

Identity, Culture and Politics
an afro-asian dialogue

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Correspondence should be addressed to :

Professor Imtiaz Ahmed

Co-Editor, *Identity, Culture and Politics : an afro-asian dialogue*.

Department of International Relations, University of Dhaka, Dhaka – 1000, Bangladesh.

Tel : 880-2-9661900-59 Ext. 4550. Fax : 880-2-8615583 or 880-2-8316769.

Email : imtiaz@bangla.net

Or

Professor Solofo Randrianja

Co-Editor, *Identité, Culture et Politique : un dialogue afro-asiatique*.

Department of Historical Studies, Faculty of arts, University of Toamasina, Madagascar,

Tel : + (261) 331253400.

Email : solofo@refer.mg

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Notes des éditeurs

Plusieurs indices montrent que le plus grand partenaire économique de l'Afrique est désormais la Chine. En 2009, elle y a investi plus de 1,44 milliards de dollars. Depuis et dans de nombreux domaines, sa présence est en constante augmentation. C'est le point d'arrivée provisoire des longues et anciennes relations. La présence de pièces et de céramiques chinoises dans les ruines du Grand Zimbabwe témoigne de l'ancienneté et de l'intensité des relations commerciales entre l'Afrique de l'Est et de l'empire du milieu. L'amiral chinois, Zheng He, à la tête d'une armada de 300 navires, atteignit les côtes de la Somalie, du Kenya et de Zanzibar très largement avant que le Portugais Bartolomeu Diaz ne parvienne en 1488 jusqu'au futur Cap de Bonne Espérance.

Si l'Empire renonça à intensifier ses relations commerciales avec l'Afrique, c'est du fait des invasions mongoles contre lesquelles il a du concentrer tous ses efforts. Et la Chine se ferma au monde pratiquement jusqu'au XIX^{ème} siècle. La deuxième expansion de l'Europe la force alors à l'ouverture. Et c'est au travers de celle ci que la Chine renoue avec l'Afrique. En effet le coolie trade fut la réponse au manque de main d'œuvre en Afrique, quand les Européens s'y lancent dans les plantations industrielles à sucre et dans la construction des chemins de fer. Pour pallier au manque de main d'œuvre provoqué par l'interdiction de la traite et l'abolition de l'esclavage, la France et l'Angleterre vont chercher en Asie des milliers d'engagés asiatiques. La constitution des premières colonies chinoises en

Notes from the editors

Several indicators show that the biggest economic partner in Africa is now China. In 2009, there has been a Chinese investment of more than \$1.44 billion. And since then in many areas its presence is constantly increasing. This only indicates a long and old relationship. The presence of pieces of Chinese ceramics and in the ruins of Great Zimbabwe reflects the age and the intensity of trade between East Africa and the Middle Kingdom. The Chinese admiral, Zheng He, commanding an armada of 300 ships, reached the coast of Somalia, Kenya and Zanzibar long before the Portuguese Bartolomeu Diaz reached the Cape of Good Hope in 1488.

If the Empire had declined to intensify its trade relations with Africa it is because of the Mongol invasions against which it had to concentrate all its efforts. Thus China remained closed to the world almost until the nineteenth century. The second European expansion forces China to open the gates and this is how China returns to Africa. The coolie trade was the response to the lack of manpower in Africa as the Europeans then engaged in industrial sugar plantations and in the construction of railways. To overcome the lack of manpower caused by the prohibition of slave trade and the abolition of slavery, France and England had to look to Asia for thousands of indentured Asian. The constitution of the first Chinese communities in Africa dates back to this period. Since the 1950's, there were issues of rivalry between

Afrique date de cette période. Dès les années 50, celles-ci sont l'objet de la rivalité entre la République de Chine et la République Populaire de Chine. L'indépendance des pays africains les transforme ainsi en enjeu quand la République populaire est à la recherche de la reconnaissance internationale.

La Conférence de Bandoeng en 1955 permet aux dirigeants nationalistes africains de sympathiser avec la Chine communiste. À partir de 1960, à la recherche de voix au sein des Nations Unies, elle courtise les nations africaines nouvellement indépendantes. Par idéologie, elle s'engage dans la solidarité anti-impérialiste durant les années 60 et 70. En leur fournissant armes, subsides et appuis diplomatiques, la Chine soutient les mouvements de libération des derniers pays africains encore sous domination coloniale comme l'Angola, le Mozambique, la Guinée-Bissau, Sao Tomé et Príncipe et le Cap-Vert. La branche armée de l'ANC en lutte contre le régime raciste de l'apartheid est en tête de ces mouvements qui bénéficient du soutien de la Chine. Aux pays indépendants, elle fournit des médecins et des agronomes ainsi que des architectes. Ils soignent les populations et construisent dans plusieurs capitales des bâtiments imposants tel le Palais des congrès de Bamako. Se considérant comme un pays en développement, ces aides de la Chine s'effectuent sous le signe de la solidarité.

Cependant depuis au moins une décennie, l'adoption de l'économie de marché permet à la Chine un décollage impressionnant qui insuffle aux relations sino-africaines un nouveau souffle. En 2005, le *Document sur la politique*

the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China. Thus the independence of African countries transformed into a concern when the People's Republic of China started seeking international recognition.

The Bandung Conference in 1955 allowed the African nationalist leaders to have a sympathizing relationship with communist China. Since 1960, in search of votes in the UN, PRC started persuading the newly independent African nations. From the standpoint of ideology, PRC engaged in an anti-imperialist solidarity during the 1960's and 1970's. By offering weapons, diplomatic support and subsidies, PRC supported the liberation movements of the existing African countries which were still under colonial domination, such as Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe and Cape Verde. For instance, China supported the ANC armed wing of its struggle against the racist regime of apartheid. It provided doctors and agronomists as well as architects to the independent African countries. China cared for the people and built several imposing buildings in the African capitals like the 'Palais des Congrès' that became the International Conference Centre in Bamako. Considering itself as a developing country, China carried out its aid under the framework of solidarity.

Since the last decade, however, the adoption of market economy allowed China to have an impressive growth that gave Sino-African relations a new breath of life. In 2005, a policy paper outlined formally China's African aspiration

africaine de la Chine expose de façon officielle les principes des relations sino-africaines. A partir de 2006, « Année de l'Afrique en Chine », Beijing redéfinit ces relations en tenant compte de sa forte croissance. Le 50ème anniversaire des relations diplomatiques sino-égyptiennes coïncide avec le troisième forum sur la coopération sino-africaine qui consacre la Chine comme le premier partenaire du continent. La Chine invite, dans le faste, la quasi-totalité des chefs d'états africains pour entendre Hu Jintao déclarer vouloir « construire un nouveau type de partenariat stratégique entre la Chine et l'Afrique sur la base de l'égalité politique, la confiance mutuelle, la coopération économique, le gagnant-gagnant et les échanges culturels ».

Après une période de solidarité tiers mondistes pendant laquelle même des pays africains ayant un PIB supérieur à celui de la Chine, se sont vus bénéficier d'une aide substantielle, voici venu le temps du *trade not aid*.

Formules de propagande qui cachent des stratégies colonialistes et impérialistes ou invitation à imiter (encore une fois) la voie chinoise ? La philosophie qui inspire les nouvelles approches chinoises de l'Afrique est aussi ambiguë que la réalité des relations. **Philip Hsiaopong Liu**, en tout les cas, fait valoir que, du moins en termes de tentatives agricoles, l'approche actuelle de la Chine ressemble à du colonialisme. Pour lui, *Trade not aid* est aussi une formule qui relève de l'idéologie. En effet, parallèlement aux relations économiques, la Chine multiplie les Instituts Confucius, ces centres culturels qui accompagnent les échanges

and the principles of Sino-African relations. China celebrated the "Year of Africa" in 2006 when Beijing redefined its relationship with Africa by taking into account its strong growth. The 50th anniversary of Sino-Egyptian diplomatic ties coincided with the third forum on Sino-African cooperation which established China as the first partner of the continent. China invited almost all the African heads of state to the ceremony, to hear Hu Jintao declare his desire to "build a new type of strategic partnership between China and Africa based on political equality, trust, mutual and win-win economic cooperation and cultural exchanges."

After a period of Third World solidarity during which even African countries with greater GDP than China, benefited from its substantial aid, time has now come for *trade not aid*.

Are these forms of propaganda which hide strategies of colonialist and imperialist actions or invitation to imitate (once more) the Chinese way? The philosophy behind the new Chinese approach in Africa is ambiguous because of the reality of their relations. **Hsiaopong Philip Liu** argues that in the field of agriculture, the current approach of China resembles colonialism. According to him, *trade not aid* policy is nothing but ideology. Thus, in parallel with economic relations, China multiplies the Confucius Institutes, these cultural centers accompany academic exchanges. These institutes promote in Africa the new Chinese development model based

universitaires. Ces structures tentent de susciter l'adhésion au nouveau modèle de développement chinois s'inspirant du concept de « monde harmonieux ».

Qualifié de *soft power*, ce nouveau visage de l'Empire bénéficie d'un capital de sympathie servi par plusieurs décennies de relations anti impérialistes et par une absence de volonté moralisatrice. Les accords commerciaux et de coopération signés par la Chine ne sont pas affublés de conditionnalités. Cette posture de non-ingérence contraste avec celle des Occidentaux pris entre leurs ambitions économiques, leur soutien aux droits de l'homme et leurs propres contradictions à ce sujet.

Fondamentalement, la Chine est fortement intéressée par les énormes réserves en énergie, minerais et matières premières de l'Afrique, pour soutenir sa croissance économique. Cette stratégie est soutenue par de larges investissements en particulier dans les infrastructures c'est à dire là où les Occidentaux n'osent pas ou plus aller. Aussi de nombreuses entreprises chinoises de BTP s'implantent en Afrique, faisant même venir de la main d'œuvre. Parallèlement le marché africain constitue un formidable débouché pour une part croissante de la production manufacturière chinoise. Adaptée à des consommateurs solvable même si leur pouvoir d'achat reste limité, cette production va jusqu'à empiéter sur le secteur informel local auquel elle s'adapte sans problème. L'industrialisation locale semble même menacée par cette expansion économique chinoise.

Finalement, semble se mettre en place une structure néo-colonialiste

on the concept of "harmonious world".

Described as *soft power*, China benefits from decades of anti-imperialist relationship and by an absence of moralistic will. It appears as sympathetic to many African public opinions and leaders. Trade and cooperation agreements signed by China are not fitted with conditionality. This posture of non-interference contrasts with the posture of the West. This latter is caught between its economic ambitions, its support for human rights and its own contradictions regarding this issue.

Basically, China is strongly interested in Africa's enormous reserves of energy, minerals and raw materials mainly to support its own economic growth. This strategy is supported by its large investments particularly in infrastructure where Western countries are reluctant to invest. Many Chinese companies are also involved into the construction sectors in Africa, often using its own labor. Meanwhile the African market represents a tremendous opportunity for Chinese manufacturing production. Adapted to creditworthy consumers even though its purchasing power is limited, this production goes to encroach on the local informal sector to which it fits seamlessly. The local industrialization seems threatened by the Chinese economic expansion.

Finally, China seems to have established a neo-colonial structure:

des échanges: achat des matières premières contre vente des biens manufacturés et une balance des paiements en défaveur des pays africains. L'Afrique ne représente cependant qu'environ 5% du commerce extérieur de la Chine même si le chiffre est en évolution.

De ce miracle chinois, l'Afrique ne peut que s'inspirer en recourant à ses propres ressources pour affronter la globalisation et y imposer sa marque. De plus, il est évident que l'Afrique et l'Asie partagent plusieurs caractéristiques et expériences sociales similaires, à la lecture d'**Iqtidar Karamat Cheema**.

En tous les cas pour **Herman Touo**, la Chine est un géant dont le modèle de développement peut être une source d'inspiration pour les économies africaines. Pour cela, il faut se défaire de la peur inspirée par son attitude néocolonialiste. Se débarrasser de la posture victimaire y compris dans des domaines comme la foi en constitue une autre nécessaire étape.

Dans la cosmogonie supposée d'une Afrique plus imaginée que réelle, la foi africaine est présentée comme spécifique. Pour **Assouman Bamba**, que Dieu soit ou existe ne semble pas faire de doute. Son idée traverse toutes les cultures du monde. Alors que le divin se dit comme pluriel dans les pratiques animistes des sociétés traditionnelles d'Afrique avec un panthéon riche de dieux variés aux fonctions diverses que cordonne un Dieu suprême, il se vit de plus en plus dans l'Afrique dite moderne d'aujourd'hui comme un singulier sans assistants. La pénétration du christianisme en Chine a connu l'échec sans doute à l'issue de la querelle sur les rites. Inventant l'inculturation, les missionnaires européens chrétiens

purchase of raw materials against sales of manufactured goods and a detrimental balance of payments vis-à-vis the African countries. Africa still occupies only about 5 percent of China's foreign trade although the figure is evolving.

In the light of the Chinese miracle, Africa can develop capacity to confront globalization if it uses its own resources and make its own products. Moreover while reading **Iqtidar Karamat Cheema**, it is clear that Africa and Asia share many similar characteristics and social experiences.

And for **Touo Herman**, China is a giant whose development model can be an inspiration for African economies. Africa must get rid of the fear inspired by Chinese neo-colonialist attitude. To get rid of the posture of victimhood, even in the domain of spiritual life and faith, is a necessary step for the African countries, along with other initiatives.

A specific look at the African faith will reveal a real Africa from an imagined one. According to **Assouman Bamba**, the existence of God does not seem to be in doubt. Its idea crosses all cultures of the world. Since the divine is plural in animist practices of traditional societies in Africa with a wide range of gods with diverse functions, all the gods are under the control of a supreme God, who is perceived in today's modern Africa as a unique God without any assistants. The penetration of Christianity has probably experienced failure after the dispute over the rites. Inventing enculturation, the European Christian missionaries of the eighteenth century tried to spread Christianity by coming out to meet

du XVIII^{ème} siècle ont tenté de propager le christianisme en venant à la rencontre de la spiritualité chinoise en lui empruntant ses rites. Pétrie de sentiment de supériorité, la hiérarchie ecclésiastique leur donna tort. Du même coup, ils se fermèrent les portes de l'empire du milieu. Pourtant comme tout polythéisme, le taoïsme, par exemple, tolère la cohabitation. En ce cas, comme plus tard mais dans d'autres domaines, le sentiment de supériorité se transforma en élément négatif au bénéfice de l'Empire du milieu. Celui-ci imposera en ce domaine comme en d'autres sa conception de l'universalité.

Parlant des sciences sociales, **Olajide Oloyede** revient sur l'histoire de la pensée occidentale pour mettre en avant le caractère durable des outils de compréhension que les savants de l'Afrique (Africains et Européens) utilisent pour donner un sens au contexte africain. Il plaide en faveur de l'existence d'un savoir à la fois africain et en même temps universel. Celui-ci est à la fois scientifique et pertinent.

Anil Nauriya, indirectement, suggère que l'Asie et l'Afrique mettent en commun ces expériences spécifiques. Il part de la trajectoire du Mahatma Gandhi favorablement impressionné par le mouvement politique en Égypte dans les premières années du XX^{ème} siècle alors qu'il était encore en Afrique du Sud. Il fut enthousiasmé par les actions du leader nationaliste Mustafa Pacha Kamil. Il est certain que la pensée autant que les actes de Gandhi, une fois installés en Inde, furent inspirés par l'expérience égyptienne et plus largement africaine.

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the Chinese spirituality by borrowing its rites. The church hierarchy of this period condemned this attempt. Thus, it failed to conquer the middle kingdom. Yet like any polytheist religion, Taoism, for example, tolerates cohabitation. Thus as in other areas, the Western feeling of superiority turned into a negative element for the benefit of the middle kingdom. China imposes its conception of universality.

Speaking about social sciences, **Olajide Oloyede** goes back to the history of Western thought to highlight the durability of Tools, that the scholars of Africa (both Africans and Europeans) utilize to give meaning to the African context. He argues in favour of an existence of knowledge for both Africa and the world which is both scientific and relevant.

Anil Nauriya suggests that Asia and Africa should share common experiences. He describes Mahatma Gandhi. This latter was impressed by Egypt political movement in the early years of the twentieth century when Mahatma Gandhi was still in South Africa. He was enthusiastic about the actions of nationalist leader Mustafa Kamal Pasha. Certainly the thoughts and acts of Gandhi, put into practice in India, were inspired by the Egyptian experience, identified as part of Africa.

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S.Randrianja

How China's "Trade Not Aid" Strategy Became Construed As Charitable Help : Deconstructing the "Touching" Idyll of Li Li's Investment in Africa

Philip Hsiaopong Liu, Nanyang Technological University

Résumé

Comment la stratégie chinoise, "commerce et non pas assistantat", se transforme en un acte de charité.

Ces dernières années, la Chine a accru ses investissements en Afrique et son modèle "Trade not Aid" semble être la meilleure prestation de l'assistance durable. En passant en revue l'histoire de l'aide chinoise à l'Afrique, en examinant les relations interraciales, et en déconstruisant les modèles contemporains de l'aide, l'auteur fait valoir que, du moins en termes de tentatives agricoles, l'approche actuelle de la Chine ressemble à du colonialisme.

Abstract

In recent years, China has increased investments in Africa and its "Trade Not Aid" model appears to be the best delivery of sustainable assistance. By reviewing the history of Chinese aid to Africa, examining race-relations literature, and deconstructing contemporary models of aid, the author argues that, at least in terms of agricultural endeavors, China's current approach resembles the colonialism that it once sought to disassemble.

There have been many arguments against traditional patterns of aid to Africa. In 2009, Dambisa Moyo provided one of the most recent and prominent rationales, asserting that trade-based economic relationships encourage investment, production, as well as technical knowledge exchange, which therefore provides the effectiveness and sustainability that are lacking in traditional aid projects.¹ This "Trade Not Aid" approach has become synonymous with contemporary China-Africa economic relations, and as it enhances its investments in Africa, China is also winning Moyo's praise as Africa's best friend.² Nonetheless, a closer inspection of their relationship reveals that, at least in terms of agricultural investment, China's strategy is not as radical of a departure from colonialism as the existing literature would suggest.

This paper takes Li Li's Jonken Farm situated in Moyo's home — Zambia — as a case study to explore the dichotomy between perceptions of aid providers and recipients. Li and her husband Wang Chi built Jonken Farm in 1992. Their story first became known in a 2004 television interview,³ and after

Li assumed the management of the 3573-hectare farm when Wang passed away in 2005, she became a national celebrity in China. Beijing crowned Li with titles such as "the Chinese who touches Africa the most", "National Heroine", and "Distinguished Communist." She was also mentioned in two important English-language publications on the Sino-African relationship. Basing herself on Jonken, Deborah Brautigam concludes that Li's private investment generates profit as well as employment opportunities for locals.⁴ Serge Michel and Michel Beuret add that trade-based relationships buffer interracial discontent in ways aid does not; despite recent anti-Chinese revolts in Zambia, they find that Jonken is described as "a perfect example of the cooperation between China and Zambia"⁵.

I deconstruct the Jonken story in the context of Beijing's agricultural endeavors in Africa since 1960. Chinese assistance to Africa began with altruistic roots, but these have been lost over time even though Chinese media frames investments as "help" to its former aid recipients so it appears that China has not discontinued any aid. While Chinese perceive the contemporary business relationships as assistance, however, "aid" recipients often do not; while Beijing paints Li as a national hero, Zambians find her a bigoted and harsh. Despite investments being more efficient than traditional forms of aid, the racism that has accompanied the capitalism foretells grave risks in the future of Sino-African relations.

Altruism

Origins of Chinese Agricultural Aid to Africa

When the People's Republic of China (PRC) was established, its communist outlook viewed commercial activities as acts of capitalist and colonialist oppression. The PRC consequently sought to bring class cooperation onto the international stage. Prior to 1949, Chinese workers were paid to work with Africans to plant cash crops for colonialists, who made their fortunes exploiting these laborers. In this way, capitalism and colonialism oppressed both Chinese and Africans, and thus set the foundation for dialogue between Communist China and Africa.

The PRC joined the race to aid Africa around 1960. Due to pressures from Moscow, Washington, and the un-surrendering Republic of China on Taiwan (hereafter "ROC" or "Taiwan"), Beijing had to give aid generously to newly independent African states in exchange for international support. The "mutual benefit" principle of which Zhou Enlai spoke in 1963 guided the Sino-Africa relationship⁶ for many years and can be understood as a framework wherein China traded economic resources for political gains.

