 Mircea Eliade, *L'épreuve du labyrinthe*, Paris P. Belfond, 1978. cf., in *l'expérience humaine du divin*, Michel Meslin, éd. du cerf, Paris 1988.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Ibid. p. 295
- 19 cf., *Sacré et profane*, Paris, Gallimard, 1965, p 86.
- 20 Mircea Eliade, *Sacré et profane*, op.cit
- 21 Ibid., p. 58
- 22 Op. cit.
- 23 *Les interprètes*, p. 302
- 24 Op. Cit.
- 25 Ibid., p. 292
- 26 *Les origines et le problème de l'homme-religieux*, Julien Ries, *Traité d'anthropologie du sacré*, volume 1, éd., Desclée, 1992
- 27 Mircea Eliade, *Le sacré et le profane* éd. Gallimard, 1965
- 28 Ils ont tous étudié en Angleterre
- 29 *Les interprètes*, p. 294
- 30 *Les Interprètes*, p.295.
- 31 Philippe Hamon, *Pour un statut sémiologique du personnage*, in *littérature n°6*, éd, Larousse, Mai, 1972.
- 32 Voir l'article de R. Barthes, *L'effet de réel*, communication 11, Paris, Seuil, 1968.
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 *Masque d'Afrique dans la collection du musée Barbier Müller*, Nathan, Paris, 1980.
- 35 Le théâtre africain, in *Littérature Nègre*, Jacques Chevrier, éd. Armand Collin, Paris, 1984.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 NDao Cheikh, *L'exil d'Albouri*, Honfleur, PJ Oswald, 1967
- 38 Issiaka P. Lalèyé, La conception de la personne dans la pensée Yoruba, approche, phénoménologique H.Lang et Cie, S.A Berne, 1970.



**B**ali Nébié est professeur de Sciences de la vie et de la terre au lycée Nelson Mandela de Ouagadougou. Il a publié en 2004, à Ouagadougou, un « roman » qui a pour cadre un village nuna, Toum. Les Nuna font partie d'un groupe de populations que leurs voisins mossis désignent sous l'appellation péjorative de Gurunsi. Le pays gurunsi est situé au sud du Burkina Faso entre Ouagadougou et Bobo-Dioulasso. Si de nombreux Gurunsi reprennent à leur compte cette appellation, Bali Nébié maintient, quant à lui, celle de Nuna.

Ce « roman » en est apparemment un, mais son contenu déborde largement ce genre littéraire et par ce « débordement » il constitue un document ethnographique remarquable et une réflexion anthropologique et politique intéressante.

Comme dans un roman, on y trouve une histoire et des personnages. L'histoire est celle d'un jeune Nuna, Bétia, faussement accusé, en place publique, par le grand prêtre interprète du Fétiche noir, d'avoir volé un chiot pour faire mourir quelqu'un à la place de son père agonisant. Après une série d'événements dus à des intrigues complexes faisant intervenir de nombreux personnages et en permanence éclairés par des traditions respectées ou bafouées, il parviendra jusqu'au bout, à refuser de reconnaître une culpabilité inventée et à échapper aux repréailles clandestines. Il en résultera aussi un profond changement dans la manière dont les habitants vivent et conçoivent les traditions.

Dans le foisonnement des personnages du roman, on peut distinguer :

—Les hommes et les femmes sans pouvoir qui respectent, car ils ne peuvent faire autrement, les traditions et croient fermement en l'infailibilité du Grand fétiche qui maintient l'ordre et la paix sociale en punissant tous ceux qui sont sensés les mettre en péril. Parmi eux, tous ceux qui sont punis, frappés, exilés pour avoir transgressé les traditions et gêné ou contrecarré l'ambition des hommes de pouvoir, avec cette cible particulière des vieilles femmes, accusées de dévorer les âmes et qui sont expulsées du village.

—Les hommes de pouvoir, représentants des quatre divinités (Tia, Yaali, Siu et Nebela), les membres de la confrérie des devins et des sociétés secrètes. Tous ces personnages qui, dans le livre de Bali Nébié, exercent le pouvoir de maintien de l'ordre et de la paix sociale, utilisent en fait ce pou-