Among the economic benefits China delivered to Africa, agricultural aid was the most critical for Africa's long-term development. The colonialist cash-crop strategy crippled sub-Saharan Africa by making it "produce what it does not consume [...] and consume what it does not produce."⁷ Dependence on imported food was therefore not only a vestige of colonialism, but a barrier to independence for many African states. A steady domestic food supply and development thus went hand-in-hand: Africa would not make sufficient progress until it ameliorated its agricultural productivity

because “the attainment of food security is at the very core of the quest for sustainable development on the African continent”⁸. China therefore prioritized agricultural aid to Africa for this was the way to assist African aid recipients in combating class inequalities.

Genuine Help and Appreciation

Chinese endeavors to improve Africa's food supply were first demonstrated on large farms and research centers for the promotion of agricultural techniques. Although both were designed to enhance food production, building large farms required heavy infrastructural investments, involved more qualified technicians, and benefitted more local people financially and technically. Since 1959, China has dispatched roughly 10,000 technicians to help convert 70,000 hectares of wasteland into farmland. This feat, which included 16 irrigation projects comprising dams, reservoirs, ditches, and pump stations, was essentially completed by the late 1970s. This wasteland transformation was highly impressive and furthered the PRC's class solidarity mission for “large farms established with Chinese aid played a crucial role in solving local grain shortages and advancing local economies.”⁹

In addition to food, large farms also generated skilled peasants and plentiful harvests, and the associated land exploration and infrastructure-building augmented employment rates. Since large farms produced significant visual and economic results, they attracted politicians' praise for Chinese food supply solutions and confirmed the strength of the Sino-African friendship. Locals, too, were seen to be grateful: reports recount stories of African peasants praising the Chinese through song and dance, with some even kneeling before Chinese-constructed buildings to thank the Chinese for saving their lives.¹⁰

Unfortunately, most of these projects were unsustainable because once these projects were transferred to locals, cultural, political, or social barriers caused the majority to deteriorate substantially. For example, the Afeji Project in Ghana was a 900-hectare rice project that included a delicate irrigation system and a reservoir. When Chinese technicians left, without continual financial and technical support, the farm reverted to its traditional slash-and-burn cultivation method which yields far fewer crops.¹¹

Although such efficiency problems existed, Beijing's attitude was surprisingly unselfish. Chinese assistance during the early period was marked by altruism, a common sentiment amongst the Chinese who worked in Africa. Chinese technicians paid their own living expenses because anything less was not philanthropic. After seeing that the Liberian economy depended on exporting primary resources, a Chinese diplomat to Liberia sighed with emotion and asked, “If all money flows to foreigners, how can Liberians gain real independence and enjoy a decent quality of life?”¹² A former Chinese ambassador to Mali remembered that Malians love tea, so Chinese technicians were dispatched to teach them how to plant tea even though helping the Malian economy meant that China would lose its export market.¹³

The technicians' sentiments and efforts did not go unnoticed by aid recipients. PRC diplomats recall that Chinese were respected everywhere. During the Ugandan civil war, for instance, detained PRC diplomats were

unable to communicate with the militia in their local dialect, but as soon as they mentioned Kibimba, a 600-hectre PRC-assisted farm, the militia immediately "switched to a smile and released [the diplomats]."¹⁴

Political and Economic Benefits

Although agricultural aid was economically inefficient, Mao's political ideals of Communism and international altruism prevailed in the PRC's assistance strategy. In many aspects of agricultural assistance, China prioritized aid recipients' interests by helping ease host governments' financial burdens and dedicating itself to dismantling the vestiges of colonial dependence. Labor and capital investments in large farms and lucrative harvests for locals demonstrated China's heartfelt efforts and therefore consolidated political alliances and friendships.

Aid recipients also reaped some lasting economic gain. For starters, not all Chinese assisted farms reverted to nothing. A few remained functional, though less lucrative than they once were. For instance, Brautigam found a 56-hectre farm in Sierra Leone's Lambayama that the PRC created 30 years ago that still reaps two harvests a year. Aside from supporting 150 peasants, this farm helped many refugees during the civil war. The local agricultural office still "appreciate[s] this kind of technical assistance [because] this area was developed long ago, and we are still benefiting."¹⁵ In addition to directly helping peasants through infrastructural development, Chinese aid made conditions more attractive to private investments. The above-mentioned Kibimba project suffered great losses after the local government took over, but the Chinese-laid infrastructure attracted a British company that replaced the management and allowed this farm to produce enough rice to market.¹⁶ Although there are many criticisms of aid efficiency prior to the 1980s, some scholars argue that "[o]f all the fields involving Sino-African technical cooperation, the best results have been seen in agriculture."¹⁷

The Evolution of China's Aid to Africa

In the 1980s, capitalism replaced Mao's strict communism when the PRC internally adopted a capitalist approach to economic development. The main reason for downsizing assistance projects was not poor efficiency but China's domestic financial needs. When Zhao Ziyang reiterated the "mutual benefit" principle in 1982, he implied that China now required more financial returns and therefore included an economic connotation to Zhou Enlai's 1963 definition of "mutual benefit".

The stabilizing of the PRC's international status was another reason for the PRC to change its conception of assistance. By the 1980s, Beijing's relationship with Moscow was less tense, Washington had recognized Beijing as the sole representation of China, and the PRC had been one of five permanent members of the UN Security Council for nearly a decade. The PRC could now "join decision-making in global politics, and thus acquire favorable conditions in the world market."¹⁸ China was eager to reduce its aid budget, but it could not simply terminate assistance for political considerations. It therefore resolved to diminish the scale of assistance but maintain

the existing number of projects, and thus the policy decision was taken to “switch from productive projects to monument building” as well as to “spend less and diversify”¹⁹

Architectural projects became the new trend in spite of aid recipients' preferences. “We are not interested in stadiums,”²⁰ summarized Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, because monuments, such as conference centers, congressional buildings, and stadiums offer little economic productivity. Compared with agricultural assistance, however, construction projects are far more sustainable and recognizable from the aid provider's perspective. Erecting a building is a one-time expenditure that stands as an incontestable reminder of a major contribution. Due to the impressive political and visual effects of architectural infrastructure, numerous African states have consequently accepted these manifestations of China's friendship despite sentiments akin to Museveni's.

In addition to guaranteeing the sustainability and visibility of its contributions, construction projects offer China the bonus of reaping returns in subcontracts. Architectural projects allow Beijing to introduce Chinese construction-related companies into Africa through sub-contracting bids. Because Chinese bids are often the most affordable ones, they usually win the contract and such business relationships have garnered praise as a new type of Sino-African Cooperation. For example, many Chinese companies were introduced to Zaire through a \$12 million USD project for Mobutu Sese Seko's Presidential Villa. Zaire's ex-Prime Minister Kengo Wa Dondo welcomed Chinese companies because Chinese bidders would undercut other contenders and decrease his construction project spending. Chinese bids thus have a monetary effect “similar to aid” and have been considered a “new type of cooperation.”²¹

Unlike architectural projects, agricultural programs are mostly set in the countryside and are therefore accessible to general contractors. Without profits, Chinese aid focused on low-cost agricultural projects, and many costs were reapportioned to recipients. Housing, which PRC technicians once considered an aid provider's expenditure, became a required recipient state expense. Under the new “spend less and diversify” aid framework, China only financed light equipment, encouraged recipient states to send technicians to study agriculture in China, and prioritized “educational agricultural demonstration centers”²² without appearing to be giving any less assistance.

Such educational centers are less expensive to maintain than assistance farms and they imply the end of China's commitment to improve infrastructure for Africa's agriculture. These centers cost significantly less to maintain, but have the benefit of allowing Chinese officials to boast about the number of ongoing projects and reap the political effects. During the 1980s, China still offered agricultural assistance to more than 20 countries, but most of the 40 projects were small in scale and had few were capable of research or exploration.²³

Small agricultural centers naturally engender fewer economic benefits and in this way China's policy shift results in less effective agricultural assistance and a further departure from its original objective to eradicate vestiges of colonialism in Africa. Few sources, however, admit this decline

in productivity. For instance, since the 1980s, Chinese technicians in central Africa have been working on Mpoko and Boyali which the Chinese media has nicknamed "little Jiang-Nan" or "little Yangtze Delta," after China's historic rice granary. But, the real efficiency of these agricultural centers is far from what the media reports. Chinese experts have been teaching locals new technologies at Mpoko and Boyali for three decades but there has been little impact; peasants still prefer traditional slash-and-burn methods. An internal report to the Department of Agriculture of Guanxi Zhuang Autonomous Region conveys that these two centers "drift along, running themselves year after year at a very low standard."²⁴ Without large investments to overhaul the infrastructure, these two education-oriented farms have much fewer chances of surviving than large farms like the famed Kibimba which saved Chinese diplomats in Uganda.

The effects of China's overall ideological shift are most manifest in Sao Tome and Principe where China sent a Shanxi-based construction corporation to erect a congressional building in the late 1980s. Sao Tome and Principe terminated its relationship with China in 1997, but the congressional building still stands today and the Shanxi construction company continues to bid on local contracts. Apart from the edifice, locals remember China for the medical aid teams whose doctors once stole medicine from the Sao Tome and Principe state-funded hospital to sell on the side. Few know that after China adopted its "spend less and diversify" approach, China built a rice-planting technical center in Diogo Nunes, a highly-visible field located beside the international airport. Although Chinese diplomats praised the land's arability,²⁵ China found no market incentives to continue technical projects and closed the center after five years. Without significant investments in the form of machinery or an irrigation system, this 20-hectre farm and rice-husking plant soon reverted to an overgrown field.

The Chinese experience in Sao Tome and Principe illustrates how a project's size matters for political effect and that monetary returns motivate aid providers. Agricultural projects do not attract sustainable attention without being sizeable and profitable; without the budget or desire to invest heavily in potentially unsustainable low-visibility projects, China's altruistic aid objectives and agricultural assistance programs are historical bygones.

Supported by the media, unprofitable agricultural assistance continues to exist, but it is no longer a priority for them to be centers for sustainable agricultural technical knowledge exchanges. Despite Guinean President Lansana Conté's praise for the Chinese for transforming the "worn-out piece of land"²⁶ near his hometown into the Koba Farm, Guinean agricultural projects are steadily declining. China continues to build regional agricultural centers to educate locals on intensive farming techniques, but these centers are on the path to extinction. In 1992, China re-built an agricultural promotion center in Kindia and dispatched technicians to teach rice-planting, maize-planting, and mechanical maintenance skills to Guineans. Without follow-up assistance, the jungle reappropriated this center in 1999. Bafing-Tolo, an educational center worth \$1 million USD, was built in 1996 and ceased to function within the year.²⁷

Although initially reluctant to provide agricultural aid to Africa, China realized through the course of the 1990s that helping Africa could offer desi-

rable returns. The success of the Koba Farm is largely related to Chinese technicians being motivated by profit. Unlike “promotion centers,” Koba is run by a Chinese state-owned enterprise whose objective is to sell food in Guinea. Since 1997, Koba received 100 million RMB in investments and has received a number of experts wishing to explore this 1800-hectre farm. In addition to the monetary returns, Koba also renders political dividends. Conté undoubtedly praised Chinese investments in his hometown to consolidate his political support. China, too, reaps political clout from the publicity of Koba as an aid project. The Chinese media makes no mention that Koba is profit-oriented. Instead, this is a farm which “displays Chinese national spirit,” represents “Sino-Africa cooperation,” wins “locals’ respect,” provides 300 job opportunities worth \$20,000 USD, and “helps resolve Guinea’s food problem”.²⁸

Help Versus Aid

Small agricultural demonstration centers generate little economic or political return, while large farms risk being unfruitful long-term investments for any number of reasons.²⁹ As a solution, the Chinese reduced local influences to manual labor and left supervision and management to investors, much like the colonial division of labor. Both administrations demonstrate that capitalism works: a specialized skills-set can create abundant harvests which encourage sustainable management. Since Chinese-stimulated crops feed into the domestic market, China is technically alleviating Africa’s food problem even though profits go to Chinese firms, not nationals of the aid recipient.

Without too much publicity on the indirect relationship between its investments and assistance, China enjoys the image of a facilitator of the “Trade Not Aid” movement. As in English, the Chinese verbs for “help” and “aid” are easily confused because both indicate altruistic activities toward a third party. Technically, Chinese officials and media use “help” (*bangzhu*) to describe the performance of Chinese agricultural firms in Africa and reserve “aid” (*yuanzhu*) for traditional government-funded projects, but these terms are rarely distinguished in common parlance. What is more noticeable is that “colonialism” and “capitalism,” on the other hand, are terms reserved for Western private investment in Africa. As a result, Western farming investments are “colonialist” and “capitalist” because they exploit Africa for profit, but Chinese agricultural investments are seen as “help” to Africa because they improve food supply, albeit indirectly.

By definition, private investment is not aid and therefore cannot perfectly demonstrate China’s friendship towards Africa, so China still maintains a number of assistance projects for political appearances. In 2006, China committed to establishing 10 demonstration centers and sending 100 elite technicians to Africa. Even though this team of elite technicians may seem to be a new element of the PRC assistance package, China’s approach to aid has not changed since the 1980s and these technicians still form part of its “downsize and diversify” policy. Each elite technician costs about \$1900-2100 USD a month and is dispatched for only one year in the host country³⁰. For \$2.4 million USD, China has purchased the impression of generously increasing

aid to Africa, but it is not in actuality committing to sustainable programs to help Africa break away from its colonial economy.

As to be expected, the technicians faced numerous budgetary limitations and so many were quite inactive during their assistance assignments and even lied in their activity reports³¹. Since August 2009, they have channeled their energies into a web forum and produced new opinions on aid which have begun to attract widespread and academic attention³². Geng Naili, an elite agricultural envoy to Côte d'Ivoire uploaded a highly-praised report titled "How to Better Execute China-Africa Agricultural Cooperation". He opines that the Chinese government should use economic incentives to attract 160,000-320,000 Chinese peasants to Côte d'Ivoire to effect technical knowledge exchange to Ivorians and resolve the food supply problem; as a bonus, the Chinese peasants would make a fortune.³³ This is not the first time Chinese academics have considered sending farmers to help Africa,³⁴ but Geng's paper attracted Dr. Hao Feng, an elite agricultural envoy to Tanzania. Feng agrees wholeheartedly with Geng that "the best way to settle Africa's agricultural backwardness is to attract Chinese investors and peasants."³⁵ To help Geng's message reach a broader audience, Hao encouraged him to submit his paper to *South China Agriculture*, an academic journal of which Hao is the director.³⁶ I am not sure if Geng's paper is published *South China Agriculture* as of yet, but Geng has promulgated his views on another popular Chinese website. His second piece bears a self-explanatory title: "[Chinese] Peasant Entrepreneurs Should Emigrate to Africa Where Land is Abundant, People are Lazy, and Food Prices are Good. All [Chinese] Peasants Will Become Technicians in Africa."³⁷

Racism

Such colonialist and racist pronouncements by elite technicians support Philip Snow's analysis that Chinese "were no freer of original sin than the Europeans or Americans."³⁸ Chinese traditionally discriminated against all ethnic groups outside of China. External states or peoples beyond the Chinese cultural periphery were viewed as inferior and barbaric. In the twelfth-century, Zhu Yu's "Pingzhou Ketan" depicted black people eating raw food. White "barbarians" were considered slightly superior to blacks because at least they cooked their food.³⁹ During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, China was more open to the West and was exposed to the white enslavement of blacks. Henceforth, "black barbarians" were also called "black slaves" (heinu), "devil slaves" (guinu), and "barbarian devils" (fangui)⁴⁰ and this consolidated Africans as the lowest caste in Chinese worldviews.

The increase in conflicts between China and the West in the late nineteenth-century changed the Chinese impression of whites as barbaric, but there was no similar socio-economic force to temper the Chinese perspective of blacks. Worse, when Darwinism became popular in China, some reform-minded scholars adopted this theory and labeled blacks as inferior. Lian Qichao found Africans lustful of white women, slavish, backward, lazy, and dimwitted⁴¹. Yan Fu, who introduced Darwin's *Natural Selection* to China, ranked Africans the lowest race of human beings.⁴² Kang Youwei ranked whites as the best race and wished to ameliorate all others by whitening

darker races through dietary change, migration, and intermarriage. Kang was optimistic about improving yellow-skinned people but not blacks and proposed sterilization as an alternate solution because "the progress of a beautiful race should not be obstructed by bad black seeds."⁴³

Chinese have perceived Africans as dimwitted, lazy, fierce, and odiferous⁴⁴, but in the early years of the PRC, communism masked China's racism and lent the Sino-Africa relationship a common identity in images of backwardness. To quote Mao, "[Westerners] say we Chinese are useless, we colored people are useless, we are dirty, and we are not elegant. We seem to be the same as Africans."⁴⁵ Both of the PRC's major enemies at the time, Washington and Moscow, were white, so Chinese ignored their own identity and advocated for "us blacks to stick together against the white race."⁴⁶

Even under Mao's vision of altruistic communism and harmonious Sino-African relations, however, racial discrimination against blacks was still rampant. Diplomats and technicians in Africa were reluctant to mingle with Africans,⁴⁷ and Chinese doctors suspected that Africans did not wash themselves regularly.⁴⁸ Chinese teachers generally perceived African students to be "uncultured, forgetful, and lazy."⁴⁹ Even when Beijing was at the peak of its altruistic communism and the state required giving Africans exceptional hospitality, there were several African protests against Chinese racism in Beijing. A collective hunger strike in March 1962 resulted in 96 of 118 African students being sent home.⁵⁰

In the post-Mao era, the state largely withdrew from every aspect of society, so Africans were not as "equal" as before. Zhao Ziyang, who proposed the 1982 "mutual-benefit" policy toward Africa, wished to restore China's greatness by foregoing the Third World and aligning China with the West. This shift renewed the rhetoric of Chinese superiority over Africans: China's destiny lies with the progressive West rather than with backward peoples.⁵¹ When the reform started, racial riots and public demonstrations occurred in Shanghai in 1979 and 1980; Nanjing in 1979, 1980, 1988, and 1989; Tianjin in 1986 and 1989; and Beijing in 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1987, 1988, and 1989.⁵² In these demonstrations and riots, Africans were described as inferior, backward, and uncivilized, so it was not wrong to call Africans "Black Devils" (*hei gui*)⁵³ or to condone "killing the Black Devils" (*sha hei gui*).⁵⁴ Two quotes from Chinese demonstrators capture this unabashed racism during this formative period of Sino-African relations: "we are walking towards a great future on a broad road to the advanced and civilized world, but we will not feed all of uncultured Africa with the results of our efforts or allow any Negroes to hang about our universities to disturb Chinese girls,"⁵⁵ and "blacks are just apes from trees who should go back to their own country and keep their diseased and lazy selves at home."⁵⁶

As Malcolm X said, "You can't have capitalism without racism." When economic reform turned the PRC's interests toward fortune-hunting, Africa's economic deficiencies no longer stimulated Chinese altruism, but strengthened Chinese racism. Kang Youwei's concerns about bad black seeds" resurfaced with special attention to the male-female relationship. The relationship between Chinese women and African men has attracted more attention. Many of the conflicts in the 1980s resulted from concerns about Africans "polluting Chinese society with their relations with Chinese

women,"⁵⁷ unlike the attitude towards Chinese-white interracial relationships which are taken to symbolize movement towards advancement, civilization, and prosperity.⁵⁸ Today, *China Safari* finds that Chinese are generally reluctant to mix with Africans, and even highly-sexed Chinese male laborers in Africa are not attracted to African women.⁵⁹

The Story of Malawi

The Myth of Helping 50,000

In 2008, Malawi terminated four decades of diplomatic relations with Taipei and turned to the PRC. Since Malawi's relationship with the PRC is only two years old, it serves as a unique case study of the PRC's agricultural strategy toward Africa.