voir pour satisfaire leurs passions, se venger de leurs ennemis, s'emparer des femmes qu'ils désirent. Mais, ne pouvant ouvertement bafouer les traditions et apparaître comme des imposteurs, ils ont recours à des procédés de mystification et de manipulation. Le cas le plus frappant est celui de Miné, ventriloque, qui utilise ce talent pour faire parler des esprits surnaturels. Gninakwa, que les règles de succession ont désigné comme Tiaté intérimaire et qui, à ce titre, fait partie de ceux qui exercent le pouvoir à leur seul profit, est particulièrement lucide quand il décrit le climat qui règne dans le village : « La communauté de Toum est dirigée de main de fer par le « Grand conseil » qui s'appuie fondamentalement sur la peur, en exploitant la crédulité des populations. Les enfants sont éduqués dès leur bas âge dans la peur des fétiches, des divinités, des sorciers et des mânes des ancêtres. Pour entretenir cette peur, on brandit l'épouvantail du sorcier prêt à dévorer les âmes et, parallèlement, on désigne les divinités et en particulier le Grand fétiche noir, comme seuls capables de vaincre le sorcier. Ainsi tout le monde se met sous la protection du Grand fétiche noir, car il est le seul qui soit connu vraiment incorruptible, le Grand fétiche n'étant autre que les membres du « Grand conseil » (p. 36).

Il y a cependant aussi ceux qui, non seulement ne sont pas convaincus de l'infailibilité du Grand fétiche, des devins et autre Grand prêtre, mais pensent avoir démasqué leurs manipulations. Bessan, le père de Bétia, recruté dans l'armée française, gravement blessé en Indochine, revient au village de Toum et vit dans l'entourage du chef de canton. Il est mal vu par beaucoup parce qu'il bénéficie d'une pension militaire. Membre du Grand conseil, il observe les manigances de la plupart de ses membres pour régner sur le village et il essaie de faire

## Au mépris des lois ancestrales

Bernard Souyris

### Le crépuscule des ténèbres

par Bali Nébié

Imprimerie des éditions Sidwaya (Burkina Faso), 2004, 191 pages, 4500 francs CFA, ISBN : 2-84775-007-X.

partager ses observations et ses découvertes à ses enfants Bétia et Jean-Marc. Ce dernier et le seul à avoir un prénom français qu'on trouve dans le roman, est un garçon d'une « curiosité malade », avide de « tout comprendre y compris l'origine de l'Homme, de la lune, du ciel, des nuages » (p.43). Ayant appris ce qu'était un ventriloque, il est convaincu que Miné en est un, et tente de le démasquer.

Kinon occupe une place à part. Durant la période coloniale il a été employé comme garde chiourme sur les chantiers des travaux forcés et en a gardé une haine farouche à l'égard des colonisateurs. Retiré dans son village, initié au Vour, il est un farouche défenseur des lois ancestrales et se donne pour mission de s'opposer à ceux qui les utilisent à leur profit au besoin en les modifiant ou plus simplement les bafouent. Il paraît être en partie le porte-parole de l'auteur, très attaché lui-même à ce qu'il appelle la culture Nuna et, pour cela, soucieux de dénoncer ce qu'il perçoit comme une perversion de la tradition.

Mais ce « roman » ne se limite pas à une simple dénonciation de charlatans manipulateurs ; l'auteur n'est pas simplement un rationaliste pur et dur, un Charpak nuna, qui utiliserait la fiction pour régler des comptes aux croyances et superstitions religieuses. Son roman est un récit. Les personnages, dont il a changé la plupart des noms, ont existé et certains vivent encore. La plupart sont morts : Bessan est décédé un mois après l'accusation portée en 1990 contre Bétia. Lui-même est mort du Sida en 1998, Kinon en 2000. Gninakwa a été destitué de ses fonctions et accusé de sorcellerie. L'auteur est aussi un des personnages du « roman ». Il a écrit par ailleurs (correspondance privée) : « Je me suis contenté de décrire des faits authentiques que j'ai vécus au village comme tous ceux de mon âge en y mettant un peu d'imagination pour les relier

de façon cohérente. Tous les faits et les personnages sont authentiques ».

En réalité l'auteur est loin de s'être contenté de décrire des faits. Disséminés dans le livre, on trouve un très grand nombre d'informations qui relèvent de l'ethnographie ; soit que l'auteur expose avec précision l'organisation sociale, les rituels religieux, l'initiation, soit que, ce qui est beaucoup plus intéressant, il décrive une ethnographie « en situation » en disant la manière dont, dans ce village nuna, on interprète et on traite les événements de la vie quotidienne, comme la naissance d'un enfant handicapé, le suicide, l'adultère, la stérilité.