The PRC's aid program seems to be tremendously efficient, especially compared to other aid donors such as Taiwan. Taiwan steadily sent agricultural assistance to Malawi for over forty years (1965-2008) but ostensibly did not produce the same results as the PRC. In terms of rice projects, Taiwan built and managed 15 large irrigated paddy rice projects which totaled roughly 2300 hectares. The Taiwanese tried to overcome obstacles such as poor governance, state enterprise monopolies, mechanical maintenance challenges, and learning Chichewa dialect to write a technical manual for local farmers, and finally estimated that these irrigation projects benefitted approximately 7799 Malawians.⁶⁰

Meanwhile, within two years, the PRC has "benefitted 50,000 Malawian peasants" in Balaka with a \$25 million USD cotton project. Its opening ceremony resembled those of old aid projects, with locals appreciating and welcoming the Chinese with song and dance while Malawian Vice President Joyce Banda explained to the masses that this is why Malawi must "discontinue its friendship with Taiwan."⁶¹ This project is so similar to assistance that some academics also mistook this cotton business as development aid.⁶²

Malawi's transition shows how China's priorities have moved away from agricultural aid. In old times, whenever the PRC replaced the ROC in an African state, Beijing's priority was to manage Taiwan-managed farms so that food production would not be affected by politics. PRC diplomats proudly remember how eagerly they took over the projects in Dahomey, Sierra Leone, and Lesotho,⁶³ where they sought to ensure food security and delink Africa from its colonial economic ties. When Malawi switched camps in 2008, Beijing did not take over any of Taiwan's agricultural assistance because food production in Malawi has never been profitable. Cotton, on the other hand, has been a competitive resource since colonial times. Beijing is not interested in agricultural assistance but Malawi is an agrarian society, so cotton production became a propaganda tool. Since the Chinese company purchases cotton from peasants, Beijing claims to "help eliminate Malawi's poverty."⁶⁴

In terms of economic theory, Beijing is helping Malawi's situation, but Malawians may not agree that they have been helped. China's Malawi Cotton Company (a joint venture of Qingdao Ruichang Cotton Industrial Company and China Color-Cotton Group) arrived to Balaka in 2008 to join

two other British companies in the cotton market. When Chinese first arrived, they offered 90-100 Kwacha per kilogram of cotton, so through the Balaka farmer's association, Malawi Cotton Company soon contracted with 50,000 peasants. They received Chinese seeds, fertilizer, and pesticides in the form of a loan which the company would deduct from the following year's cotton harvest. In 2009, the Chinese offered 42 Kwacha per kilogram of cotton, which was the market price, no higher than the other two British companies, and lower than the nationally regulated price of 70 Kwacha per kilogram. Peasants felt cheated so many refused to sell their cotton to Malawi Cotton Company.

All credit and loan measures are done through local farmer associations. Malawian farmers and this Malawi Cotton Company have no direct contact with one another; the company representatives in Balaka do not even know which farmers have contracted with them. Their relationship is a strict transaction: no personal care, no skills training, just a sum of money which does not cover living costs. As in colonial times, this economic framework trades cash crops for food; while the Chinese feel like they are helping Africans, Malawian peasants feel exploited.

Problems of Business-Based "Help"

Up to now, apart from taking over Taiwan's non-agricultural aid (Muzuzu hospital and a road between Karonga and Chitipa), assistance to Malawi consists mainly of two construction projects in Lilongwe. The first is a gift, a parliament building worth \$40 million USD, contracted to an Anhui state-owned enterprise. The second is a concession loan from China's Export-Import Bank for a conference center worth \$90 million USD, contracted to a Shanghai state-owned enterprise. Besides infrastructure, there are 20 young volunteer aid ambassadors stationed in Lilongwe. They are mostly recent graduates in their early twenties whose diplomatic duties include playing ping pong, promoting Chinese medicine, and Chinese language exchanges.⁶⁵ Few PRC endeavors relate to food security except for four horticultural volunteers conducting peripheral research in two agricultural institutions.

The greater impact on Malawians is the corresponding influx of Chinese businesses to Malawian cities and the Malawian countryside whose low-quality but cheap products and questionable business practices have driven out local enterprises. Most Chinese businesspeople in Malawi are extremely reluctant to integrate into local society. Being mostly unreligious and not fluent in the local languages, Chinese businesspeople are commonly ignorant of local laws and customs and tend to settle issues using the corrupt methods with which they are familiar in China. Negative reports regarding Chinese are everywhere, such as money laundering, illegal transport of foreign currency, bribery of officials, violence against Malawian employees, and sale of sexual organs.⁶⁶ Newly arrived Chinese care so little about Malawian law that the PRC embassy must warn businesspeople to "remember, this is their country."⁶⁷

Whenever there is a report on China, Malawians complain about discrimination and exploitation at the hands of Chinese. But, because Chinese consider their sales a form of assistance, they feel they deserve the locals' appreciation, so they respond harshly by calling Malawians "black dogs"⁶⁸ who would be "naked in the streets without the hard-working Chinese."⁶⁹ The first PRC envoy Fan Guijin was caught calling Malawians "beggars" three months after this new bilateral relationship began⁷⁰. The PRC embassy tried to emphasize the traditional Sino-African friendship by blaming the "bad image of Africa"⁷¹ on Western media, but while Chinese believe they are helping impoverished Malawians acquire low-priced goods, Malawian customers and merchants smart from unemployment and racist attitudes.

Some newly-arrived PRC citizens were advised to introduce themselves as Taiwanese for safety concerns.⁷² But, in fact, Chinese safety concerns in Malawi are much less serious than those in neighboring Zambia, where Chinese businesses are the targets of many crimes and where Chinese private enterprises have provoked the ire of locals.⁷³

The Making of Li's Story

Zambia attracts Chinese investments because its economic policy is friendly to foreign investors. Unlike Malawi, for instance, Zambia permits foreigners to own land, so in addition to traders, it attracts Chinese business farmers. Before Li's Jonken Farm, the biggest farm was the 667-hectare Sino-Zambia Friendship Farm. As its name implies, this farm was an assistance project, but it was privatized in 1990 because it was unprofitable. Jiangsu Agricorp (Jiangsu State Farms Group Corporation) and Zhongguo Agricorp (China National Agricultural Development Group Corporation) now hold 40% and 60% respectively of the Friendship Farm. Under new management, the farm soon turned a profit and also benefited China's political agenda as an assistance-oriented farm that provides food for Africa. In 2003, when Lee Ruihuan, Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, visited this farm with Zambian politicians, the *People's Daily* reported:

A group of black men, women, and children dressed in their shiny ethnic garb, played their leather drums, danced, and sang [...] along the side of the road for the arrival of Mr Lee Ruihuan. [...], Lee gladly said [...] we must take this farm as a model to encourage friendly cooperation between China and Zambia.⁷⁴ Lee Ruihuan also commented "this is China's tradition of helping poor. This is humanity."⁷⁵

Chinese commercial activities now are commonly dressed as Sino-African "cooperation projects." The PRC embassy in the UK publicized the Sino-Zambian Friendship Farm as "a modern farm under cooperative management by China and Zambia. Thanks to the application of advanced farming technologies, the farm produced a bumper wheat harvest."⁷⁶ There is no mention of this being a private investment and that Zambia's "cooperative" contribution consists of part-time laborers that the seven Chinese

managers hire for \$1-2 USD a day even though the farm makes as much as \$400 000 USD a year.⁷⁷

Li's late husband, Wang Chi, worked in the Sino-Zambian Friendship Farm in the early 1990s. At one point, Zhongguo Agricornp decided to invest independently, so with an initial investment of \$220 000 USD, the company bought the 3573-hectare farm in 1993 and Wang left Sino-Zambia Friendship Farm for the new Jonken Farm (a Chinese abbreviation of Zhongguo Agricornp). Although Wang passed away in 2005, Jonken Farm remained successful with an annual business volume of \$3 million USD, 1000 cattle, 2000 pigs, 120 000 chickens, and also 200 local employees all under Li's care. *The People's Daily* measures Li's decade-long contribution to Zambia in terms of the 7000 jobs she has created, the 14000 people for whom she provides housing, the interest that she pays on her \$150 000 USD loan, and the free medical services she supplies that have helped thousands of locals.

Much of this "help" is, however, contentious. Li's "contribution" must be framed in China's indirect terms of "help": by raising product for the local market, Jonken improves the local food supply, and by hiring local hands, it alleviates local unemployment problems. Since Jonken has approximately 200 regular employees, the quoted 7000 jobs likely includes every part-time position available on the farm in the past 10 years. Zambian laws require employers to provide housing and health services for employees and their families, so the 14 000 beneficiaries should thank the Zambian state, not Li's benevolence. The interest Li pays on her \$150 000 loan is not so much an aide as it is a debtor fulfilling an obligation to the bank. Furthermore, although *The People's Daily* found someone anonymous to call Li an "angel,"⁷⁸ her employees consider her a tyrant. Contrary to the Chinese media's depiction, laborers fear Li and Wang even recalls the process of tempering her to be less fierce to their employees.⁷⁹

Chinese capitalism in Africa came with unabashed racism. *The People's Daily*, Li, and Wang all refer to Zambian laborers as "blacks" rather than "Zambians". When the media came to film the farm workers' relatively low living standards, Wang made no attempts to hide his sense of superiority. He stated that "these black people [...] usually steal from us. [T]hey stick to my enterprise like lice. [...] I am like a father to them."⁸⁰ Jonken is not alone in its attitude toward locals. Although famous PRC scholar Lu Ting-en reminds Chinese investors that Africans are very sensitive to racism because of their colonial history,⁸¹ few Chinese in Africa have heeded his advice. Even the Chinese-run hotel where I stayed in Zambia does not welcome African guests because they are perceived as dirty. In light of these stereotypes, it is easy to see that part of Li's so-called heroism comes from being cast as a poor widow toiling in backward Africa fending for herself amidst throngs of African men.

In actuality, Chinese investors like Li and most other businesspeople stay in Africa for monetary, not altruistic purposes and so their management skills are no different than from their Western predecessors. Although Mao once used the West as foil for China's commitment to Africa, Chinese investors think exactly like Western capitalists. The West's concept of market expansion is the major target of this model farm. "Compared with the West, Jonken is not large enough,"⁸² Li says, "in agricultural cooperation with Africa, the

PRC government should cooperate with small investors in order to enhance Chinese enterprises' influence in local agriculture."⁸³

Li is not the sole voice asking for more governmental participation in China-Africa investment. The success stories of Chinese businessmen construct Africa as an ideal emigration destination for Chinese peasants because of its relative abundance of land, uncompetitive locals, and the possibility to substantially relieve Chinese population and food pressures. Recently, a Chinese Ministry of Commerce study combined notions of aid, immigration, and commerce and encouraged the idea of "technological demonstration families"—that is, Chinese peasants running a profitable farm as a means to demonstrate farm management to African locals. Like Li's story, this study also suggested that the Chinese government intervene and use official Chinese aid to increase competition in Chinese agribusiness in Africa, and, for instance, "assist" Africa by building roads to Chinese farms.⁸⁴

Conclusion

China might be Africa's best friend because Beijing chooses business instead of charity⁸⁵, but the side effects of pure business in Africa include flashbacks to colonialism and racism in the Sino-Africa context, as demonstrated by Li's "touching" idyll. Contrary to China's once-altruistic and generous aid principles, current agricultural assistance projects are cost-cutting and focused on the bottom line. In essence, China seeks to resolve the African food problem by selling Chinese products. In the past, the Chinese taught Africans agricultural skills and built irrigation systems for free; now, Africa must pay to access Chinese technical knowledge. The Sino-Africa agricultural relationship is therefore a commercial one, but couched in terms of "cooperation" and "mutual-benefit" whereby Africans buy food from Chinese farming entrepreneurs and China increases its market share in Africa while easing its domestic population pressure.

On a macro-level, China indirectly assists Africa with its food supply difficulties and earns the fashionable image of being a pioneer of the "Trade Not Aid" movement. Vital to China's Africa policy, large private investments such as Jonken provide the same benefits to China's international image as agricultural assistance projects. These private farms fit China's "spend less and diversify" bill exactly: with economies of scale, they are able to have sizeable harvests, afford better technology, hire more local workers, and promulgate the rhetoric of Chinese altruism toward Africa with greater efficiency than smaller state-funded projects.

Curiously, China does not consider all of its investors as aid envoys when their businesses turn a profit. When China conducts business with the West, it does not purport to be "helping" or "benefitting" Westerners. Only when China engages with Africa do commercial measures morph into aid programs so charitable that they "touch" Africans on an emotional level. This paternalistic spin on Chinese business investments in Africa exposes the racist condescension of Chinese towards Africans. This manifestation of "Trade Not Aid" explains why Chinese investors are always reported to be "helping Africa" but also the targets wherever there is social unrest in Africa.

Although economic theory claims that trade brings mutual benefits, as the revolts against Chinese in Zambian copper mines signal, social unrest may arrive before wealth. Driven by capitalism and saturated with racism, the contemporary Sino-Africa cooperation model replicates the colonial system from whose shackles Chinese help initially sought to liberate Africa.

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Les économies africaines doivent-elles avoir peur de la Chine ?

Herman Touo, Université de Ngaoundéré, Cameroun

Abstract

Do African economies have to fear China ?

The term 'Fear' constitutes for some years as the dominant paradigm through which the rise of China as emerging power in the World is analyzed in various realms. This concept of fear appears like a category endowed with a capacity of ambiguous explanatory. It postulates a sort of universal mistrust towards China. From this universalizing cognitive approach, imperialism emerges as a methodical doubt on the use of this concept whose content seems relative. Africa had to organize and stow itself to the Chinese' locomotive to the will of its interests. But Africa is itself contaminated by Chinese fears. While carrying the fear and who had never been offered economic support since a century or more, Africa surprised with certain Chinese clichés. China poses like a 'Big Satan Dragon' to Africa with its arrival to tap African oil, to pillage and influence of big media and some publications. One can ask whether Chinese strong growth controls/ occupies the geopolitical composition of the continent or is China a threat or opportunity for the African economies?

To bring elements of response to the questioning, two hypotheses can be drawn here:

- 1. Of course China constitutes a threat because of its status of emerging power and whose conquering economy conveys the image of an authoritarian new «grand» doubled with predator's appetite.*
- 2. There is absolutely no need to be afraid of China because it is a giant whose model of development can be a source of inspiration for the African economies in the framework of a relation of win-win partnership. The stake for Africa is to have the mastery of its relations with China that can be an opportunity for this continent.*

Our thesis is that China occupies the geopolitical reconstruction of Africa, which creates to a certain extent a conflict of interests with the former western powers. And it can be an opportunity for the African economies, especially if governments assume their own financial responsibilities by improving the way of collecting taxes, the business environment, and the quality of the public expense and by putting an end to the capital outflow, or by requiring the transfer of technology from Chinese partners. This is comprehensible given the fact that all weaknesses of Africa can be corrected by assets of Africa which is in a position to recover its status of strategic stake in the new global political and economic order.

Résumé

La peur constitue depuis quelques années le paradigme dominant à travers lequel la montée en puissance de la Chine dans le monde est analysée dans divers domaines. Cette notion

de peur apparaît comme une catégorie dotée d'une capacité d'ubiquité explicative. Elle postule une sorte de méfiance universelle à l'égard de la Chine. De cet impérialisme cognitif universalisant naît un doute méthodique sur l'usage de ce concept dont le contenu semble relatif. L'Afrique qui devait s'organiser pour s'arrimer à la locomotive chinoise au gré de ses intérêts, se laisse parfois communiquer des peurs qui ne sont pas absolument les siennes. Portés par ceux qui depuis plus d'un siècle n'auraient pas pu offrir à l'Afrique les moyens de son décollage économique, certains clichés tendant à présenter la Chine comme «le grand Satan dragon» venu juste ponctionner le pétrole africain et piller les autres matières premières sont distillés à travers les grands médias et certaines publications. La question que l'on est en droit de se demander est de savoir si les économies africaines et ceux ou celles qui les pilotent doivent nécessairement avoir peur de la forte croissance chinoise et de la place qu'occupe ce pays dans la recomposition géopolitique du continent. Autrement dit, la Chine est-elle une menace ou une chance pour les économies africaines ? Pour apporter des éléments de réponse à ce questionnement, deux hypothèses méritent d'être formulées :

1. La Chine constitue certes une menace en raison de son statut de puissance émergente, dont l'économie conquérante véhicule l'image d'un nouveau « grand » autoritaire doublé d'un appétit de prédateur.
2. Il ne faut cependant pas avoir absolument peur de la Chine car celle-ci est un géant dont le modèle de développement peut être une source d'inspiration pour les économies africaines dans le cadre d'une relation de partenariat gagnant-gagnant. L'enjeu pour l'Afrique, c'est d'avoir la maîtrise de sa relation avec la Chine qui peut être une chance pour ce continent.

Notre thèse est que la place qu'occupe la Chine dans la recomposition géopolitique de l'Afrique, qui engendre, dans une large mesure, un conflit d'intérêts avec les anciennes puissances occidentales, est une chance pour les économies africaines, notamment si les gouvernements assument leurs propres responsabilités financières en améliorant la façon de percevoir les impôts, l'environnement des affaires, la qualité de la dépense publique et en mettant un terme à la fuite illégale des fonds vers l'étranger, ou encore en exigeant le transfert de technologie de la part des partenaires chinois. Cela se comprend, étant donné que toutes les faiblesses de l'Afrique peuvent être corrigées par les atouts de l'Afrique qui a retrouvé son statut d'enjeu/objet stratégique dans le nouvel ordre politico-économique global.

La peur constitue depuis quelques années le paradigme dominant à travers lequel la montée en puissance de la Chine dans le monde est analysée dans divers domaines. Cette peur apparaît comme une catégorie dotée d'une capacité d'ubiquité¹ explicative. Elle postule une sorte de méfiance universelle à l'égard de la Chine. De cet impérialisme cognitif universalisant naît un doute sur l'usage de ce concept dont le contenu semble relatif. D'où la nécessité de prendre au sérieux le conseil méthodologique d'Emile Durkheim d'après lequel il faut se méfier des « notions vulgaires », des mots que l'on emploie couramment et avec assurance comme s'ils correspondaient à des choses bien connues et définies, alors qu'ils ne réveillent en nous que des notions confuses, des préjugés, des passions² et des interprétations mécanistes³. La peur appartient à cette catégorie de notions vulgaires. Le sens commun constitue ici un véritable obstacle épistémologique dans la mesure qu'il croît savoir de manière définitive ce à quoi renvoie le discours de la peur sur la Chine en termes de domination⁴, de régression ou de souf-

france. Le bon sens appréhende la peur généralement à travers le prisme de la rupture eschatologique⁵. Ceci permet d'éviter la confusion entre l'investigation scientifique qui vise à établir la véracité des faits et l'inquisition qui tend à juger, à formuler des jugements de valeur. Il importe dès lors de repenser la peur de la Chine plus ou moins considérée comme une construction intellectuelle aux relents d'abstraction pour certaines régions du monde, voire un concept analytique et une stratégie.

En effet, la peur de la Chine est devenue une donnée largement répandue dans le monde aujourd'hui. Elle est d'autant plus amplifiée qu'elle est aussi et surtout portée par ceux qui jusqu'à une période relativement récente, tenaient encore le leadership mondial. La Chine qui ne fait pas partie du G8, à savoir les pays qu'on dit les plus puissants du monde, réécrit désormais l'histoire en termes de puissance économique. Dans un monde où le droit de la souveraineté est en crise⁶, l'on peut dire, à la suite de Luc Sindjoun, que « c'est la puissance qui institue les relations internationales comme ordre, c'est-à-dire comme ensemble de positions et de rôles inégaux, variant en fonction des ressources des acteurs ; elle introduit l'inégalité constitutive du milieu international »⁷. Entre les Etats-Unis et la Chine, les deux principaux protagonistes de la nouvelle géopolitique mondiale, c'est une sorte de guerre froide. Cela se comprend, étant donné qu'elle diffère nettement de l'autre guerre froide qui opposa les mêmes Etats-Unis à l'Union Soviétique. Hier l'enjeu était la maîtrise de l'armement et de l'espace. Aussi les deux super-grands se lancèrent dans une course aux armements qui finit par ruiner l'Union Soviétique et permettre ainsi aux Etats-Unis de se hisser sur « le toit du monde ». A l'heure actuelle, les armes ont changé de nature. Elles sont désormais économiques, notamment financières et monétaires. C'est à qui réussira à maintenir sa monnaie au niveau le plus bas possible par rapport à celle de son concurrent, c'est à qui réussira à vendre plus qu'il n'achètera à l'autre ; c'est à qui réussira à endetter l'autre à son profit que se situe désormais l'enjeu.

La Chine a pris une avance considérable dans ces domaines avec un excédent⁸ sur les Etats-Unis qui s'établissait en 2005 à 202 milliards de dollar US. La Chine a financé le déficit américain par le placement d'une partie de ses réserves⁹ de change, évaluées à plus de 1000 milliards de dollar US (sur les 14.294 milliards de la dette publique américaine), en bons de trésor américains. C'est ici que se situe la peur des stratèges américains, transformée parfois en phobie chinoise. Néanmoins, les Etats-Unis et la Chine (le G2) ne sont nullement sur le pied de guerre. Au-delà des peurs parfois amplifiées par les ultra des deux camps, les deux pays ont réussi à créer des espaces de négociation, conscients que l'avenir de l'économie mondiale dépend du comportement qu'ils auront : d'où la divergence dans le sourire.

Au regard du tableau qui montre que la Chine a réussi à faire plier une jambe à l'hyper puissance américaine, il est tout à fait compréhensible que les autres régions du monde redoutent ce pays. L'Europe qui avait tenté une résistance et même quelques offensives désespérées, a depuis compris qu'il faut négocier et chercher comment tirer meilleur profit de l'extraordinaire croissance chinoise. L'Europe a ainsi accepté que la Chine devienne pour elle la grande usine du monde, le grand guichet où elle ira s'approvisionner en espèces sonnantes et trébuchantes en se pliant au dictat du « commu-

nisme de marché chinois », ou en tolérant d'être rappelée à l'ordre par Pékin face à la crise de la dette.

L'Afrique qui devait aussi s'organiser¹⁰ pour s'arrimer à la locomotive chinoise au gré de ses intérêts, se laisse parfois communiquer des peurs qui ne sont pas absolument les siennes. Portés par ceux qui depuis plus d'un siècle n'auraient pas pu offrir à l'Afrique les moyens de son décollage économique, certains clichés tendant à présenter la Chine comme « le grand Satan dragon » venu juste ponctionner le pétrole africain et piller les autres matières premières de ce continent sont distillés à travers les grands médias ou certaines publications. Tout ceci pour empêcher les Africains de rester lucides dans leur relation avec la Chine¹¹. Pourtant, en opposition aux modèles colonialistes, la Chine entend faire de l'Afrique un multiplicateur de puissance sur la scène diplomatique et un acteur privilégié dans la construction d'un nouvel ordre mondial dans lequel la relation sino-africaine serait synonyme de progrès mutuel, des signes ou traces visibles sur le terrain. *Le Livre blanc* du gouvernement chinois indique clairement que « la Chine veille à établir et à développer un nouveau type de partenariat stratégique avec l'Afrique, caractérisé par l'égalité et la confiance réciproque sur le plan politique, la coopération conduite dans l'esprit gagnant-gagnant sur le plan économique et le renforcement des échanges sur le plan culturel »¹². Comme on pouvait s'y attendre, cette déclaration de bonnes intentions, qui doit faire face au discours de la peur construit sur la Chine, suscite des interrogations dans plusieurs milieux¹³. Si certains cercles ne manquent pas de voir derrière l'offensive de Pékin l'expression d'une nouvelle aventure coloniale dont l'Afrique sortira meurtrie, d'autres affichent leur optimisme en présentant la nouvelle politique africaine de la Chine comme la dernière chance du continent de sortir de son sous-développement chronique¹⁴.

Certains auteurs¹⁵ estiment même que sous l'égide d'une politique amie qui se caractérise par de nombreuses aides et des emprunts à taux préférentiels, on assiste petit à petit à la mise sous tutelle de l'Afrique. Celle-ci n'aurait pas encore pris conscience qu'elle cède peu à peu à la Chine ce qu'elle a de plus précieux, à savoir ses ressources naturelles. D'où notre problématique, à savoir **les économies africaines doivent-elles avoir peur de la Chine ?** Autrement dit, les économies africaines et ceux ou celles qui les pilotent doivent-ils nécessairement avoir peur de la forte croissance chinoise et de la place qu'occupe ce pays dans la recomposition géopolitique du continent ? La Chine est-elle une menace ou une chance pour les économies africaines ?

Pour apporter des éléments de réponse à ce questionnement, deux hypothèses méritent d'être formulées :

1. La Chine constitue certes une menace en raison de son statut de puissance émergente, dont l'économie conquérante véhicule l'image d'un nouveau « grand » autoritaire doublé d'un appétit de prédateur.
2. Il ne faut cependant pas avoir absolument peur de la Chine car celle-ci est un géant dont le modèle de développement peut être

une source d'inspiration pour les économies africaines dans le cadre d'une relation de partenariat gagnant-gagnant caractérisé plus par le pragmatisme que par la rhétorique idéologique. L'enjeu pour l'Afrique, c'est d'avoir la maîtrise de sa relation avec la Chine, car la période actuelle est riche en opportunités¹⁶ qui ne demandent qu'à être saisies pour réaliser la renaissance de l'Afrique malgré les contraintes.

Ces deux hypothèses qui passent en revue la perception binaire de la montée en puissance de la Chine dans le monde en général, et plus singulièrement en Afrique, trouvent leur justification dans le fait que le monde est devenu un village planétaire, sous l'effet de la globalisation et de nouvelles technologies de l'information et de la communication qui l'accompagnent avec la compression des notions de temps et d'espace. La nouvelle économie « sans frontière » réduit l'autonomie des Etats¹⁷, engendre une forte pression sur les ressources naturelles et suscite l'éveil des consciences de tous les habitants de la planète ainsi que leur aspiration à la dignité. Sous l'influence du réalisme, du constructivisme¹⁸, d'une vision systémique des relations internationales¹⁹ et de l'individualisme méthodologique, les Etats, de plus en plus interdépendants, élaborent de nouvelles solidarités²⁰. La perception holiste des problèmes économiques s'impose désormais à tous. En même temps la grille de lecture de la peur, des menaces, des vulnérabilités et des risques, souligne la forte interaction entre le local, le national, le régional et le global. Cette lecture remet en débat l'idée selon laquelle un Etat ne saurait garantir sa propre sécurité économique qu'en menaçant celle des autres. C'est le dilemme de la sécurité²¹ de plus en plus remis en cause dans un monde globalisé où la sécurité de l'autre est la condition de notre propre sécurité.

Ici le paradigme structuraliste²² vient au secours de l'observateur et lui permet de comprendre que les pays puissants qui sont au centre du système international, veulent continuer à dominer la ou les périphéries en construisant un discours de la peur sur la Chine. Le paradigme matérialiste²³ dévoile, en effet, les visées impérialistes du centre qui veut préserver ses intérêts voire sa domination hégémonique en suscitant, au besoin, à la peur collective à l'égard de la Chine, proche de la crainte médiévale de la peste, et à l'anarchie²⁴. Cela se comprend dans la mesure où cette étude est menée dans un contexte international caractérisé par la volonté affirmée d'un groupe de grandes puissances, d'influencer le destin des pays qu'on appelait encore hier, le Tiers-Monde, par un interventionnisme inédit dans les relations internationales. Celles-ci n'hésitent pas à utiliser la force armée, officiellement au nom de la diffusion de l'idée démocratique et des valeurs qu'elle véhicule. Cette nouvelle donne ne leur donne pas seulement un droit de regard, mais aussi un devoir d'action chez les autres, notamment les plus faibles, avec la caution morale de l'Organisation des Nations Unies (ONU). Le paradigme matérialiste permet, en outre, de montrer que la Chine serait en quête d'hydrocarbures, des minerais et autres matières premières.

Deux ordres de préoccupations se dégagent des orientations empiriques et théoriques ci-dessus, qu'on peut ramener à deux idées principales :

- D'abord, l'idée de la Chine comme une menace potentielle pour les économies africaines en raison de son statut de pays émergent.
- Ensuite, l'idée du modèle de développement chinois comme une source d'inspiration pour l'Afrique.

I. La Chine comme une menace potentielle pour les économies africaines en raison de son statut de pays émergent.

L'idée qui présente la Chine comme une menace²⁵ pour les économies africaines s'origine dans le fait que peu de Nations ont changé aussi vite et de façon aussi spectaculaire que ce pays dans l'histoire de l'humanité. La Chine se développe et s'émancipe à une telle allure qu'elle en devient effrayante. Pour certains, son émergence, la nature peu démocratique de son système politique doublée de son appétit de prédateur l'érige moins en partenaire qu'en menace.

A. L'émergence d'un nouveau géant : rappel historique²⁶

L'émergence de la Chine aurait été prédite au 19^e siècle par Napoléon 1^{er}. Ce dernier aurait indiqué que lorsque la Chine s'éveillera, le monde se mettrait à trembler. Cette prophétie semble se réaliser aujourd'hui.

Conçue comme l'*empire du milieu*, la Chine est historiquement l'un des plus grands empires. Mais au 19^{ème}, les Chinois sont entrés dans ce qu'ils appellent le siècle de la honte, en raison des intrusions étrangères et des guerres civiles jusqu'à la proclamation par Mao Tsé Toung, de la République populaire de Chine (RPC) le 1^{er} octobre 1949 à Pékin (Beijing) qui en devint la capitale. Le nouveau régime communiste va adopter le modèle de développement soviétique à savoir le collectivisme (terme désignant un système économique dans lequel la propriété des moyens de production est collective, où l'organisation de la production des biens et services est centralisée et planifiée) pour ce pays de 9 571 300 km² de superficie et qui compte aujourd'hui 1 milliard 310 millions d'habitants. Afin d'étendre la révolution et de généraliser son pouvoir, le Parti Communiste Chinois (PCC) va entreprendre, entre 1949 et 1952, plusieurs grandes campagnes de réformes et de propagande.

En 1950, la réforme agraire libère la petite paysannerie de la tutelle économique et financière des grands propriétaires. Elle est souvent violente et aboutit parfois à des procès et à des exécutions sommaires. La loi sur le mariage, en autorisant le divorce, met fin à l'oppression traditionnelle des femmes. D'autres campagnes sont organisées comme celle des « trois anti » qui débarrasse le Parti de ses éléments corrompus et celle des « cinq anti », en 1953, qui s'attaque à la bourgeoisie d'affaires. Chacune de ces mesures permet au Parti Communiste de gagner de nouveaux adhérents.

Les bons résultats du premier plan quinquennal vont encourager Mao Tsé Toung, en 1958, à développer un nouveau programme économique, social et politique, connu sous le nom de Grand bond en avant. Préconisant un développement du collectif dans tous les domaines de la vie quotidienne, ce projet gigantesque marque une rupture idéologique avec le modèle soviétique. Des contrôles plus rigides sont imposés pour accroître la

production agricole, réduire la consommation et accélérer l'industrialisation. La Chine qui vit repliée, affairée à se développer doit rattraper son retard par tous les moyens et une mobilisation effrénée des travailleurs donne des résultats plus ou moins positifs.

L'arrivée de Deng Xiaoping au pouvoir en 1976 conduit au tournant de l'ouverture. À partir du XV^{ème} Congrès du Parti communiste, en septembre 1977, une nouvelle ère semble s'ouvrir. Le président Jjang Zemin annonce, dans son discours, la privatisation des entreprises d'État et la relance des réformes économiques²⁷ destinées à faire face à la concurrence internationale (adapter l'économie à une ouverture partielle à l'international et la convertibilité du yuan). Le nouveau Bureau politique insiste également sur l'urgence de restructurer le Parti et le gouvernement, sur la lutte contre la corruption, et s'ouvre aux technocrates. Le gouvernement entreprend une réforme globale de l'administration chinoise : le nombre de postes et de ministères est réduit, la moyenne d'âge des dirigeants tombe à moins de 60 ans.

Arrivé au pouvoir en mars 1998, le nouveau Premier ministre, Zhu Rongji, qui succède à Li Peng, dont il est le vice-Premier ministre, est un technocrate considéré comme un réformateur. À l'origine des réformes économiques entreprises depuis 1992, il lance le pays sur une nouvelle voie, provoquant l'inquiétude des conservateurs. Par sa politique d'austérité, il obtient une réduction sensible de l'inflation (de 24% à 1%). Les principales réformes annoncées sont la poursuite de la privatisation des entreprises d'État, le renforcement du rôle de la Banque centrale, la réduction de la dette publique, le développement des travaux publics, du logement, des industries de pointe et l'amélioration du système éducatif.

Quant à l'épineuse question de l'admission de la Chine à l'Organisation Mondiale du Commerce (OMC), elle enregistre de nets progrès. Le 19 mai 2000, les négociateurs européens et chinois signent un accord préalable à l'adhésion de la Chine à l'OMC, par lequel celle-ci s'engage à abaisser ses droits de douane sur certains produits et à faciliter l'investissement européen sur son territoire. Dans le même sillage, la Chambre des représentants américaine adopte au cours de ce mois de mai 2000 une loi de normalisation des relations commerciales entre les États-Unis et la Chine, permettant de libéraliser les échanges entre les deux pays. Pour certains auteurs, cette ouverture, qui indique que l'histoire chinoise n'est pas particulière mais doit suivre le cours commun, se transformera en une victoire de la Chine sur « l'Occident piégé par la mondialisation »²⁸.

En juillet 2000, Pékin est choisie par le Comité international olympique (CIO) pour accueillir les jeux Olympiques en 2008. Ce fut la première fois que la Chine organise la plus grande manifestation sportive mondiale. Cette élection suscite la joie des habitants de Pékin, mais elle est déplorée par les défenseurs des droits de l'homme qui militaient contre l'attribution des Jeux à la Chine, présentée comme un immense cimetière pour les droits et libertés fondamentaux.

Au mois de septembre 2001, après quinze ans de discussions, un accord est finalement signé à Genève entre la Chine et ses partenaires commerciaux en vue de l'adhésion de Pékin à l'OMC. Elle est formellement entérinée au mois de décembre lors de la conférence de l'OMC à Doha

(Qatar). Dans l'optique de cette nouvelle donne économique, les entreprises chinoises se réorganisent fébrilement afin de faire face à la concurrence internationale.

Les entrepreneurs chinois sont au cœur de la pensée de Jiang Zemin, lors de son discours d'ouverture du XVI^e Congrès du Parti communiste²⁹, au mois de novembre 2002, lorsqu'il loue le rôle joué par les « couches sociales avancées » dans la modernisation du pays. Ce Congrès est l'occasion pour le président chinois d'annoncer son retrait de la scène politique et de désigner son successeur, à la fois à la tête du pays et du parti, en la personne de Hu Jintao. Cette succession, effective en mars 2003, marque un rajeunissement de la classe politique dirigeante : Hu Jintao, âgé de 59 ans, inaugure en effet la « quatrième génération » des cadres communistes depuis la naissance de la République populaire. Elle s'accompagne en outre d'un changement à la tête du gouvernement qui confirme cette tendance : Wen Jiabao (60 ans), qui succède à Zhu Rongji au poste de Premier ministre, présente un profil de technocrate consensuel, similaire à celui du nouveau numéro un chinois. Toutefois l'ancien président Jiang Zemin ne disparaît pas totalement de la vie politique, puisqu'il conserve la présidence de la Commission militaire centrale.

Au mois d'octobre 2003, la Chine s'impose comme une grande puissance scientifique et technologique en réussissant son premier vol spatial habité, un succès qui revêt aussi une dimension patriotique considérable. Le pays poursuit sa libéralisation économique en amendant sa Constitution en mars 2004, afin d'y inscrire la protection de la propriété privée. Sur le plan politique, la transition en douceur s'achève en septembre 2004 par la démission de Jiang Zemin de la présidence de la Commission militaire centrale, au profit de Hu Jintao. Aujourd'hui, l'émergence de la Chine bouscule de plus en plus la géopolitique traditionnelle. La nature peu démocratique de son système politique doublée de son appétit de prédateur inquiète certaines économies.

B. Un système politique peu démocratique doublé d'un appétit de prédateur.

La Chine a adopté un système de parti unique d'inspiration marxiste-léniniste. Toute revendication visant la démocratisation du système est violemment réprimée par les autorités³⁰. L'ambiguïté du discours de la Chine sur les droits de l'homme et son soutien à certaines dictatures qui sévissent en Afrique constitue une source d'inquiétude.

Pour la Chine, « la protection des droits de la personne ne saurait contraindre l'exercice de la souveraineté nationale. Il ne fait aucun doute que les succès rencontrés par Pékin en Afrique ont bénéficié de cette vision, même si ce n'est pas l'unique point commun que la Chine partage avec ses partenaires africains »³¹. Pour bon nombre de régimes autoritaires, Pékin constitue une manne et une bénédiction au détriment des mouvements démocratiques. Le régime chinois offre une alternative à ceux-ci face à la pression de plus en plus pesante et tendue des occidentaux par rapport à la transparence des règles de dévolution du pouvoir. Là où le sermon occidental sur le manque de transparence, la mauvaise gouvernance et le

non-renouvellement des élites politiques est une rengaine bien connue, la Chine se garde bien d'assortir son aide de discours politiques moralisateurs au grand dam de la soif des populations pour plus de démocratie. Sous le couvert d'une amitié indéfectible, du respect du sacro-saint principe de « la neutralité et la non-ingérence », Pékin ne manifeste aucune exigence en matière de démocratie ou de bonne gouvernance³². Or, la mauvaise gouvernance a été identifiée comme la principale cause du sous-développement de la plupart des pays africains et comme un obstacle majeur à la « facilité de faire les affaires ».

Comme on le voit, la diplomatie chinoise, adossée à son système politique, constitue un véritable bouclier pour les régimes autocratiques, et se présente comme un frein à l'émergence de l'Etat de droit dans certains pays africains. Le soutien de la Chine constitue une bouffée d'oxygène salvatrice pour des régimes politiques souvent décriés³³ ou qui se situent entre la démocratie et l'autoritarisme. La Chine perpétuerait la mauvaise gouvernance politique du continent africain sous le prétexte du respect de la souveraineté des Etats³⁴, et bloquerait l'alternance indispensable pour le progrès d'un pays. Par ailleurs, il est démontré aujourd'hui que seuls les nostalgiques³⁵ des régimes autoritaires osent encore soutenir l'idée que de tels régimes sont seuls capables d'assurer la stabilité politique et le développement économique, ou pensent qu'on peut faire carrière à la tête d'un Etat. L'histoire nous enseigne qu'en ce qui concerne la construction d'un pays, aucune personne ou aucun individu, fut-il le plus compétent ou le meilleur de la classe politique du moment, ne l'a achevée nulle part dans le monde.

La « diplomatie de non-rupture » chinoise serait de nature à saper les efforts des organisations des droits de l'homme soucieuses d'inscrire les pays africains sur la liste des nations respectueuses des droits fondamentaux et des libertés publiques. Pourtant, l'avenir politique de l'Afrique semble lié à sa capacité de s'insérer dans la société internationale à tous points de vue. C'est pourquoi « le partenariat entre l'Afrique et les pays développés repose sur des éléments essentiels – respect des droits de l'homme et des libertés fondamentales, démocratisation de la vie politique – qui fonctionnent sinon comme des contraintes axiologiques du moins comme des valeurs politiques dont dépend tout à la fois la modernisation et la civilisation de la figure internationale des Etats ».³⁶

En outre, certaines motivations de la présence chinoise en Afrique peuvent causer des soucis aux acteurs économiques. La Chine effraie et défraye les chroniques : « *La Chine, méga puissance, va envahir l'Afrique* », « *Pékin qui s'impose n'a besoin de l'Afrique que pour ses matières premières* », « *L'économie chinoise avide des matières premières africaines* », « *La Chine tisse sa toile sur le continent noir* », « *La Chine à l'assaut du marché africain* », « *La Chine pousse ses pions en Afrique* », sont des titres récents d'articles de presse assez révélateurs.

L'enjeu pétrolier³⁷ et bien d'autres matières premières (charbon, fer, nickel, bauxite)³⁸ semble être, pour certains observateurs, la principale motivation de la présence chinoise en Afrique. La dépendance énergétique est devenue une préoccupation majeure pour Pékin³⁹. De huitième pays importateur de pétrole en 2000, la Chine est passée au quatrième rang en

2003 après les Etats-Unis, le Japon et l'Allemagne. Devenue deuxième pays consommateur de pétrole dans le monde, après les Etats-Unis, la Chine doit impérativement trouver de nouvelles zones productrices pour sécuriser ses approvisionnements. Tout naturellement, l'Afrique est devenue un terrain convoité car depuis leur intervention en Irak, les Etats-Unis ont parachevé leur contrôle sur l'ensemble des pays du Proche-Orient à l'exception de l'Iran. En 2000, les importations représentaient 27% du total de la consommation de pétrole en Chine, puis 37% en 2002, 45% en 2010 et devraient atteindre 60% d'ici 2020 selon certaines estimations. Plus de 25% des importations chinoises de pétrole proviennent actuellement du continent africain, notamment de la majorité des pays du Golfe de Guinée (Angola, Nigéria (où les compagnies anglo-saxonnes ont longtemps conservé leur monopole), Cameroun, Congo Brazzaville, Gabon (demeurés jusqu'en 2004 une chasse gardée des compagnies françaises), Guinée Equatoriale et du Soudan. Les autres sources d'approvisionnement africain de la Chine sont l'Egypte et l'Algérie. La soif énergétique de la Chine est si forte qu'elle ne connaît aucune frontière, pas même celles des Etats qui, tel que le Tchad, maintiennent leurs relations diplomatiques avec Taïwan. En 2008, la Chine entretenait des relations diplomatiques avec 47 des 53 pays du continent noir qui en compte aujourd'hui 54 depuis l'indépendance du Sud-Soudan le 09 juillet 2011.