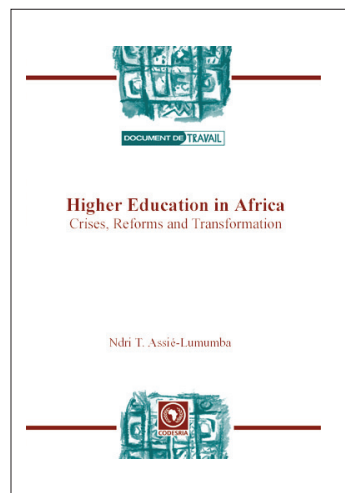
Mais l'essentiel de son propos est encore ailleurs. Il écrit, dans une correspondance privée : « Mon objectif est de dénoncer l'utilisation abusive de nos pratiques culturelles en faisant le parallèle entre ce qui devait se faire (incarné par Kinon) et ce qui se fait aujourd'hui (incarné par Gninakwa) ». Il dit être convaincu que sa « culture » est en train d'être détruite et que les lambeaux qui en demeurent sont manipulés par les plus intelligents et les plus avides : « Des gens m'accusent de vouloir saper les bases de notre société. Je ne suis pas de leur avis, parce que pour moi, la base de notre société a été sapée par la colonisation et aujourd'hui, elle est à un stade très avancé de putréfaction. Les populations ne s'y retrouvent plus et il y a des petits malins qui cherchent à tirer profit de cette instabilité. Je crois qu'il est du devoir de celui qui en prend conscience (j'ai la prétention de croire que c'est mon cas), de dénoncer la perversion de nos pratiques culturelles et tous ceux qui en tirent profit. On connaît le drame que vivent les vieilles femmes humiliées et bannies de leur milieu sous prétexte d'avoir « mangé » l'âme de leur fils ou d'un voisin. Que font les intellectuels face à cette situation ? Rien ! À moins qu'ils ne veuillent insinuer que ces pratiques font partie de notre culture. Ce qui est absolument faux parce que nos coutumes protègent les vieilles personnes ».

*Le crépuscule des ténèbres*, un « roman », mais aussi un récit authentique entremêlé d'ethnographie, et, peut-être surtout, un texte engagé.



## Higher Education in Africa: Crises, Reforms and Transformation

N'Dri T. Assié-Lumumba



2006; 200 pages  
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This Green Book provides theoretical tools for analysing contemporary African higher education systems and institutions. It also examines policy challenges and the prospects for social progress. It points to critical areas of investigation for the CODESRIA Multinational Working Group (MWG) research network on higher education. Conceived as a background text for this network, the book traces the historical roots and the global factors of the African higher education crises and the search for transformation to address issues of legitimacy and relevance. It analyses the origins, nature, and mission of African higher education, the problems associated with cultural colonization and the dependency trap, the local/global nexus in the crises with a special attention to the structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), and the various waves of reforms and innovations. Furthermore, the book presents a synopsis of studies that were conducted on the crises, highlighting both their findings and recommendations. The new challenges within the global and local objective conditions of globalisation, the debt burden, the disruptive impact of violence and armed conflicts, and human resource loss due to HIV/AIDS and brain drain are also discussed. Finally, the book examines the potential for higher education as a public good to promote structural change by productively using African assets including indigenous knowledge within a philosophy of fusion, and Africans in the Diaspora. It argues for the need to vigorously engender African higher education, and creatively appropriate new opportunities such as the selective use of information and communication technologies and decolonized partnerships in the global context.

L'ouvrage de J. Des Forts s'adresse à tout être humain doué de conscience et de raison. Il pose des questions essentielles touchant à l'éthique, au respect de la vie humaine, au respect des droits naturels des femmes. Les femmes sont les fondements de toute société, sans elles la vie ne peut continuer d'abord parce que c'est elles qui donnent la vie, ensuite c'est elles qui élèvent, éduquent, soutiennent petits et grands. Et paradoxalement, c'est elles qui sont les plus maltraitées du fait même qu'elles soient femmes. Mais être femme du Tiers-Monde lui ajoute une tare supplémentaire qui fait qu'elle sera utilisée pour des expériences honteuses menées par des puissances occidentales (laboratoires pharmaceutiques, etc.)

J. Des Forts a été sage-femme au Maroc puis en Algérie où elle arrive en 1963. Elle décide de faire ses études de médecine et de rester définitivement en Algérie qu'elle ne quittera plus depuis cette date, 1963. Sa participation à des colloques et congrès internationaux élargira ses connaissances sur les conditions de vie des femmes des autres pays du Tiers-Monde. Témoin d'un demi siècle de l'évolution obstétricale, l'auteur consacre, justement, la première partie de son ouvrage aux « violences obstétricales » : même si les connaissances dans ce domaine ont fait des pas de géants, leurs bienfaits ne profitent nullement à toutes les femmes du monde et encore moins aux femmes du Tiers-monde qui continuent jusqu'à aujourd'hui à mourir des suites de la grossesse ou de l'accouchement : 500.000 à 600.000 femmes meurent encore chaque année de complications obstétricales, faute de soins !