Les pays occidentaux, quant à eux, redoutent une hausse du cours du pétrole et bien d'autres matières premières, due à la forte demande du marché chinois pour ces produits. L'Afrique avec 8.9% des réserves mondiales de pétrole, et qui représente 11% de la production mondiale, est désormais un terrain de confrontation entre les Etats-Unis, l'Europe et la Chine. Dans le document portant sur la stratégie de sécurité nationale publié en 2006, l'Administration américaine a exprimé ouvertement ses craintes en indiquant que les chinois « développent le commerce, mais agissent comme s'ils pouvaient en quelque sorte verrouiller l'approvisionnement énergétique de par le monde ou chercher à diriger les marchés plutôt qu'à les ouvrir, comme s'ils pouvaient appliquer un mercantilisme d'une époque discréditée et soutenir des pays riches en ressources naturelles sans tenir compte des écarts de conduite de ces régimes en matière de politique intérieure ou de leur mauvaise conduite à l'étranger ». Dans le même ordre d'idées, l'ambassadeur de France au Cameroun, Bruno Gain, a évoqué indirectement la concurrence qu'impose l'Empire du Milieu à son pays lorsqu'il laisse entendre qu'« il y a de nouveaux amis qui sont au Cameroun, il y a aussi des vieux amis. Nous pensons que les deux peuvent travailler ensemble »⁴⁰. Or, il est généralement admis qu'une amitié aussi vieille soit-elle, doit être renouvelée, redynamisée étant donné que l'idée selon laquelle « *les Etats n'ont ni amis éternels, ni ennemis éternels mais des intérêts éternels* » dans le jeu international reste d'actualité.

Par ailleurs, une trop grande dépendance de l'exportation du pétrole ou des matières premières en général est dangereuse⁴¹. Autrement dit, l'Afrique ne doit pas se laisser aveugler par la demande croissante de pétrole et bien d'autres matières venant de la Chine. La Chine réalise des projets de développement en échange des matières premières. Des centaines de milliers des Chinois travaillent dans les projets financés par la Chine et des dizaines des milliers d'autres sont dans le commerce. Les Africains risquent

de perdre leur emploi⁴² et le contrôle de leurs économies. Au Nigéria par exemple les Chinois vendent des tongs⁴³. Ils gèrent des salons de thé en République Démocratique du Congo. Ils ont des commerces et exploitent des terres au Cameroun comme dans plusieurs pays africains. Au regard de cette présence massive de la diaspora chinoise sur le continent, Fantu Cheru, Cyril Obi et leurs collègues⁴⁴ semblent avertir que « si l'Afrique ne fait pas attention, elle va, sur sa propre demande, être de nouveau colonisée, cette fois-ci par la Chine ». Cela se comprend, étant donné que dans le domaine des échanges commerciaux, le partenariat sino-africain est dominé par la persistance de la détérioration des termes de l'échange. La Chine inonde le marché africain de produits manufacturés, concurrence même l'industrie locale⁴⁵ et ne favorise pas la diversification des exportations africaines en dehors des matières premières. « La Chine apparaît donc en Afrique comme essentiellement prédatrice, selon le modèle hier mis en œuvre par les puissances coloniales. [Une] stratégie qui permet aux régimes les plus contestables de la région de reconstituer une économie de rente fondée sur l'exploitation massive des ressources naturelles, sans réel transfert de richesse ou de savoir-faire vers les populations locales »⁴⁶.

Une autre source de menace potentielle qui viendrait de la Chine est l'invasion foncière⁴⁷. Dans la plupart des contrats et accords de coopération signés ces derniers temps entre les Etats africains et les pays émergents, développés ou industrialisés, un paragraphe est réservé à l'agriculture. En février 2007, par exemple, lors de la visite au Cameroun du président de la République Populaire de Chine, Hu Jintao, un accord fut conclu portant sur le développement de la culture du riz, du maïs et du soja dans la localité de Nanga Eboko (département de la Haute Sanaga, région du centre) et celle de Santchou (département de la Menoua, région de l'Ouest) sur une superficie totale de 10.000 hectares⁴⁸. Il va certainement se poser la question de l'avenir des paysanneries et des stratégies de résistance qu'elles vont développer. Archie Mafeje⁴⁹ et Ali Mazrui ont jadis soutenu l'idée selon laquelle l'intégration dans le capitalisme mondial n'exige pas nécessairement l'adoption, dans les périphéries dominées, de formes d'organisations capitalistes de la production, malgré leur divergence sur la thèse de « la recolonisation de l'Afrique ». Cela se comprend dans la mesure où la colonisation non seulement s'est parfaitement « adaptée » à « l'absence » de la propriété privée du sol dans la majeure partie de l'Afrique subsaharienne, mais en a même tiré un bénéfice supplémentaire. La thèse que propose Ali Mazrui⁵⁰, aujourd'hui, est que dans la perspective de l'expansion du capitalisme impérialiste contemporain, la question de la privatisation du sol est désormais posée. Les faits nous enseignent que les relations entre l'Union Européenne et le Zimbabwe sont tendues depuis le début de la réforme agraire et la réélection contestée de Robert Mugabe en 2002.

Il est, toutefois, difficile de conclure que le partenariat sino-africain n'est pas générateur d'opportunités pour l'Afrique qui « peut dire non »⁵¹ et qui devrait s'inspirer du modèle de développement chinois.

II. Le modèle de développement chinois comme une source d'inspiration pour l'Afrique.

La montée en puissance de la Chine semble augurer de profonds bouleversements qui ne manqueront certainement pas de reconfigurer un environnement africain déjà fortement marqué par son passé colonial, et dont les élites politiques restent encore partagées entre le conformisme et la recherche de nouvelles réponses au sous-développement⁵² dans « un monde dominé par le paradigme du complexe et de l'incertain ». La Chine peut être une chance pour les économies africaines dans le cadre d'une relation de partenariat gagnant-gagnant. Le décryptage de la « nouvelle lune de miel » aux relents de retrouvailles entre l'Afrique et la Chine laisse transparaître la nécessité pour l'Afrique de s'arrimer au modèle de développement de ce nouveau géant dans une perspective d'adaptation et de diversification.

A. Une « nouvelle lune de miel » pleine d'espérance aux relents de retrouvailles entre l'Afrique et la Chine

L'histoire des relations politiques entre l'Afrique et la Chine révèle que l'intérêt de cette dernière pour l'Afrique ne date pas de l'expansion économique chinoise actuelle. La Chine a manifesté un intérêt pour l'Afrique, devenue le terrain de confrontation entre l'Occident et l'Union Soviétique, dès les années 1950 et particulièrement lors de la Conférence de Bandung⁵³. Les nations participantes, issues de la décolonisation, affirment leur volonté de disposer d'une voix indépendante dans les affaires internationales, qui ne soit alignée ni sur les positions américaines ni sur celles de l'URSS. Après la Conférence de Bandung, les relations étroites de la Chine avec l'Égypte et l'Algérie s'inscrivirent dans une logique idéologique anti-impérialiste. Dans le cadre de la rivalité sino-soviétique, la Chine soutint des mouvements indépendantistes en Angola tel que l'Union nationale pour l'indépendance totale de l'Angola (UNITA) et au Mozambique tel que le Front de libération du Mozambique (FROLIMO). Malgré son isolement sur la scène internationale dans les années 60 et 70, la Chine continua d'entretenir de bonnes relations avec les pays comme le Cameroun, le Congo Brazzaville, la Guinée, l'Île Maurice, le Mali, la Somalie, la Tanzanie et la Zambie. La Chine réalisa la ligne de chemin de fer dénommée Tazara (Tanzania-Zambia Railway) reliant Lusaka, la capitale de la Zambie, à Dar es Salam, capitale de la Tanzanie, en 1975. Dans les années 80, la Chine s'est rapprochée des pays comme l'Éthiopie, le Lesotho et la Libye.

Jusqu'au milieu des années 1970, il s'agissait de construire la solidarité entre deux continents appartenant au même monde : celui des pays sous-développés. La présence chinoise en Afrique se résumait au technicien venu assister le pays frère fraîchement affranchi de la tutelle coloniale et contribuer ainsi à son essor. Quinze mille médecins et plus de dix mille ingénieurs agronomes furent alors envoyés vers ce « tiers-monde » transformé en base arrière de la guerre froide⁵⁴, et qui est aujourd'hui aux avant-postes de la guerre commerciale qui s'intensifie dans le monde post bipolaire⁵⁵. En 1977, la valeur totale des échanges commerciaux entre l'empire du Milieu et le continent noir atteint le record de 817 millions de dollars US. Jadis réduite à

la construction d'ouvrages à vocation sociale et culturelle et à l'assistance technique, la coopération avec la Chine s'est diversifiée et s'est intensifiée. La République Populaire de Chine est désormais présente dans des secteurs aussi importants que ceux de l'énergie, des infrastructures et du développement agricole. Un tel partenariat de type nouveau est une illustration de la coopération Sud-Sud qu'il faudrait développer et consolider, afin de remédier au déséquilibre et à l'iniquité qui caractérisent les relations internationales aujourd'hui⁵⁶.

Lors de son voyage au Gabon en 2004, le président Hu Jintao a promis « une coopération économique qui se préoccupera davantage des infrastructures, de l'agriculture et du développement des ressources humaines », même si certains observateurs pensent que Pékin « se comporte désormais comme n'importe quelle autre puissance soucieuse de ses intérêts bien compris. Elle cible sa coopération sur des pays à fort potentiel, qu'il s'agisse de matières premières, de pouvoir d'achat et d'influence diplomatique »⁵⁷.

Selon l'Ambassadeur de la République Populaire de Chine au Cameroun, Xue Jinwei⁵⁸, la Chine a de très bonnes relations avec les 53 pays (54 avec le Sud Soudan) africains. Ces pays sont selon lui des frères pour la Chine et sont de niveau de développement différent. Le diplomate indique également que son pays oriente sa coopération avec les pays africains vers des capacités d'auto développement. Le Cameroun a eu l'honneur de recevoir les premiers ministres Li Peng et Zhu Rongji, respectivement en 1997 et 2002, le Président Hu Jintao en 2007 et le vice-Premier Hui Liangyu en 2011.

Le pragmatisme et la non-ingérence constituent les fils conducteurs de la politique chinoise. La Chine ne souhaite pas se mêler dans les affaires intérieures des Etats africains. La Chine ne présente pas d'exigences politiques particulières, à la différence des Etats-Unis et de la France ou de la politique de conditionnalité des grands bailleurs de fonds comme le FMI et la Banque Mondiale, et permet aux pays africains de garder pleinement leur souveraineté. La Chine ne propose pas le déploiement de soldats sur le sol africain, sauf dans le cadre des opérations de maintien de la paix comme au Libéria en 2005, et s'abstient de donner toute leçon de démocratie à l'égard de ces gouvernements. La Chine fait des dons, se montre prête à annuler les dettes et réalise des grands projets sur le Continent. L'on peut citer la construction d'un réseau téléphonique en Ethiopie, d'un terminal aéroportuaire en Algérie, du barrage de Méroé au Soudan, du barrage hydro-électrique d'Imbouli sur le fleuve Congo au Congo Brazzaville, des Palais de Congrès et de Sports de Yaoundé, du barrage de Lagdo au Nord Cameroun, du Palais de la Culture à Abidjan, du bâtiment de l'Assemblée nationale à Libreville ou encore de l'Hôpital Gynéco-Obstétrique et Pédiatrique de Yaoundé.

Les Chinois ont lancé une véritable opération de charme vers l'Afrique en profitant à la fois de la perte d'influence occidentale et de la crise que traversent les institutions chargées de l'aide au développement. En 2007, par exemple, Pékin a investi plus de 9 milliards de dollars en Afrique alors que la Banque Mondiale s'est révélée incapable d'y injecter plus de 2,5 milliards de dollars. L'organisation internationale basée à Washington tente désormais de convaincre la Chine de devenir son partenaire pour le financement des projets africains.

Selon le Document sur la politique africaine de la Chine, publié en 2006, le gouvernement chinois part du principe d'une relation de partenariat gagnant-gagnant, qui consiste à « entretenir une amitié sincère, assurer les avantages mutuels sur un pied d'égalité, coopérer dans la solidarité et œuvrer à un développement partagé ». L'ambassadeur de Zambie en Chine, David Clifford Saviye⁵⁹ a relevé dans une interview que « l'économie chinoise est en redressement, tandis que le développement constitue un problème urgent pour l'Afrique. Nous pouvons utiliser les capitaux chinois pour développer notre économie. Ce serait une situation d'avantages réciproques ». Dans le même ordre d'idée, le ministre kényan des affaires étrangères, Moses Wetengula⁶⁰, a déclaré dans une autre interview que la coopération entre la Chine et l'Afrique était favorable au développement économique des pays de ce continent. Pour le Chef de l'Etat camerounais, Paul Biya, le partenariat avec la Chine donne satisfaction⁶¹.

L'enjeu commercial⁶² dans la reconquête du continent africain par la Chine est au centre de la problématique du décollage économique de bon nombre des pays du continent. La forte croissance économique de la Chine semble bénéfique pour les pays africains qui ont trouvé un nouveau débouché pour leur commerce extérieur, bénéficiant surtout de la hausse sensible du cours des matières premières. En effet, l'irruption de la Chine sur le marché des minerais et des hydrocarbures est venue le rendre plus compétitif. Alors que les producteurs, faute d'alternative étaient auparavant obligés de vendre leur production aux prix fixés par les acheteurs animés par l'esprit monopolistique et du profit maximum, la diversification des clients et les exportations massives vers la Chine ont permis de faire grimper les prix au grand bonheur des pays africains producteurs qui peuvent désormais céder leur production à un juste prix. Les investissements directs de la Chine en Afrique sont ainsi passés de 490 millions de dollars en 2003 à 9,33 milliards de dollars en 2009. Les échanges entre la Chine et l'Afrique relatifs aux importations et aux exportations ont eux cumulé à 129 milliards de dollars en 2010, soit dix fois plus qu'en 2000. La Chine est par conséquent devenue le premier partenaire commercial de l'Afrique dans le cadre d'une coopération fructueuse qui prend en compte les intérêts de toutes les parties.

Les raisons de cette recrudescence des échanges entre ce géant d'Asie et l'Afrique trouvent leur fondement dans le Forum sur la coopération Chine-Afrique organisé par l'Empire du Milieu en 2000. Face aux critiques de l'Occident concernant l'augmentation vertigineuse des investissements de la Chine en Afrique, le secrétaire général de cet organisme qui est également le directeur général du département Afrique au ministère chinois des affaires étrangères souligne que « la Chine, pays en développement, est mieux placée que les pays déjà développés pour comprendre les besoins et les mentalités des pays du Sud »⁶³. C'est dire que la Chine qui est déjà un partenaire majeur pour l'Afrique, pourrait à terme devenir un partenaire stratégique dans la marche de l'Afrique vers l'émergence. Il devient ainsi difficile de ne pas voir dans la politique chinoise de réforme et d'ouverture sur l'extérieur un modèle de réussite dont devrait avantageusement s'inspirer les économies africaines.

B. Le nécessaire arrimage de l'Afrique au modèle de développement chinois dans une perspective d'adaptation.

C'est peut être une évidence de dire que la Chine a su forcer l'admiration de tous en se hissant, en un temps record, grâce au génie et l'ardeur au travail du peuple chinois, au rang des premières puissances économiques mondiales. Par ses progrès fulgurants et son développement prodigieux, la Chine peut faire naître l'espoir là où l'afropessimisme du dehors et du dedans semble prévaloir. Selon Kofi Annan⁶⁴, « l'Afrique, qui compte pour un quart des Etats du monde et un milliard d'habitants, est un géant endormi, sur le point de se réveiller ».

L'Afrique⁶⁵ a-t-elle l'ambition de transformer ses rêves⁶⁶ d'aujourd'hui en réalités de demain ? Cette question, qui interpelle les dirigeants africains, apostrophe davantage les peuples africains eux-mêmes et leurs élites. Les élites, loin de se transformer en force de destruction massive, doivent animer les vrais débats, éclairer les peuples sur les vrais enjeux et proposer les voies qui permettront au rêve de devenir réalité. C'est dire que l'Afrique doit s'organiser pour s'intégrer dans le mouvement de la mondialisation et non laisser celle-ci venir vers elle comme un village rattrapé par la ville. En d'autres termes, les gouvernements du continent doivent adopter une ou des stratégies⁶⁷ d'avenir qui permettent aux Africains de décider et d'influencer ensemble l'évolution à venir du monde au lieu de continuer de subir des évolutions décidées par d'autres suivant leurs intérêts.

L'expérience concluante de la Chine comme bien d'autres pays émergents devrait inspirer les peuples africains. A ce sujet, le Chef de l'Etat camerounais note que « les prouesses de la Chine montrent bien que la pauvreté et le sous-développement ne sont pas une fatalité, et donc, que l'Afrique, elle aussi, peut un jour se réveiller. Ce n'est pas une vue de l'esprit. A condition bien sûr que, comme la Chine, [l'Afrique en paie] le prix par l'effort, le travail et la détermination »⁶⁸. En effet, face à la mondialisation néolibérale qui a bouleversé les données anciennes des relations entre les nations, remettant en cause, par le fait même, certains acquis, la problématique de la place et du rôle de l'Afrique dans le monde doit demeurer pour tous les Africains une source permanente de préoccupations. Elle implique une « reconversion des mentalités »⁶⁹, voire « une décolonisation du corps politique et de l'esprit »⁷⁰. Cette problématique met la liberté de l'Afrique en relation avec une capacité africaine d'auto-pacification⁷¹, d'auto-développement et sa participation au développement et à la pacification du monde⁷².

L'idée de l'arrimage de l'Afrique au modèle chinois de développement grâce à son génie multidimensionnel qu'il importe d'exhumer de l'inconscient collectif tout en le connectant aux impératifs de l'Afrique nouvelle est une des pistes dont l'exploration peut déboucher sur des perspectives porteuses, tant pour l'Afrique que pour ses partenaires, dans un processus de développement interdépendant. S'arrimer, c'est non seulement reprendre sa place dans le système-monde d'une manière générale, mais c'est aussi combler le fossé, rattraper le train de la modernité sociopolitique, économique et culturelle et, par là même, atténuer une pauvreté par trop

préjudiciable pour les africains (Conférence Internationale de Yaoundé, Africa 21, 2010).

La plupart des analyses géostratégiques parviennent à la conclusion que l'Afrique recèle de nombreux atouts, notamment du fait de ses ressources naturelles et de sa population particulièrement jeune, dans un contexte de vieillissement accéléré dans les pays du Nord. Seulement, dans certains cas, ces atouts se retournent contre elle et se transforment en contraintes, voire en cauchemar permanent. C'est ainsi que plusieurs pays africains sont victimes du « dutch disease », à savoir une incapacité manifeste à utiliser à bon escient leurs ressources naturelles (agricoles, forestières, halieutiques, minières entre autres). C'est « le paradoxe de l'abondance »⁷³ qui consiste à avoir des populations pauvres vivant dans des pays qui regorgent pourtant d'importantes richesses naturelles (CODESRIA, 2011). En effet, la globalisation a induit de nouveaux défis à la gouvernance des ressources naturelles dans les pays qui n'ont pas d'institutions qui encouragent la transparence politique, l'efficacité de l'Etat⁷⁴, la gestion axée sur les résultats ou l'obligation de rendre compte.