L'auteur aborde les souffrances que subissent ces femmes, les accouchements à la maison sans même la présence de la sage-femme. Elle dénonce la mauvaise qualité des soins dans les maternités et hôpitaux due à la vétusté de ces structures

## Tiers-monde : ces «pondeuses» qu'on ne saurait voir

Badra Moutassem-Mimouni

### Violence et corps des femmes du Tiers-Monde : le droit de vivre pour celle qui donnent la vie

par Jacqueline Des Forts

L'Harmattan 2002 (Rééditée par ANEP, Alger 2003), 286 pages, 450 Dinars Algériens, 2-7475-1732-2

et du manque de moyens matériels et humains. Ce qui est dramatique c'est selon l'auteur la situation, après une amélioration durant les années soixante-dix et quatre-vingts, empire puisque le taux de mortalité maternelle est en train de s'aggraver en Afrique et partout dans le Tiers-Monde, en partie à cause de la dégradation des économies de ces pays mais également à cause des programmes d'ajustements structurels imposés par la Banque mondiale et le FMI (à titre d'exemple, « Au Nicaragua, en 1989 l'État dépensait 35 dollars par habitant pour la santé ; ce chiffre est tombé à 14 dollars en 1995 » (p.74. édition 2002).

La deuxième partie est consacrée aux violences démographiques : à partir des années soixante, commence l'ère de la contraception médicale avec la pilule et le stérilet. L'auteur présente les politiques démographiques coercitives de certains pays qui vont avoir des effets presque contraires sur la limitation des naissances, alors que les pays qui se sont contentés d'informer et surtout de scolariser les filles, comme l'a fait l'Algérie, ont eu des résultats bien plus significatifs.

La démographie « galopante » des pays du Sud faisait très peur aux pays occidentaux qui sous prétexte d'aide, ont fourni des programmes de « maîtrise de la

croissance démographique » qui vont de la contraception chirurgicale « volontaire » (contre la volonté des femmes et à leur insu –p.114) à l'expérimentation sauvage de produits rejetés par et pour les femmes occidentales telles que le Dépo-Provéra ou AMR (qui sera injecté à des femmes en leur faisant croire qu'on les vaccinait, p.116) et le Norplant, un implant sous-cutané qui a l'avantage, en plus de sa durée d'action de cinq ans, de ne pouvoir être retiré par la femme elle-même.

Les femmes du Tiers-Monde ont servi de cobayes pour des expérimentations eugénistes de produits dangereux pour leur santé physique, leur fertilité. L'auteur parle également de génocide des femmes tibétaines (p.130) qui au nom de la limitation des naissances, des bébés sont assassinés juste avant leur naissance ou à des âges de gestation avancés.

La grande question qui se pose à la fin de cette partie concerne le vieillissement des populations et les dangers de voir « mourir certains pays ! »

Les violences sexuelles font l'objet du troisième et quatrième chapitre où l'auteur dénonce avec force l'aviilissement des femmes : du viol à la prostitution (qui n'est pas le plus vieux métier du monde ! clame l'auteur), la traite des blanches (les femmes de l'Europe de l'Est par exemple, les

prisonnières des bordels, les esclaves du trottoir, etc.), les mutilations génitales au « viol légalisé » de la nuit de noce et le culte de la virginité ; rien n'échappe à la colère de J. Des Forts qui montre les perversions des conceptions et formulations politiquement correctes. Le corps de la femme doit être respecté ! Il faut briser le mur du silence, d'abord le silence des victimes ainsi que celui des médias et de la société civile !

La cinquième partie pose des problèmes graves : après avoir pillé les matières premières du Tiers-Monde, après avoir avili, instrumentalisé le corps des femmes, l'Occident trouve de nouveaux moyens coercitifs tels que les programmes d'ajustement structurel imposés par la Banque Mondiale et le FMI qui imposent aux pays endettés de faire « des économies » sur les secteurs « non productifs » tels que la santé (« c'est-à-dire la protection de la vie humaine ») et l'école (« la promotion de cette même vie humaine »), ce qui va faire régresser les pays en développement qui, jusque-là, avaient fait des efforts louables pour améliorer la santé et la scolarité des deux sexes et en particulier celle des filles.