Les Chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement, les responsables d'organisations internationales, les experts, les dirigeants d'entreprises et les représentants de la société civile, africains et non africains, qui ont participé, les 18 et 19 mai 2010, à la Conférence internationale de Yaoundé Africa21⁷⁵ sur les nouveaux défis pour l'Afrique ont déclaré d'un commun accord : - leur conviction que le 21^{ème} siècle marque déjà le retour de l'Afrique à une plus forte croissance, à une limitation de son endettement et à une plus grande audience dans la communauté internationale - leur foi dans les capacités de l'Afrique à générer innovation et progrès en s'appuyant sur ses valeurs humaines, la force de sa jeunesse à qui incombe la réalisation des promesses de la renaissance de l'Afrique, la richesse de son environnement et l'abondance des ressources de son sol et de son sous-sol - leur refus d'une Afrique marginalisée et sous-représentée dans les instances internationales. Ils ont en outre estimé : - que le réveil africain en cours doit s'appuyer notamment sur le développement de l'agriculture vivrière. L'Afrique ne doit plus importer pour manger, elle doit, si nécessaire, protéger temporairement son agriculture - que la crise financière mondiale récente doit amener l'Afrique à en tirer toutes les leçons, à lutter contre les dérives spéculatives, à combattre l'existence de produits dérivés coupés des transactions réelles, notamment dans le domaine alimentaire, et à prévoir la réparation des préjudices - que le développement des partenariats public/privé et des échanges entre pays émergents sont de nature à améliorer la croissance et l'emploi - que la conduite de politiques de progrès ne peut se concevoir que dans un climat de paix et de sécurité. Des facteurs tels que l'urbanisation non maîtrisée, l'expansion des risques sanitaires, la perte des valeurs culturelles, appellent en tout premier lieu la nécessité d'une gouvernance publique transparente et rigoureuse.

En effet, une gouvernance publique transparente et rigoureuse implique une croisade contre la corruption, véritable fléau social dégradant, appauvrissant l'être humain spirituellement, intellectuellement, moralement, matériellement, financièrement, en un mot, enlevant tout son sens et son essence à la dignité humaine. Mettre l'éthique au cœur de l'action publique peut constituer un remède efficace permettant, à défaut de l'éradiquer

parce que participant de la nature profonde des êtres humains avec des degrés divers, tout au moins, d'atténuer, de réduire l'ampleur de ce mal et en arriver à le cantonner à des manifestations minimales. Il s'agit à la vérité de :

- l'éthique personnelle, chacun face à sa conscience, à ses convictions religieuses, spirituelles et morales doit connaître la ligne rouge à ne jamais franchir
- l'éthique professionnelle qui trace les limites entre un comportement licite et illicite pour toute profession
- et l'éthique sociale, c'est-à-dire ce que la société, dans son ensemble, admet comme normal ou anormal et qui participe donc de la culture du bien public dans une société donnée, à un moment donné du développement historique de celle-ci⁶.

Convoitée par l'Asie et par l'Occident, l'Afrique dispose de tous les moyens pour devenir un pôle de développement dans le monde. La trajectoire qui consiste à renforcer les relations avec la Chine, nous semble pertinente. Et s'il est vrai que la Chine n'investit pas en Afrique pour faire plaisir aux Africains, il n'en demeure pas moins vrai que ce géant d'Asie réalise des projets adossés aux besoins infrastructurels du continent. La Chine a certes des intérêts en Afrique. Mais elle voudrait laisser dans l'histoire l'image d'un pays qui n'a jamais colonisé. Il faut néanmoins que le regard des Africains soit flexible, dirigé à la fois vers l'Occident et vers l'Asie. Cela se comprend étant donné que l'opposition structurelle de la Chine à la domination de l'Occident n'est pas active. Elle est passive dans la mesure où la Chine n'a pas les moyens militaires pour s'opposer à l'Occident conquérant. Elle n'a pas pu empêcher les frappes aériennes de l'Organisation du Traité de l'Atlantique Nord (OTAN) qui ont contribué à la chute du régime du Colonel Mouammar Kadhafi en Lybie en août 2011. C'est dire qu'il serait difficile pour les Africains de reprendre, par rapport à la médiatisation de la peur de la Chine par l'Occident, le titre « *On vous connaît* », une inspiration de la diva gabonaise, Patience Dabany, qui qualifie certains hommes politiques « des menteurs, des "kongosseurs", et des voleurs »⁷. Ce dont on aurait le plus peur, c'est qu'en l'absence d'une véritable « circulation des élites » ou de l'alternance au pouvoir, qui est à la démocratie ce que l'oxygène est aux poumons, l'on risque de voir davantage la communauté internationale au chevet des pays rendus malades par certains hommes politiques et par ladite communauté internationale. Celle-ci souhaiterait gagner des contrats de travail, sous forme de partage de butin de guerre, pour la reconstruction de ces pays qui auraient subi ses bombardements parfois à tort et à travers dans le cadre, officiellement déclaré, de la « protection des populations civiles » ou de « l'instauration de la démocratie », et dans une dynamique de domination néocoloniale.

Conclusion

Nous pouvons tenir pour acquis, en guise de conclusion, les points essentiels suivants :

- a. La peur de la Chine doit être lue comme une configuration mouvante dont les traductions varient en fonction des pays et des régions. Cette approche permet d'appréhender les vécus différenciés de la peur et d'échapper au nominalisme. C'est dire que la peur de la Chine ne renvoie pas au même ordre de réalité suivant qu'on est dans une économie industrialisée ou alors dans une économie sous-développée. La contextualisation apparaît dans le cas d'espèce un facteur de fécondité heuristique. Il convient, toutefois, d'éviter de tomber dans ce que Luc Sindjoun⁷⁸ qualifie de relativisme absolu, étant donné qu'il serait peut être imprudent et même prématuré de conjurer la peur de la Chine dans un monde encore dominé par le « paradigme du complexe et de l'incertain ».
- b. La peur de la Chine doit être appréhendée de manière dynamique en rompant avec la perception en termes de pathologie, de déséquilibres économiques. Il s'agit de sortir de la tradition alarmiste du discours de la peur sur la Chine au profit d'une approche réaliste qui appréhende ce qui se joue dans la méfiance à l'égard de ce pays en termes de transformations des rapports économiques à l'échelle mondiale. La peur apparaît ici comme un concept analytique et comme une stratégie. Il faudrait donc voir dans la montée en puissance de la Chine face à une économie européenne, qui danserait au bord du précipice⁷⁹, une chance formidable de refonder la relation Afrique – Occident à travers la modification des accords économiques.
- c. La peur de la Chine pour aussi réelle qu'elle soit en ce sens qu'elle va de pair avec une conjoncture économique particulière ne devrait pas être dominée par l'illusion du « jamais vu », par la célébration ou le vomissement de ce qui serait un moment de renversement des rapports de force. Elle doit être perçue comme un processus obéissant au temps long d'accumulation des contradictions du capitalisme. La peur de la Chine est la conséquence de la dénaturation du capitalisme, de la perte des valeurs et des repères qui l'ont toujours fondé. En dérégulant à l'excès, les Etats capitalistes ont laissé s'installer les dumpings monétaires, fiscaux, sociaux et les concurrences déloyales. Il importe, dès lors, de renouer avec une approche empirique, en rupture avec les constructions idéologiques en vogue.
- d. Notre ère multi-centrée est traversée par un certain nombre de questions⁸⁰ : - Comment remettre l'économie au service de l'homme ? - Comment faire en sorte que l'économie n'apparaisse plus comme une fin en soi mais comme un moyen ? - Comment aller vers une

mondialisation où chacun en se développant contribuerait au développement des autres ? – Comment bâtir une mondialisation plus coopérative et moins conflictuelle ?

Notre thèse est que la place qu'occupe la Chine dans la reconfiguration géopolitique de l'Afrique, qui engendre, dans une large mesure, un conflit d'intérêts avec les anciennes puissances occidentales, est une chance pour les économies africaines, notamment si les gouvernements assument leurs propres responsabilités financières en améliorant la façon de percevoir les impôts, l'environnement des affaires, la qualité de la dépense publique et en mettant un terme à la fuite illégale des fonds vers l'étranger ou encore en exigeant le transfert de technologie de la part des partenaires chinois. Cela se comprend, étant donné que toutes les faiblesses de l'Afrique peuvent être corrigées par les atouts de l'Afrique qui a retrouvé son statut d'enjeu/objet stratégique dans le nouvel ordre politico-économique global.

Références

1. Capacité de se trouver au même moment en plusieurs lieux, l'aptitude à être partout à la fois, don d'ubiquité.
2. DURKHEIM, Emile, *Les règles de la méthode sociologique*, Paris, PUF, 2007.
3. Selon Dani W. NABUDERE, la leçon méthodologique que l'on peut tirer de l'apport d'Archie Mafeje aux Sciences sociales en Afrique, c'est que les connaissances ethnographiques détaillées nous aident à éviter les interprétations mécanistes. Loin d'ouvrir la voie au relativisme ou au particularisme, elles nous permettent de décoder ce qui pourrait nous frapper à première vue comme étant des choses si différentes et nous mettent ainsi dans une position où nous pouvons découvrir les unions cachées (NABUDERE, Dani W., « Archie Mafeje et les Sciences sociales en Afrique », *Bulletin du CODESRIA*, N° 3 & 4, 2008, p. 8). Il peut arriver que l'Afrique ait beaucoup plus peur de l'Occident que de la Chine, ou que la « haine de l'Occident » soit transformée subtilement en peur de la Chine.
4. MORGENTHAU, Hans J. (revised by Kenneth THOMPSON), *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, Sixth Edition, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1985.
5. Qui a rapport à l'eschatologie, c'est-à-dire l'ensemble des doctrines relatives aux fins dernières de l'Homme et de l'Univers.
6. BADIE, Bertrand, *La fin des territoires : essai sur le désordre international et sur l'utilité sociale du respect*, Paris, Fayard, 1995.
7. SINDJOUN, Luc, *Sociologie des relations internationales africaines*, Paris, KARTHALA, 2002, p.143.
8. Les Etats Unis avaient 14 294 milliards de dollar de dette publique au mois de juillet 2011 causée principalement par les cadeaux fiscaux accordés aux plus riches, tandis que la Chine présentait un excédent commercial de 11.7 milliards de dollar pour la même période.
9. Les réserves financières de la Chine dépasseraient 1 500 milliards de dollars, et Pékin joue de cette puissance financière pour séduire, contrôler.
10. L'Afrique doit s'organiser pour s'imposer comme un véritable acteur du jeu international et non comme un champ de confrontation des intérêts des grandes puissances, ou le théâtre de la compétition entre l'Asie à travers, principalement, la Chine et l'Occident.
11. L'on peut noter, à la suite de Louis MICHEL, alors Commissaire européen au développement et l'aide humanitaire, qu' « il ne s'agit plus aujourd'hui, de considérer l'Afrique avant tout comme un "bénéficiaire" ou "un continent en développement" voire "sous-développé", mais bien comme un partenaire à part entière, un nouvel acteur du système multipolaire mondial, doté des attributs de la puissance politique, économique et stratégique, et capable de relations normales avec d'autres pôles mondiaux » (Conférence publique sur la stratégie Afrique prononcée à Berlin le 28 novembre 2006).

12. *La voie de développement pacifique de la Chine*, Livre blanc du gouvernement chinois, décembre 2005. La pierre angulaire de la nouvelle diplomatie chinoise en Afrique apparaît comme une réactivation des cinq principes régissant la politique étrangère de la Chine énoncée pour la première fois en 1953 par Chou En-Lai : - respect mutuel de la souveraineté et de l'intégrité territoriale – non-agression mutuelle – non-ingérence dans les affaires intérieures – égalité et bénéfices réciproques – coexistence pacifique.
13. CISSE, Mbaye, L'affirmation d'une stratégie de puissance: la politique africaine de la Chine, Mémoire présenté dans le cadre du séminaire géopolitique de l'Afrique du Collège Interarmées de Défense (CID) de Paris et du Master Recherche en Relations Internationales à l'Université de Paris II-Panthéon Assas, 2006.
14. CISSE, Mbaye., op. cit..
15. BELKACEM, Karima & OULED BEN HATSIA, Lotfi, *L'avenir du partenariat Chine-Afrique*, Paris, L'Harmattan, Collection Etudes africaines, 2011.
16. SINDJOUN, Luc (ed.), *The Coming African Hour: Dialectics of Opportunities and Constraints*, Africa Institute of South Africa, 2010.
17. MVIE MEKA, Elie, *Architecture de la sécurité et gouvernance démocratique dans la CEEAC*, Yaoundé, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), 2007, p.22.
18. ONUF, Nicholas G., *World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations*, Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1989. Pour cet auteur, le constructivisme fait des Relations internationales un monde pleinement vivant, avec ses contingences, un monde créé par les hommes pour leur propre réalisation.
19. ARON, Raymond, *Paix et guerre entre les nations*, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1984 (1ère édition 1962).
20. Il s'agit notamment de la : - solidarité dans le combat contre la pauvreté et la précarité – solidarité face aux nouvelles contraintes écologiques – solidarité face aux menaces qui pèsent sur la paix – solidarité face à la menace terroriste plus particulièrement.
21. MCDONALD, Matt, « Securitization and the Construction of Security », *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 14 (4), 2008, pp. 563-587.
22. WALTZ, Kenneth N, *Theory of International Politics*, New York, Random House, 1979.
23. AMIN, Samir , *Obsolescent Capitalism. Contemporary Politics and Global Disorder*, London, New York, Zed Books, 2003.
24. WENDT, Alexander, « Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics », *International Organization*, Vol. 46 (2), 1992, pp.391-425. Selon cet auteur, «l'anarchie est ce que les Etats en font». Cette formule présente l'anarchie du système international comme une construction des acteurs qui s'y trouvent.
25. Voir URL : <http://www.oboulo.com/summary>, « Faut-il avoir peur de la Chine ? », consulté le 05 mai 2011.
26. «Chine.» Microsoft® Encarta® 2009
27. BARDHAN, Pranab, *Awakening Giants, Feet of Clay: Assessing the Economic Rise of China and India*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2010. Il y a lieu de souligner que l'année 2003 est marquée par la visite officielle d'Atal Bihari Vajpayee, la première visite en Chine d'un Premier ministre indien depuis dix ans. Cette visite marque un tournant dans les relations entre les deux puissances asiatiques, altérées par le conflit territorial qui les oppose depuis la guerre sino-indienne de 1962, et ouvre la voie à leur rapprochement économique. Dans une déclaration sur les principes régissant leurs relations bilatérales et la coopération, l'Inde reconnaît la souveraineté de la Chine sur la région autonome du Tibet, tandis que la Chine accepte l'appartenance du Sikkim à l'Inde
28. JEAN MANDELBAUM, Daniel Haber, *La victoire de la Chine : l'Occident piégé par la mondialisation*, Paris, Descartes & Cie, 2001.
29. HALPER, Stefan, *The Beijing Consensus: How China's Authoritarian Model Will Dominate the Twenty-First Century*, New York, Basic Books, 2010. Selon cet auteur, la légitimité du Parti communiste chinois réside dans son habilité à favoriser la croissance économique. Les responsables du Parti auraient remplacé Karl Marx par une version mutante d'Adam Smith que l'auteur appelle « capitalisme d'Etat ». Ils auraient fait un deal avec le peuple : nous ferons marcher l'économie, nous vous procurons des emplois, de l'argent, et l'accès aux produits de consommation dont pourraient rêver vos parents et grands parents et en retour vous ne nous poserez pas de questions sur notre façon de gouverner.
30. CALHOUN, Craig, *Neither Gods nor Emperors: Students and the Struggle for Democracy in China*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1994. L'auteur fait une analyse pointue du mouvement étudiant pro démocratique de la place Tiananmen de juin 1989.
31. WENPING, He, directrice adjointe du département relations internationales de l'Institut des études africaines de la Faculté des sciences sociales de Pékin, cité par Jean-Christophe SERVANT, « La Chine à l'assaut du marché africain », *Le Monde Diplomatique*, mai 2005.
32. LAURENT, Eric, « La Chine à l'assaut de l'Afrique », *Le Monde*, avril 2008

33. La Chine est accusée par les puissances occidentales et les organisations non gouvernementales de soutenir indirectement la campagne électorale de certains Présidents en fonction, par le financement de nombreux matériels de campagne des partis au pouvoir.
34. CISSE, Mbaye, op.cit.
35. GONIDEC, Pierre François, « Contribution au débat sur la recolonisation de l'Afrique », Bulletin du CODESRIA, N° 2, 1996, p. 12. Selon cet auteur, la démocratie ne peut être arbitrairement réduite à ses seuls aspects juridico-politiques, trop facilement empruntés à des systèmes étrangers. Il reste à inventer la démocratie économique, sociale et culturelle, ce qui impose une réflexion approfondie afin de définir les rôles respectifs de l'appareil d'Etat et des organisations diverses représentatives de la société civile qui a fait irruption en Afrique. Voir également à ce sujet, ONANA, Janvier, «Contre l'Etat, l'ONG ou la figure vertueuse de la société civile ? Sur le désenchantement de l'Etat contemporain en Afrique subsaharienne », *JANUS, Revue Camerounaise de Droit et de Science Politique*, 2e Année, N° 2, janvier 2007, pp. 16-17.
36. CHOUALA, Yves Alexandre, « L'Afrique dans le nouveau partenariat international : enjeux de civilisation et de puissance », *Revue Etudes Internationales*, Vol. XXXIV (1), mars 2003.
37. CHUNG-LIAN, Jiang, « Le pétrole, nouvelle dimension des relations sino-africaines », *Géopolitique Africaine*, N° 14, printemps 2004.
38. La croissance et même la survie économique de la Chine dépendent, paradoxalement et pour une part croissante, du continent le moins développé, l'Afrique. Pékin absorbe désormais 25 % de tout le cuivre consommé à travers le monde, 40 % du charbon, 35 % de l'acier, 10 % du pétrole et sa demande ne cesse de croître, et 90 % de tout l'aluminium. Une économie dévoreuse d'énergie, boulimique en matières premières qui s'est tout naturellement tournée vers la région qui en est le mieux pourvu (Voir LAURENT, Eric, op. cit.).
39. LAFARGUE, François, « La Chine, une puissance africaine », *Perspectives Chinoises*, 2005, mis en ligne le 27 février 2007, consulté le 25 mai 2011. URL : <http://perspectiveschinoises.revues.org/900>.
40. Extrait du discours de Bruno Gain lors de la signature, le 13 janvier 2011, du document cadre du Contrat désendettement développement (C2D) de deuxième génération.
41. L'exploitation des matières premières soulève, en effet, six types de problèmes: - la spécialisation dans la production de matière première peut amener à la désindustrialisation des pays producteurs (syndrome hollandais) - les revenus ne profitent pas à l'ensemble de la population, mais à une «kleptocratie» - la dépendance à un client de poids constitue un danger pour les producteurs de matières premières - l'exploitation des matières premières contribue à l'appréciation des devises des pays producteurs, dont les autres exportations deviennent moins compétitives - la spécialisation dans l'exploitation de matières premières détourne une partie de l'économie de l'agriculture, ce qui peut renforcer la dépendance alimentaire - l'exploitation de matières premières ne favorise pas à elle seule la création d'industries de transformation pour en faire des produits de plus haute valeur ajoutée (voir NGUYEN, Eric, *Les relations Chine-Afrique*, Levallois-Perret, Studyrama, 2009).
42. En 2008, plus de 800 000 Chinois travaillaient en Afrique pour plus de 900 entreprises de toutes tailles. Ils extraient le cuivre et le cobalt en Zambie et au Congo, le platine et le chrome au Zimbabwe ; ils achètent d'énormes quantités de bois au Gabon, au Cameroun, au Mozambique, en Guinée équatoriale et au Libéria, ainsi que l'acier, l'or, le charbon, le nickel dans tous les pays de cette zone qui en détiennent ou en produisent (voir LAURENT, Eric, op. cit.). Les Chinois installent, par ailleurs, leurs entreprises sur le sol africain, et bénéficient de ce fait des avantages réservés aux exportations africaines dans le cadre de l'African Growth Opportunity Act (AGOA) avec les États-Unis et des Accords de partenariat économique entre les pays de l'Afrique, des Caraïbes et du Pacifique (ACP-UE).
43. Les tongs sont des chaussures de plage dotée d'une semelle en plastique ou en caoutchouc et d'une lanière en V qui isole le gros orteil des autres doigts.
44. CHERU, Fantu & OBI, Cyril (eds.), *The Rise of China and India in Africa: Challenges, Opportunities and Critical Interventions*, London, Zed Books, 2010.
45. Dans le domaine du textile par exemple, l'industrie sud-africaine a été ébranlée par les produits chinois au point que les entrepreneurs locaux ont réclamé des mesures de protection pour faire face aux pratiques de dumping chinois. Outre le démantèlement du tissu industriel embryonnaire sur le continent, les exportations chinoises de produits manufacturés en Afrique étoufferaient les Petites et Moyennes Entreprises (PME) ainsi que de large secteur de l'économie informelle (une situation pouvant engendrer le chômage et les tensions sociales). Au Sénégal, l'Union Nationale des Commerçants et Industriels (UNACOIS) a manifesté à plusieurs reprises en 2004 et 2005, pour dénoncer la concurrence déloyale chinoise. Le Groupement Inter-patronal du Cameroun(GICAM) a émis des réserves sur la qualité de certains produits manufacturés chinois que certaines personnes qualifient de « chinoiseries » sans remettre en cause la solidité et l'allure futuriste des ouvrages réalisés par la Chine au Cameroun . Les mêmes récriminations sont perceptibles en Guinée Equatoriale, au Zimbabwe et en Zambie où le sujet a occupé une partie du débat lors de l'élection présidentielle, amenant même certains candidats à promettre l'expulsion pure et simple des hommes d'affaires chinois du pays (Voir CISSE, Mbaye, op. cit.).
46. NIQUET, Valérie, « La stratégie africaine de la Chine », *Politique Etrangère*, février 2006.