En se basant sur une expérience, sur un savoir, sur une documentation rigoureuse, l'auteur pose les grands problèmes d'abord d'éthique et de bioéthique. Il s'agit d'un cri de colère et un appel aux consciences des scientifiques, ainsi que de tout être humain, à réagir à ne pas se laisser bernier par les discours enrobés, le paternalisme et le pseudo-humanisme qui cachent des intentions eugéniques et parfois même génocidaires. Ce n'est pas que l'occident qui est mis en cause, mais aussi les gouvernements qui manquent de discernement, et les femmes du monde entier qui se taisent et se laissent manipuler, maltraiter. ...



En collaboration avec la « World Links for Development Program » de la Banque Mondiale, le Centre de Recherche pour le Développement International (CRDI) a lancé, dès 1997, un programme appelé « Acacia » pour faciliter l'action - recherche dans le domaine des Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication (TIC). Au terme de cinq années d'expérimentation, un cadre d'évaluation a été mis en place afin de tirer le maximum d'informations relatives aux travaux menés au Sénégal, en Afrique du Sud, au Mozambique, en Ouganda, en Angola, en Zambie, au Lesotho, en Namibie et au Zimbabwe.

Fruit d'un travail collectif, l'étude menée sous la direction de Tina James ouvre la voie à des recherches nouvelles dans ce domaine. Pour les auteurs de l'ouvrage, la dissémination des leçons tirées de cette expérience est importante. Elles méritent qu'on s'y attarde. S'il n'apporte pas de solution idoine aux problèmes que rencontre l'Afrique dans son développement, l'ouvrage met toutefois en exergue les questions essentielles qui restent à maîtriser, et les besoins criards en ressources et technologies de l'information et de la communication.

Les auteurs montrent bien que l'accès à la culture, à l'information et à la communication n'est guère une entreprise simple, exempte de problèmes, la nature de cet accès étant étroitement liée à l'appropriation des nouvelles techniques ; mais, selon eux, l'évolution des matériels, la multiplication des logiciels, l'abaissement de leur coût et

## Afrique : le virage technologique

Mohamed Bensalah

### Technologie de l'information et de la communication pour le développement en Afrique, Volume 3, La mise en réseau d'institutions d'apprentissage – SchoolNet

Coordonné par Tina James  
CODESRIA-CRDI, 2005, Edition : septembre 2004, 294 pages,  
£ 14.00 \$20.00, ISBN : 2-86978-117-2,

la mise en réseaux augmenteront et diversifieront, sans aucun doute, les utilisations. La connectivité des établissements scolaires et leur mise en réseaux constituent, en Afrique, une grande avancée car le continent ne dispose ni de compétences avérées suffisantes, ni de matériel adéquat, contrairement aux pays industrialisés.

Ainsi, en dépit des discours tenus ici et là, la première assertion que rappellent les auteurs de l'ouvrage est que les TIC sont incontournables dans cette nouvelle société de l'information, qui s'impose à la planète toute entière. En mettant en lumière les questions essentielles qui restent à maîtriser, les auteurs pensent que les questionnements ne peuvent aboutir à des éclaircissements que si l'enseignement et la formation se donnent pour mission de transmettre un savoir et un savoir-faire accompagnés d'une réflexion sur la pratique. Pour T. James, un système d'enseignement bien conçu ne peut et ne doit éluder ces considérations au

risque d'accroître le décalage, voire la fracture, entre l'évolution technologique et les mutations psychosociales qu'elle engendre.

Faire face aux exigences du monde contemporain, tel semble être le maître-mot de cette initiative-pilote, résumée à travers cet ouvrage consacré à la mise en réseau d'institutions d'apprentissage, le troisième d'une trilogie<sup>1</sup> consacrée au développement technologique en Afrique. Les auteurs se penchent, à travers les trois premiers chapitres<sup>2</sup>, sur les effets des mutations technologiques en tentant d'en appréhender les différents aspects. Tout en soulignant l'importance d'une grande maîtrise des techniques, les auteurs des cinq autres chapitres de l'ouvrage<sup>3</sup>, s'attachent à mettre en exergue les lignes force de ce « séisme » technologique dont les ondes de choc semblent annonciatrices de réformes fondamentales.

L'étude des SchoolNet (nées au Canada et en Europe au début des années 80), « africanisées » et fonctionnant sur une base communautaire, constitue un moyen de

transformation radicale de l'enseignement et de l'apprentissage. L'expérience, pilotée par des promoteurs africains, sous l'égide du CRDI et du CODESRIA, a pris racine en Afrique au début des années 90 pour ensuite essaimer sur l'ensemble du continent africain.