47. La menace d'invasion qui plane sur les terres du continent aurait été prévisible, suivant le schéma tracé par les plans d'ajustement structurel imposés par la Banque mondiale. «On a interdit aux Etats d'investir dans les secteurs productifs, et donc dans l'agriculture. Avec cette option, les Etats ont abandonné d'immenses étendues de terres qui auraient pu servir au développement agricole, à asseoir la souveraineté et la sécurité alimentaires des pays, et participer à la rentabilité de nos terres», explique Kolyang Palebele, président d'une ONG paysanne tchadienne. D'après lui, «si les Etats n'avaient pas accepté cette situation, on en serait pas là. Ces investissements constituent d'énormes menaces pour nos enfants qui, à terme, n'auront plus où construire ou encore où cultiver». Si les firmes occidentales et chinoises exhibent des aspects positifs tels que la création d'emplois, le transfert de technologie ou encore la réalisation d'infrastructures, il y a cependant des points qui impactent négativement la vie des populations. Par ailleurs, si la menace extérieure est la plus visible, il en existe cependant une autre, plus violente, à l'intérieur des pays et qui vient des élites. «On a des villages qui sont devenus la propriété des individus, qui achètent à tour de bras des milliers d'hectares de terres dans les campagnes», indique un observateur. Un phénomène qui a été créé, au Zimbabwe et en Afrique du Sud, le courroux des populations noires privées de terres arables (que l'on peut labourer), pendant que 90% des surfaces cultivables étaient aux mains de fermiers Blancs (ces observations sont reprises dans l'enquête du journal *Mutations*, édition du 07 octobre 2010, URL : <http://www.quotidienmutations.info/enquête>, consulté le 20 août 2011).
48. Pour le sénateur gabonais Ernest Ndassikoula, l'invasion des terres du continent est liée au contexte actuel : «L'Afrique devient un pôle d'attraction important à travers ses potentialités économiques. Parmi celles-ci, la terre représente un intérêt vital et elle suscite donc, de façon légitime auprès des investisseurs, un engouement». Selon André Marie Afouba, président du Centre d'Accompagnement des Nouvelles Alternatives de Développement Local (Canadel), une ONG basée à Yaoundé au Cameroun, «il y a une menace forte sur les terres du continent. Il faut savoir que la terre est le principal facteur de production en Afrique ; c'est aussi un facteur de conflits venant de l'extérieur et de l'intérieur, notamment entre élites et paysans. Il y a une question de gouvernance de la terre qui demande qu'on assure la protection des faibles contre les plus forts, qui accaparent toutes les terres. Il faut donc conjurer cette menace qui vient et qui risque d'ébranler la stabilité de nos Etats». «Les investisseurs étrangers profitent pour accaparer nos terres au moment où les accords de partenariat économique (Acp-Ue) sont en négociation, souligne Césaire Kantarama, responsable de la fédération des agriculteurs d'Afrique de l'Est. Même si un Africain a beaucoup d'argent, il ne peut pas acheter de terres [hors du continent]» (ces observations sont reprises dans l'enquête du journal *Mutations*, édition du 07 octobre 2010, URL : <http://www.quotidienmutations.info/enquête>, consulté le 20 août 2011).
49. MAFEJE, Archie, *The Agrarian Question, Access to Land and Peasant Responses in Sub Saharan Africa*, UNRISD papers, 2004.
50. MAZRUI, Ali A., « Débat sur Archie Mafeje et Wole Soyinka: l'Afrique peut-elle s'auto-coloniser? », *Bulletin du CODESRIA*, Nos 3 & 4, 2008, pp 11-12.
51. ALDEN, Chris, « Leveraging the Dragon : Towards "An Africa That Can Say No" », URL: <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/display/article/eAfrica>, March 1, 2005, consulté le 30 mai 2011
52. CISSE, Mbaye, op. cit.
53. Réunion qui s'est tenue du 18 au 24 avril 1955, à Bandung, sur l'île de Java en Indonésie, réunissant vingt-trois pays d'Afrique et six pays d'Asie, et qui a été à l'origine de la création du mouvement des pays non-alignés (voir Jean LACOUTURE, « Bandung ou la fin de l'ère coloniale », *Le Monde diplomatique*, mars 2005).
54. LAFARGUE, François, « La Chine, une puissance africaine », op. cit.
55. BIGO, Didier, « Les conflits post-bipolaires : dynamiques et caractéristiques », *Cultures & Conflits*, N° 8, 1993, pp. 3-14.
56. Voir l'allocution du Président Paul Biya à l'occasion de sa rencontre avec les membres du corps diplomatique africain à Beijing le 21 juillet 2011.
57. Voir AICARDI DE SAINT-PAUL, Marc, « La Chine et l'Afrique, entre engagement et intérêt », *Géopolitique Africaine*, n° 14, 2004.
58. Lire l'interview de Xue Jinwei dans *Cameroon Tribune*, N°9763/6564 du 12 janvier, 2011, p.9.
59. Cité par Etienne de TAYO, « Qui a peur de la Chine », mis en ligne en 2007, URL : <http://www.africamaat.com/article>, consulté le 15 mai 2011.
60. Cité par Etienne de TAYO, « Qui a peur de la Chine », op.cit.
61. Toast du Président Paul Biya du 14 janvier 2011, à l'occasion du déjeuner offert en l'honneur de S.E.M. Hui Liangyu, vice-Premier ministre de la République populaire de Chine.
62. Le commerce sino-africain a connu un progrès spectaculaire ces dernières années, passant de 10 milliards de dollars US en 2000 à plus de 20 milliards de dollars, et a atteint un niveau record de 37 milliards de dollars en 2005 et 129 milliards en 2010.
63. Voir *L'Action* N° 773 du 20 juillet 2011, p.2.
64. Voir le discours de KOFI ANNAN prononcé le 19 mai 2010 lors de la Conférence Internationale de Yaoundé, Africa 21.

65. Bien qu'auréolée de son statut de berceau de l'humanité (l'homo sapiens vit le jour en Afrique, dans la vallée de l'Omo, au sud de l'Éthiopie, il y a 4 millions d'années), l'Afrique aura une trajectoire des plus erratiques voire instables. Après une histoire tourmentée, marquée par la traite, l'esclavage et la colonisation, le continent a amorcé, il y a plus d'un demi-siècle, un tournant symbolisé par l'accession à la souveraineté internationale de plusieurs territoires. La prise en main de leur destin par ces jeunes États africains à l'occasion des indépendances, parfois mouvementées, était alors porteuse d'une espérance forte pour la mise en œuvre du chantier de l'accomplissement individuel et collectif des populations. Outre qu'il devait faire éclore la liberté, le «soleil fécondant et revigorant des indépendances» était supposé enclencher un processus de développement irréversible, fondé sur la valorisation des nombreux atouts du continent. Ce futur passe nécessairement par un arrimage réussi de l'Afrique au Monde globalisé (voir Georges CHAFFARD, *Les carnets secrets de la décolonisation*, Tome II, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1967 ; Yves BÉNOT, *Idéologies des indépendances africaines*, Paris, Maspero, 1969 ; Alain de BENOIST, *L'Histoire générale de l'Afrique*, Tome III, 1970 ; Ahmadou KOUROUMA, *Les soleils des indépendances*, Paris, Seuil, 1995 (1970) ; Engelbert MVENG, *Histoire du Cameroun*, Tome 1 & 2, Yaoundé, CEPER, 1984 et 1985) ; Lansiné KABA, *Le "non" de la Guinée à De Gaulle*, Paris, Editions CHAKA, 1990
66. Dans la vie, chacun d'entre nous a ses rêves, les uns les plus fous que les autres. Rêve de construire une belle maison, rêve de voir ses enfants réussir leurs études et trouver chacun sa voie dans la vie, rêve de réaliser un investissement. Nous rêvons également collectivement que nos villes deviennent plus belles, que des boulevards et des échangeurs facilitent la circulation, que notre pays soit traversé par des autoroutes, que des gratte-ciels poussent ici et là, que nos Universités soient aussi célèbres que Harvard, Oxford, Massachusetts Institut of Technologies ou Polytechnique, que nos aéroports ne laissent pas le temps aux chèvres de brouter de l'herbe et de se reposer tranquillement sur la piste d'atterrissage ou l'aire de stationnement des avions (voir l'article de *Cameroon Tribune* N°9893/6094 du 26 juillet 2011, p.5).
67. Voir dans cet ordre d'idées, le *Document de Stratégie pour la Croissance et l'Emploi (DSCE)*, qui est un cadre de référence de l'action gouvernementale pour la période 2010-2020, élaboré par le gouvernement camerounais en août 2009. Il s'agit d'une vision de développement économique à l'horizon 2035 qui entend faire du « Cameroun un pays émergent, démocratique et uni dans sa diversité ».
68. Allocution du Président Paul Biya à l'occasion de sa rencontre avec les membres du corps diplomatique africain à Beijing le 21 juillet 2011.
69. MAFEJE, Archie, « Cadre africain de substitution aux programmes d'ajustement structurel: pour une reconversion des mentalités », *Bulletin du CODESRIA*, N° 2, 1990, p.12.
70. MAFEJE, Archie, « Recolonisation "bénigne" et esprits "malins" au service de l'impérialisme », *Bulletin du CODESRIA*, N° 2, 1995, p.20.
71. MAZRUI, Ali A., - *Towards a Pax-Africana: A Study of Ideology and Ambition*, Chicago & London, University of Chicago Press. - « Auto-colonisation et quête de Pax Africana: une réplique » *Bulletin du CODESRIA*, N° 2, 1995, p. 24. Cet auteur propose que l'Afrique entreprenne sa propre colonisation dès lors que l'ordre colonial a pris fin.
72. MAZRUI, Ali A., *The African Condition: A Political Diagnosis*, New York & Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1980, p. 113.
73. KARL, Terry Lynn, *The Paradox of Plenty: Oil Booms and Petro-States*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1997.
74. RUDRA, Nita & JENSEN, Nathan M., « Globalization and the Politics of Natural Resources », *Comparative Political Studies*, 44(6), 2011, p. 648.
75. <http://www.yaoundeconference-africa21.org/fr>, URL consulté le 25 mai 2010.
76. Voir le débat entre Pierre Moukoko Mbonjo et Adamou Ndam Njoya, autour de la question « Peut-on vaincre la corruption au Cameroun ? », dans *Cameroon Tribune* N° 9909/6110 du 17 août 2011, pp. 6-7.
77. Ces attributs, que présente Patience Dabany, ex première Dame du Gabon, vont, dans une large mesure, à certains hommes politiques comme un gant irait à une main.
78. SINDJOUN, Luc, « Les conséquences des crises sur les universités africaines comme lieux de recherche et de production des connaissances : brèves remarques méthodologiques », communication présentée lors de la 10e Assemblée générale du CODESRIA sur le thème : *L'Afrique dans le Nouveau Millénaire*, Kampala, Ouganda, décembre 2002
79. JAMET, Jean-François, « Gouvernement économique européen : la question n'est plus quand mais comment », *Question d'Europe* N° 216, Fondation Robert Schuman, octobre 2011.
80. Voir le discours du Président de la République française, Nicolas SARKOZY, prononcé à l'ouverture du 40ème Forum économique mondial à Davos (ville de l'est de la Suisse), le 27 janvier 2010.

Soundings in Kindred Struggles : The Egyptian Voice in Gandhi

Anil Nauriya, Supreme Court, India

Résumé

Gandhi et l'Égypte

Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) a été favorablement enthousiasmé par le mouvement politique en Égypte dans les premières années du XX^{ème} siècle alors qu'il était encore en Afrique du Sud. Il a été particulièrement impressionné par le leader nationaliste Mustafa Pacha Kamil mort en Février 1908 au Caire. Gandhi apprécia de nombreux aspects de la politique adoptée par le Parti nationaliste de Mustafa Kamil Pacha à un moment où il songeait à la résistance civile contre le régime de l'Afrique du Sud. Dans les années suivantes, Gandhi resta un observateur attentif de l'évolution politique égyptienne, tout comme il admirait Zaghloul Pacha, le chef du Parti Waf. De même les dirigeants égyptiens s'inspirèrent en retour de Gandhi. Cette contribution aborde quelques-unes des spécificités du mouvement égyptien qui ont influencé Gandhi. Elle examinera de même l'interface ou la symbiose entre Gandhi et l'Égypte. Les changements qui déferlent sur toute la région de l'Afrique du Nord donnent à ces réflexions une résonance contemporaine.

Abstract

Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) was favourably impressed by the political movement in Egypt in the early years of the twentieth century while he was still in South Africa. He was particularly impressed by Egypt's nationalist leader Mustafa Kamil Pasha whose death occurred more than a hundred years ago in February 1908 in Cairo. Many aspects of the policy adopted by Mustafa Kamil Pasha's Nationalist Party were appreciated by Gandhi at a time when he was contemplating civil resistance against the South African regimes. In subsequent years, Gandhi would remain a keen observer of Egyptian political developments; just as he admired Zaghloul Pasha, the great leader of the Wafd Party, Egyptian leaders too would take inspiration from Gandhi. Some of the specificities of the Egyptian movement which influenced Gandhi are explored in this lecture. An attempt is made also to examine the interface or symbiosis between Gandhi and Egypt. This has some contemporary resonance in the winds of change now sweeping across the North African region.

I

The Suez Canal was opened in 1869, the year of Gandhi's birth. Thus it was from the north-eastern ports of Egypt that Gandhi had his first acquaintance with the African continent. The young man had sailed from India in September 1888 and turned nineteen during the voyage. He reached

London shortly before the end of October and joined the Inner Temple ; he would be called to the Bar three years later. He started work on a Guide to London, meant for the benefit of future Indian students. When this work was completed is not known for certain but from its completed form one can glean that on the sea voyage to Europe through the Suez route one had to be ready for colder weather after Port Said. Though Egypt was then legally speaking part of the Ottoman Empire, it had been under Anglo-French influence since 1879 and under British occupation since 1882, that is, some six years before Gandhi's ship docked at its ports.²

From at least January 1904 Gandhi had been considering the possibility of jail-going in protest against repressive legislation in South Africa against Asians. (CW, Vol 4, p.105) More than two years later a resolution was passed giving notice of this prospect at a mammoth meeting of Indians in Johannesburg on September 11, 1906. (CW, Vol 5, p. 426). Already moving along the path of peaceful protest, one African impetus that Gandhi received along his way was surely Egypt. The movement for Home Rule in Egypt was gathering strength in 1907 and the movement clearly impressed him. Given the legal framework within which British Indians had to operate within South Africa, it was not yet possible for Gandhi either to disown the British Empire or to do without the, albeit, verbal support that the Government of British India could be called upon to provide to British Indians working in territories abroad. Even so, Gandhi's comment on the Egyptian movement was as succinct as it was portentous, providing another early indication of the way his mind was working :

" Messages in the papers indicate that an agitation for Home Rule is going on in Egypt. Large meetings are being held and resolutions passed by the Egyptians in order to gain political power by driving out Lord Cromer.³ Writing strongly on the subject, the *London Times* says that the movement should be suppressed. We do not believe it likely that it can be stopped thus. There are some brave persons among the Egyptians; and education is widespread. If the movement continues long enough, we believe that the British will grant self-government to the Egyptians. In keeping with British traditions it has first to be shown that people who make demands are prepared to die for them. It is not enough to go on making verbal demands. The British follow this rule in their own country and that is how they endure." [*Indian Opinion*, March 9, 1907, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, (CW), Vol 6, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, New Delhi, 1958-1994, pp. 359-360]

Although Gandhi did not actually repudiate the Empire until after his return to India, he was already speaking of freedom. In the following month, on the occasion of the Colonial Conference he made a comparison between India and the "Colonies", pointing out that while the bulk of Indian revenues were appropriated by Britain, in the "Colonies", (that is countries colonised by white *settlers*) it was the reverse: Britain provided the capital and "the profit was consumed by the Colonies". (*Indian Opinion*, April 27, 1907, CW, Vol 6, p. 437). In an article written in Gujarati he set forth the reason

for this difference and the lesson it contained for India: "They can stand up to England. If we become as strong as they, we too shall get justice.... But speaking does not mean mere shouting. It must be accompanied by kicking. The way we can kick in South Africa or in India is to go to gaol. If we do not help in the oppression that is being perpetrated on us, we shall be free. It is only when the axe is fitted with a wooden handle that it can cut wood." (*Idem*). Here Gandhi had set out not only the course of action that would be initiated in South Africa in the months and years to come but also the basis of the policy of non-violent non-co-operation that he would later adopt in India in the struggle for Indian freedom.

During his first incarceration in South Africa, Gandhi was kept in a Johannesburg prison and released at the end of January 1908. Pre-occupied though he was, especially since September 1906, with the struggle in the Transvaal, Gandhi's interest in developments elsewhere did not flag. When Egypt's leader Mustafa Kamil Pasha (1874-1908) died in February 1908 in Cairo, Gandhi paid high tributes, carried in four successive issues of his journal.⁴ (*Indian Opinion*, March 28, April 4, April 11, April 18, 1908, CW, Vol 8, pp. 166-167, pp. 174-176 pp 187-188, and p. 199). Mustafa Kamil was in fact five years younger than Gandhi and only 34 at the time of his death. In his tribute to Mustafa Kamil, published on March 28, Gandhi noted that the thoughtful leader had made "a number of speeches to the people of Cairo and Alexandria between 1895 and 1907" and that people belonging to "all classes of society, from prince to pauper, thronged to hear him speak". (CW, Vol 8, 167) "Whenever any section of society had a grievance against the [British] Government, they would besiege the offices of *Luwa* (Mustafa Kamal Pasha's paper) and clamour for his intervention or guidance". (*Idem*) In the tribute published on April 4, Gandhi referred to various works by Kamil Pasha and noted also that he had started two journals, (*Al*) *Luwa*, mentioned above, and, before that, *Al Madrasa*, "famous for its trenchant and original writing". (CW, Vol 8, p.175) "Mustafa Kamal Pasha's efforts", Gandhi wrote, "were addressed to the task of stemming the tide of blind contempt for Egyptians, which had risen in the wake of British rule". (*Idem*) Gandhi noticed that Kamil Pasha's "writings and speeches appear to be inspired by the principles of the great Italian patriot, Mazzini". (*Idem*) According to Gandhi, Kamil Pasha believed that "Turkey would not stand in the way of Egypt's independence". (*Idem*) Quite evidently, Kamil Pasha believed that his real adversaries were the British. Gandhi observed: "He was a fearless man and would not give up his campaign. The occupation of the Sudan by the British and other similar events dealt a cruel blow to [the hopes of] Egyptian independence. But the Pasha remained undaunted" (*Idem*). In the third article, published in the following week, on April 11, Gandhi recorded graphically the public grief in Egypt on Kamil Pasha's demise; he referred also to the moving funeral, reproducing some of the verses from the funeral dirge composed by Ismail Pasha Sabri, then Head of the Department of Justice. (CW, Vol 8, pp. 187-188) And in the article published on April 18, Gandhi noted that the object of the Nationalist Party (*Al Hizb al Watani*) founded by Mustafa Kamil was "to see that the administration was entrusted to the people's representatives, who would be responsible to a sovereign parliament constituted on the European model; also, Egypt should enjoy complete freedom (from

British control) in its internal administration.(CW, Vol 8, p.199)⁵ Gandhi added significantly : "The British Government cannot stop the Nationalist Party because the party is wise enough not to encourage acts of violence".(*Idem*) This was a precept that Gandhi could never have forgotten. A few months later, Gandhi's paper carried in Gujarati "a spirited address", occupying several pages, that the Pasha had delivered in Alexandria on October 22, 1907.(*Indian Opinion*, June 27, July 4 and July 11, 1908) The speech⁶ was a passionate cry for Egyptian freedom and for the establishment of an Egyptian Parliament. Kamil Pasha was in effect telling the British to "Quit Egypt". It was a call also for people to educate themselves and to use their knowledge for the benefit of those less fortunate than themselves. Kamil Pasha made repeated references to the 1906 incident involving British repression at Denshawai, Egypt,⁷ just as Gandhi would in later years in India refer repeatedly to the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre of 1919. Would the British like their own country taken over by a foreign power ?, Kamil Pasha wanted to know, referring also, in terms that would be most familiar to Indians, to the economic and financial drain of wealth from Egypt, and the condition of the peasantry. The charter of demands put forward by him is meaningful even a century later though seeking freedom and some reformative measures at the same time : Freedom and Democracy, Parliament, Relief on Debts, Freedom to criticise the Government, Education, especially for the poor, including night classes for workers, Urban renewal, Security of life and property, Freedom to maintain relations with other countries.... He refuted allegations that any section of people would not be treated as Egyptians. All those who reside in the country would be treated as Egyptians. But he wanted to impart religious education, if only to teach his compatriots to live in harmony with others. Kamil Pasha concluded his oration by asking his people to be ready to sacrifice their lives for their country.