Qu'en est-il, quinze années plus tard ? Les différents succès, obtenus selon les promoteurs de l'initiative, incitent à l'optimisme, même s'il est prématuré de parler d'une plus-value éducative, l'enseignement et l'éducation, étant à leurs yeux, les réponses pertinentes et incontournables pour faire face au développement. Dans leur esprit, la révolution éducative au niveau des établissements scolaires est en marche, et les limites du possible reculent chaque jour davantage, même si les difficultés rencontrées pour intégrer les TIC et susciter une prise de conscience auprès des décideurs, demeurent.

## Notes

1. Vol. 1 : « Potentialités et défis pour le développement communautaire », sous la direction de Ramata Molo Thioune. Vol 2 : « L'expérience des télécentres communautaires », sous la direction de Florence Etta et Shiela Parvyn-Wamahiu.
2. Signés par Shafika Isaacs, Irène Broekman, Thomas Mogale, Tina James et Malusi Cele)
3. Au Mozambique Ephraïm Siluma, Daniel Browde et Nicky Roberts, au Sénégal, Ramata Molo AwThioune et El hadj Habib Camara, en Afrique du Sud, Edward Holcroft et en Ouganda, Anne Ruhweza, Grace Baguma et Florence Etta.



L'auteur, Ismaïla Diarra Poudré est né en 1943 dans le cercle de Kadiolo au Mali. A la retraite depuis mars 1999, il a été successivement Directeur Général du Trésor et de la Comptabilité publique du Mali, Administrateur de la Banque Centrale du Mali, Directeur Général Adjoint de la Société Total Texaco Mali et Commissaire (communautaire) de l'Union Monétaire Ouest Africaine. Dans *Qui veut développer l'Afrique noire?* l'auteur tente de répondre à la lancinante question du développement économique, social et politique de l'Afrique. Son discours est structuré autour de trois axes majeurs de réflexion, notamment la notion de développement et ses contours ambigus, les acteurs du non-développement de l'Afrique, et enfin les actions urgentes à mener pour sortir le continent de sa situation actuelle. L'ouvrage se termine par une interpellation des chefs d'Etats africains, sous la forme d'une lettre ouverte.

### Le développement et son contour ambigu

Les économistes définissent, en termes généraux, le développement comme la satisfaction des besoins fondamentaux de la population ou l'amélioration de la qualité de la vie. Cette définition, bien que générale, ne fait pas l'unanimité. Elle varie en fonction des écoles de pensée et des éléments utilisés pour mesurer le développement. Le concept n'a pas de mesure universelle propre. Celle-ci s'adapte au secteur que l'on traite. De ce point de vue, il se mesure en terme de richesses accumulées par un pays ; il s'évalue aussi par simple classement des performances des Etats par domaines d'activité. Le développement se mesure enfin en terme d'investissement par attraction de capitaux étrangers, en quantité de biens produits ou consommés dans un pays, et par rapport à l'espérance de vie d'une population.

Le mot français qui se substituerait aisément à celui du développement, sans trop contrarier le lecteur, est certainement le mot "progrès". Il traduit la notion d'avancée d'un point de départ à un point d'arrivée. Il résulte de la multitude d'appréciations du terme, un réajustement dans son utilisation. Le concept n'est plus utilisé tout seul. Il

## Le développement de l'Afrique en question

Adama Aly Pam

### Qui veut développer l'Afrique noire?

par Ismaïla Diarra (Poudré)

publié à Bamako (Mali) à compte d'auteur en 2004, 102 p.

est accolé à d'autres termes : économique, financier, socioculturel. Les canadiens lui ont substitué la notion du "mieux-être", qui a l'avantage de traduire l'amélioration et d'inclure l'idée de croissance.

Bien que le développement soit une notion ambiguë, le sous-développement, lui, se constate aisément avec son cortège d'insatisfactions et de misères. Au sujet de l'Afrique, l'auteur souligne que les statistiques s'accordent sur l'appauvrissement continu d'une grande partie de la population.

### Les acteurs du non-développement de l'Afrique

Les indépendances, acquises au cours de la décennie 1960, ont été le point de départ de la mise en place de régimes politiques africains fondés sur des systèmes politiques totalitaires. Les coups d'Etat militaires ont constitué des ruptures sanglantes dans la gestion du pouvoir dans toutes les "micro-nations" proclamées dans la précipitation. L'instabilité administrative, le système de népotisme en vigueur en Afrique, la main basse systématique sur les biens de l'Etat au profit exclusif des nouveaux dirigeants ont fragilisé les économies et ruiné toutes les perspectives de développement. Le potentiel des matières premières de l'Afrique noire aigüise les appétits des grandes puissances. Des contrats singuliers sont accordés aux multinationales qui gèrent les secteurs stratégiques des pays en développement.

Aujourd'hui, l'Afrique noire frappe à toutes les portes pour dénoncer le dumping dont elle est victime par le biais des subventions accordées aux agriculteurs des pays développés.

Au plan sanitaire, des millions d'Africains survivent grâce à l'aide alimentaire, et cinq cent millions n'ont pas accès à l'eau potable. Le paludisme est l'affaire exclusive des pays tropicaux. Au titre de cette seule maladie, les hospitalisations coûteraient 12 milliards de dollars par an. Au plan financier et juridique, des études ont mis en parallèle le développement économique et la corruption. Ces études évaluent le niveau de la corruption entre 5 et 20 pourcent du PNB mondial. Les corrompus sont en général des ressortissants africains. Les corrupteurs seraient les multinationales. Les États africains, en raison du poids de la dette publique, sont toujours sur la corde raide et doivent recourir au Fonds monétaire international. Celui-ci est chargé de surveiller les monnaies et les finances de tous les États membres, de leur apporter l'assistance technique nécessaire et de leur accorder des prêts en cas de besoin à des conditions bien définies. Pour éviter les risques de cessation de paiement, les Instituts d'émission (Banques Centrales) qui tiennent les comptes bancaires des États leur accordent des avances. Ces avances, dites statutaires, sont égales à un pourcentage des recettes fiscales. Ceci se traduit par une accumulation de la dette extérieure, assortie de déficits budgétaires colossaux. Le déficit démocratique dans la gestion du pouvoir et les multiples

conflits armés compromettent l'avenir économique du continent.

### Les actions urgentes à poser

L'action la plus urgente dont le continent a besoin est sans aucun doute l'arrêt des conflits armés. Il faut ensuite mettre en place une politique démographique saine en vue de réduire les trop grands écarts entre les ressources et les consommateurs. La question de l'environnement doit également être prise en charge en valorisant l'énergie solaire pour éviter le piège des multinationales qui ont déjà fait main basse sur les énergies fossiles et en vantant les mérites. Sur la question de la monnaie, l'auteur suggère d'engager une lutte commune pour faire libérer les contrats internationaux en euros et instaurer une monnaie unique à l'image du continent européen. Les réserves d'or et l'expertise locale du continent le permettent. La question de l'éducation doit être abordée globalement à l'échelle du continent, pour rompre avec les politiques ruineuses en vigueur dans les États, pris individuellement.

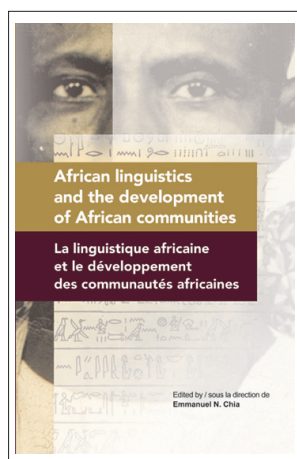
### Observations

L'ouvrage pose plus de questions qu'il n'apporte de réponses. Il s'attache à identifier les coupables du non-développement de l'Afrique et vise à situer les responsabilités de chacun depuis le Chef d'Etat jusqu'au fonctionnaire africain en passant par les marchands de canons étrangers. L'analyse de l'auteur essaie de suivre l'histoire des choix politiques et économiques du continent depuis la Traite des esclaves jusqu'au projet du NEPAD. Ce parti pris de l'auteur l'oblige à se limiter à des généralités sans véritablement apporter un point de vue d'expert sur les questions abordées. Par ailleurs, il convient de noter le manque de rigueur dans la démarche scientifique. Les problèmes sont posés de manière péremptoire sous forme de proclamation. L'auteur ne cite pas ses sources et l'ouvrage ne dispose d'aucune référence bibliographique susceptible de corroborer ou d'infirmier les thèses avancées.



## African Linguistics and the Development of African Communities La linguistique africaine et le développement des communautés africaines

Edited by / Sous la direction de Emmanuel N. Chia



2006; 270 pages;  
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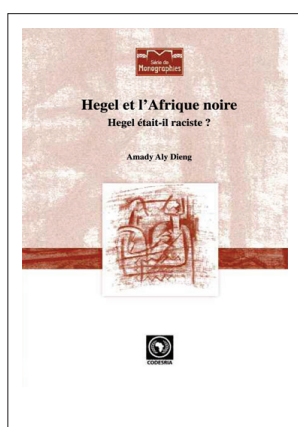
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### Hegel et l'Afrique noire – Hegel était-il raciste ?

Amady Aly Dieng



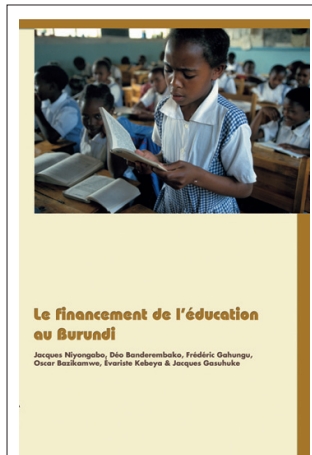
2006; Série de monographies  
ISBN 2-86978-178-4 ; 140 pages  
Afrique: US\$10.00, 5.000CFA  
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Depuis 1978, la position de Hegel à l'égard de l'Afrique noire est très discutée. Le philosophe de Berlin a été traité de raciste. C'est l'opinion qui domine chez la plupart des chercheurs européens et africains. Mais une telle affirmation mérite d'être révisée à la suite de la thèse d'Etat soutenue en 1990 à l'Université de Paris I par un philosophe africain, Pierre Franklin Tavarès. La lecture attentive de cette thèse devrait amener beaucoup de chercheurs à nuancer leur pensée sur l'attitude de Hegel sur l'Afrique noire. « La question Hegel » en Afrique ou ce que Guy Planty-Bonjour appelle « les questions africaines de l'hégélianisme » n'est pas seulement d'ordre théorique, mais également pratique.

Des historiens, des hommes de lettres, des hommes politiques, des sociologues et quelquefois, même des philosophes africains se sont dépêchés de traiter Hegel de raciste à la suite de leur seule lecture des *Leçons de la philosophie de l'histoire* qui est une oeuvre posthume publiée sur la base des notes de ses étudiants. Par ailleurs beaucoup de ses auteurs ont ignoré l'ouvrage de Carl Ritter : *L'Afrique* (1500 pages) sur lequel s'est appuyé Hegel qui, introuvable à la Bibliothèque Nationale de France, n'est disponible qu'à l'Institut de géographie de Paris. Seul Pierre Franklin Tavarès a pu exploiter ce livre que Hegel a consulté pour avoir des informations sur l'Afrique à Berlin. C'est pourquoi il parle de la deuxième attitude de Hegel à l'égard de l'Afrique motivée par la lecture de ce grand géographe allemand qui s'appuie sur le système de Schelling : le Tout.

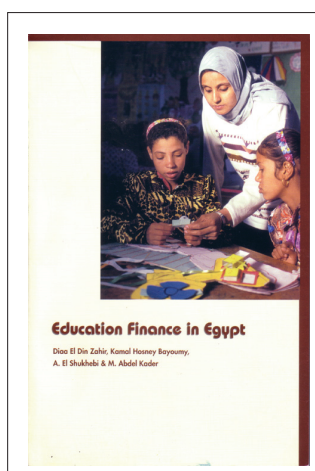
Beaucoup d'autres chercheurs ont apporté des informations sur l'attitude de Hegel à l'égard de la Révolution de Haïti qu'il a soutenue dans des textes allemands qui ne sont pas encore traduits en français. C'est pourquoi, l'auteur de ce livre essaie de tenir compte des progrès effectués dans les recherches portant sur Hegel, d'élargir le débat sur « Les questions africaines du hégélianisme » et d'ouvrir quelques pistes de recherche qui peuvent intéresser au premier chef les chercheurs africains.

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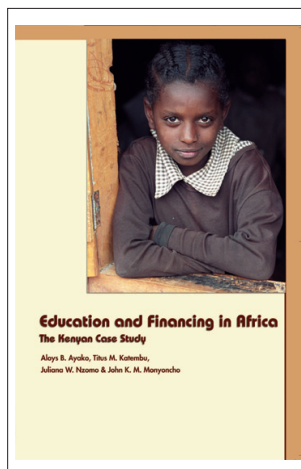
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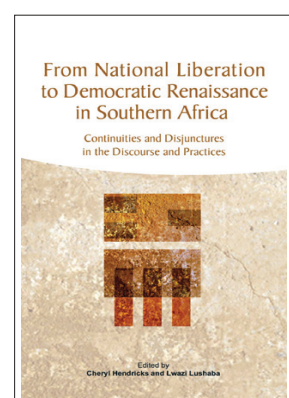
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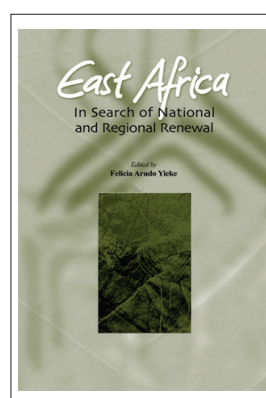
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