George Bernard Shaw had set out an elaborate account of the "Denshawai Horror" in his "Preface for Politicians" (1906) to the play "John Bull's Other Island" (1907).⁸ According to Shaw, in mid-June 1906 some English officers out on a pigeon-shoot got into a nasty scrap with villagers injuring some of them and inducing retaliatory thrashings. This infuriated the British authorities and ultimately resulted in four persons being hanged, two being sentenced for life, one for 15 years and six to 7 years, three for a year with "hard labor and fifty lashes" and five to 50 lashes.⁹ It is not clear whether Gandhi was familiar with this work by Shaw, but eighteen months after publishing Kamil Pasha's speech, Gandhi referred appreciatively to G.K Chesterton's protest against the Denshawai incident. In Chesterton's words, when a "few harmless peasants at Denshawai had objected to the looting of their property; they were tortured and hanged." (*Indian Opinion*, January 22, 1910, CW, Vol 10, p.134). In his article Gandhi, in words that may have contemporary Egyptian resonance, criticised the system "in which a few men capture power in the name of the people and abuse it. The people are deceived because it is under cover of their name that these men act." (*Ibid*, p.135).

By now Gandhi saw clearly also the process of the emergence of a new South African nation and that Indians would ultimately need to prepare themselves to participate in that larger process. Referring to the indignities

and harsh treatment that some "Colonial-born" Indian passive resisters, including Joseph Royeppan, David Andrew and Samuel Joseph, had recently undergone and bravely withstood in Diepkloof prison in the Transvaal, Gandhi wrote: "We trust that the lead given by Mr Royeppan will infuse a new spirit into the colonial-born and other Indians who have their work cut out before them if they wish to take part in the making of the future South African nation." (*Indian Opinion*, May 7, 1910 CW, Vol 10, p. 244) The same issue of the journal informed its readers that some publications of Gandhi's press in South Africa, the International Printing Press, had, according to the *Bombay Government Gazette* of March 24, been "forfeited to His Majesty for the reason that they 'contain matter declared to be seditious'". (CW, Vol 10, p. 245) These included Gandhi's *Hind Swarajya* (Indian Home Rule), *Mustafa Kamel Pasha's Speech*, being a Gujarati translation of a speech delivered shortly before the Egyptian leader's death, and the "Gujarati rendering" (by Gandhi) of John Ruskin's *Unto This Last* and Plato's *Defence of Socrates*.

These were times when African intellectuals, like their Indian counterparts, were at pains to point to past or outstanding accomplishments of their respective peoples in a bid to assert their civilisational achievements. Gandhi's *Indian Opinion*, in its issue of October 21, 1911 carried extracts from an article, "*The Coloured Man in Art and Letters*", by Duse Mahomed, the famous author of "*In the Land of the Pharaohs*". Duse Mahomed was an Egyptian of Sudanese origin, then living in London from where he brought out the *African Times and Orient Review*. In his article Duse Mahomed had referred to many authors of mixed blood, saying that "a race capable of producing a Poushkin, a Dumas, and a Dunbar in letters, and a Coleridge Taylor and a Marion Cook in music, can neither be lacking in high intellect and artistic temperament nor devoid of that dash of creative genius without which literature is debased to the level of nonsensical drivel and music degraded to a flaccid medley of conventional sounds". As *Indian Opinion* noted of the various personalities mentioned, all had African blood in them. Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906), the famous African-American author, "was of pure African lineage" while the others were of mixed blood.¹⁰ According to information culled from Duse Mahomed, Alexander Dumas was said to have "descended from an African grandmother in Haiti", Alexander Pushkin "had an Ethiopian grandmother", Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912) was "the son of a West African doctor", and Will Marion Cook (1869-1944) had "both maternal and paternal African forbears". It was significant that these materials from an intrepid Egyptian author appeared in Gandhi's *Indian Opinion* at a time when racism was on the rise in South Africa and elsewhere.

II

Gandhi left South Africa in July 1914, reaching England in the first week of August just as the World War began. It was on December 18, 1914 that Egypt was unilaterally declared a British Protectorate. On the following day Gandhi would sail for India. It was clear now that Britain intended to strengthen its hold over Egypt. In the course of the struggles which lay ahead after his return to India in January 1915, Gandhi would make references every now and then which suggested various African sources of inspiration and

empathy toward African aspirations. One of his pre-occupations in April 1916 was to seek the release from internment of Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali, the two famous brothers who had been held in May 1915 for publishing in their journal an article entitled "*Choice of the Turks*" which had, inter alia, demanded the British evacuation of Egypt. [Letter to Mohamed Ali, April 14, 1916, CW, Vol 91 (Supplementary Volume 1) pp. 106-107¹¹] Mohamed Ali would later, in 1923, be President of the Indian National Congress. In a speech on November 3, 1917 at the Gujarat Political Conference in Godhra, Gandhi publicly repeated his appeal to the Government on behalf of Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali (CW, Vol 14, p. 51)

In March 1919 Gandhi called for a protest against the Rowlatt legislation sought to be introduced by the colonial regime in India. The legislation which envisaged arbitrary detention, and trials without effective legal assistance, cutting off pleadings and appeals, was a serious assault on democratic rights. Among the various activities chosen as part of the protest, a country-wide hartal or strike was held on April 6; a further programme was envisaged including, in Gandhi's words, that "laws regarding prohibited literature and registration of newspapers may be civilly disobeyed". (*The Bombay Chronicle*, April 8, 1919, CW, Vol 15, p. 192). Of the four prohibited works chosen for dissemination by the Gandhi-led committee organising the protest, three were Gandhi's own and the fourth was *The Life and Address of Mustafa Kamal Pasha*, which had been printed in Gandhi's press in South Africa. (*Idem*)¹² As we saw from his writings in South Africa, Gandhi had much admiration for the Egyptian leader to whom he had paid high tribute upon his death in February 1908. (*Indian Opinion*, March 28, April 4, April 11, April 18, 1908, CW, Vol 8, pp. 166-167, pp. 174-176 pp 187-188, and p. 199).

British administrators in India seriously mulled in April 1919 the possibility of deporting Gandhi, along with some others, to Burma.¹³ But one of the considerations that made them hesitate was that in Egypt "recent doings show deportation might cause general conflagration".¹⁴ Presumably the precedent they feared was the aftermath of the arrest of Zaghoul Pasha (1860-1927) in March 1919, and his subsequent deportation from Egypt to Malta: "Within a few days all Egypt had flared up in revolt".¹⁵ That is, but for the experience of public protest in Egypt, British repression in India might have been harsher still!

Zaghoul and three of his colleagues were arrested on March 8, 1919. The arrest and the exile to Malta were a kind of riposte "for insisting that the Egyptian delegation (Wafd) to the Versailles Conference be recognised, so that it could demand that Egypt be accepted as an independent national state".¹⁶ Students went on strike the day after the arrest and they were "followed by members of the Egyptian Bar" on March 11, 1919.¹⁷ The feeling had been growing in Egypt that Britain intended to introduce full-scale colonialism upon Egypt and scholars have also concluded "That Britain planned somehow to integrate Egypt fully into the imperial system was now becoming clear."¹⁸ A peasant insurrection began in Egypt almost immediately at least partly because of a regime of starvation-threatening non-availability of food, high consumer prices and unfavourable procurement policies induced by British war impositions.¹⁹ Hundreds of peasants were imprisoned in Egypt by the middle of March.²⁰

Events in India had also been moving to a head. Since February 1919, Gandhi had been speaking of a civil resistance campaign (*satyagraha*) over the Rowlatt Bills and a *Satyagraha* Pledge was signed by Gandhi and others on February 24, 1919, indicating that the proposed legislation, if signed into law, along with other laws to be specified would be civilly disobeyed. (CW, Vol 15, pp. 101-2). The decision to observe a hartal on April 6, 1919 was announced on March 23, 1919. (CW, Vol 15, pp. 145-146) The Egyptian flare-up had occurred in the interregnum between the taking of this pledge and the announcement of the hartal in India.

The hartal in India on April 6, 1919 had a high degree of success. It was clearly not possible for Britain simultaneously to take on large-scale protests in India and a rebellious Egypt. The events in the two countries appear to have led initially to different yet not unconnected carrot-and-stick variants in imperial policy. In Egypt, it was announced by the new British representative, Allenby, on April 7 that Zaghloul would now be released and be given permission to proceed elsewhere.²¹ In more distant India subsequent events, including the massacre at Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar on April 13, 1919, indicated that the Indian protests of the preceding fortnight had had the effect of unnerving the colonial administration. This incident, in which even according to official figures nearly four hundred unarmed civilians were shot dead in an enclosed park, galvanised Indian nationalist opinion still further in the same way as Denshawai had done in Egypt thirteen years earlier.²²

The rebellion that occurred in Egypt from March 1919 was initially characterised by some violence.²³ But this was soon quelled; there then followed a change in approach in the struggle.²⁴ Later, in December 1919, the British Government sent the Milner Commission to Egypt "to inquire into and report on the future status of Egypt".²⁵ One of the reasons for the boycott by Egyptians of the Milner Commission in 1919-20 had been that it comprised only Britishers although it "proposed to recommend a Constitution for Egypt, a task for which the Egyptians considered themselves fully as capable and more concerned".²⁶ The boycott met with "remarkable success".²⁷ Zaghloul, who had earlier been released, was taken to London in May 1920 and then, upon his not agreeing to British terms, was left to return to exile again.

There is, as we shall see from Gandhi's remarks a few weeks later, evidence that he was watching some of these events in Egypt and drawing appropriate lessons. Boycott of Councils had by now featured on the political agenda in India. (*Navajivan*, July 18, 1920, CW, Vol 18, p. 56) The movement for non-co-operation with the British regime was launched in India from August 1, 1920. (CW, Vol 18, p. 104) This involved, inter alia, withdrawal from government institutions and, of course, included boycott of councils. (CW, Vol 18, pp. 149-151) Writing in *Young India* on September 22, 1920, Gandhi refused and described as erroneous an argument made in the *London Times* about the Milner mission to Egypt: "It audaciously says that Lord Milner's mission listened to the Egyptians only when they were ready to lift the boycott of the Egyptian council." (*Young India*, September 22, 1920, CW, Vol 18, p. 270)²⁸

Gandhi was scrutinising imperial policy and events in North Africa fairly closely. Noticing in his journal a work by Dr Syed Mahmud relating to

England's policy on Turkey (*The Khilafat and England*, published earlier in the year), Gandhi touched also on past developments in North Africa, including Egypt and present-day Tunisia and Libya, pointing to British complicity in the French occupation of Tunis, the Anglo-French partnership "in the financial spoliation of Egypt", and "the treacherous dealings of England regarding Egypt, Tripoli and the Balkan War ...". (*Young India*, September 1, 1921, CW, Vol 21, pp. 34-35) His disenchantment with the British Empire, particularly after the 1919 events in India and their aftermath, was now across the board.

Zaghloul Pasha had returned to Egypt in April 1921 to a popular welcome. There had been disturbances in Alexandria in May 1921 and in Cairo later in the year. In December Zaghloul was arrested again. This time the British blamed him for "incitement to disturbance".²⁹ Some violent incidents had continued to take place in Egypt. However, irrespective of the evidence, the British establishment was apt to hold the Wafd responsible. Seeing how the colonial rulers were prepared to utilise any acts of violence to discredit national struggles, Gandhi was at pains to emphasise that a peaceful struggle would impart to the Indian movement even greater strength than that which characterised its counterparts in Ireland, Russia or Egypt. (*Navajivan*, May 22, 1921, CW, Vol 20, p. 68) Gandhi strove to hold the Indian movement to strict standards; he would take these to a logical conclusion after the "rude shock" he would presently receive in the form of a breakout of violence in eastern India. (Letter to Members of Working Committee, February 8, 1922, CW, Vol 22, p. 350) Wary of violence and how the administration was prone to take advantage of it, Gandhi had written a year earlier: "It is to be wished that non-co-operationists will clearly recognize that nothing can stop the onward march of the nation as violence." (*Young India*, February 9, 1921, CW, Vol 19, p.338) About this time a journalist, interviewing Gandhi on February 5, 1922, asked: "What do you think of the suggestion made in the *Chronicle* that an alliance of understanding should be come to with the leaders of suffering subject nations like Egypt and Ireland to fight the imperialism of the Western nations by non-co-operation propaganda?" (*The Bombay Chronicle*, February 7, 1922, CW, Vol 22, p. 339) Gandhi, who empathised with Egyptian and Irish aspirations, said: "I would love to see such an alliance but that will come in its own time. It is my humble opinion that we are not getting sufficiently advanced in the direction to form a useful alliance. I do not believe in paper alliances. They will come naturally when we are ready." (*Idem*)

When in the first week of February 1922 there were incidents of organised violence in Chauri Chaura in the eastern part of the then United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh), leading to the killing of about a score policemen at the hands of those claiming to participate in the movement, Gandhi initiated the process for suspending civil disobedience. (Letter to Members of Working Committee, February 8, 1922, CW, Vol 22, pp. 350-351)

At the end of February 1922, the British Government made, unilaterally, a Declaration abolishing the Protectorate in Egypt and declaring that country, at least nominally, as an independent sovereign state while simultaneously claiming and asserting special powers and privileges for itself.³⁰ The unilateral nature of the declaration was partly dictated by the fact that there was no agreement on the reserved points. In less than a fortnight after the

Declaration with respect to Egypt, Gandhi was arrested in India. By the time of Gandhi's arrest, Zaghoul had been deported to the Seychelles Islands.

There were by now some significant interconnections in the popular sentiment across continents, including some striking ones between India, Egypt and faraway West Indies. On Gandhi's arrest in March 1922, the leading Jamaican and African-American activist, Marcus Garvey pointed out in a speech that in Jamaica in the Caribbean, the colonial authorities had "called upon the West Indian regiments to go out to India – the black soldiers who have always fought for them in their wars of conquest – to fight the Indians, and they refused to go."³¹ Garvey attributed the West Indian troops' reported refusal to be utilised for suppression of the Indian movement to the propaganda which his own organization, the Universal Negro Improvement Association, had been carrying on. Interestingly, in his speech Garvey affirmed one of the arguments that Gandhi, for his part, had been making against the use of Indian troops in Egypt and Mesopotamia. One of the declarations made in a famous manifesto drafted by Gandhi in October 1921, and signed by him along with other Indian leaders, was : "We, the undersigned, state it as our opinion, that it is contrary to national dignity for any Indian to serve as a civilian, and more especially as a soldier, under a system of Government, which has brought about India's economic, moral and political degradation and which has used the soldiery and the police for repressing national aspirations, as, for instance, at the time of the Rowlatt Act agitation, and which has used the soldiers for crushing the liberty of the Arabs, the Egyptians, the Turks and other nations who have done no harm to India." (*Young India*, October 6, 1921, CW, Vol 21, p. 235) In a Press interview a couple of months before his arrest, Gandhi had declared that "when India had full *swaraj* she could certainly not permit a single Indian soldier to leave India in order to coerce the brave Egyptians into submission to a foreign yoke". (*The Bombay Chronicle*, January 18, 1922, CW, Vol 22, p.213)

The British regime in India may have believed or hoped that Gandhi and his movement had been crushed with his arrest on March 10, 1922. But the struggle and also the developments in Egypt had an international impact as indicating that the world was "on the move towards liberation".³² Britain soon realised that it would be difficult to pacify Egypt while keeping its most popular leader under detention. Zaghoul, who had been transferred from the Seychelles to Gibraltar in 1922, was released in March 1923, and in September 1923 he returned home.³³ Elections were held in Egypt in January 1924, and on January 27, Zaghoul, whose Wafd Party swept the polls, assumed office as Prime Minister. These gains substantially would be reversed before the year was out.

Meanwhile in India, on February 5, 1924, that is about a week after Zaghoul had assumed office in Egypt, Gandhi would be unconditionally released. Towards the end of 1924, Gandhi was chosen to be President of the Indian National Congress (INC) which was to meet at Belgaum in South India in December. By the time the INC session took place, things had changed once again in Egypt, particularly in the previous month. In his presidential address at Belgaum, Gandhi spoke also about the ongoing repression in Egypt : "Egypt fares no better than we do. A mad Egyptian kills a British officer – certainly a detestable crime. The punishment is not only a detestable

crime, but it is an outrage upon humanity. Egypt has nearly lost all it got. A whole nation has been mercilessly punished for the crime of one man. It may be that the murder had the sympathy of the Egyptians. Would that justify terrorism by a power well able to protect its interests without it?" (*Young India*, December 26, 1924, CW, Vol 25, p 488) The remarks, reminiscent of Gandhi's criticism of the repression in that country in 1910, were a reference to the assassination in November 1924 of Major-General Oliver (Lee) Stack, Commander-General of the Egyptian Army and Governor General of Sudan. In the aftermath of the murder, British authorities undid many recent political advances in Egypt. Allenby, the British representative, escorted by a British Cavalry Regiment with "spears and swords raised", called on Prime Minister Zaghloul Pasha; impliedly holding the Egyptian government responsible for the assassination, Allenby departed after presenting Zaghloul with an ultimatum demanding, inter alia, an apology, an indemnity of 500,000 pounds to be paid by the following day, and the evacuation of Egyptian troops from Sudan which had been under the legal frame of a joint Anglo-Egyptian arrangement.³⁴ Egyptian troops and officers were expelled from Sudan under Allenby's instructions to the Sudanese government, perhaps scotching forever any prospect of realisation of the nationalist aspiration of unity of the Nile Valley. The British ultimatum virtually forced the resignation of Zaghloul Pasha who, as we have seen, had in January 1924 become the first Prime Minister of Egypt after the victory of his party in the parliamentary elections held under the new dispensation. Parliament was now dissolved and the arbitrary powers of King Fouad were also revived following the assassination. Indiscriminate arrests were made, including by British military authorities; Zaghloul's Wafd Party, which denied any connection with the assassination, was particularly targeted and its activities restricted. In the following year Allenby would be recalled from Egypt and one of the reasons for his recall is understood to have been the widespread resentment felt at the manner in which the British authorities had exploited the incident. Zaghloul is reported to have remarked of the assassination: "The bullets that were fired were not targeted at the chest of Sir Lee Stack; they were targeted at mine."³⁵ This Egyptian experience, which Gandhi had followed closely enough to make a pointed reference to it in his Presidential address at Belgaum, could only have confirmed him in his disapproval of assassination as a means of accomplishing ostensible political objectives.

In 1928 the Simon Commission visited India "for the purpose of inquiring into the working of the system of Government"; but Indians were not represented on the panel. Gandhi had supported the boycott of the Simon Commission, saying in an appeal to the people of Bombay, where the Commission first landed: "I hope the boycott will pass peacefully and show the nation's strength of purpose". (*The Bombay Chronicle*, February 3, 1928, CW, Vol 36, p. 8) The boycott met with a very high degree of success. It will be recalled that nearly a decade earlier a similar Commission had been sent by the British Government to Egypt and Egyptians had not been represented on it. The Milner Commission was successfully boycotted by Egyptians. We have noted Gandhi's remarks with reference to the Milner Commission in 1920. It is quite possible that familiarity with this Egyptian experience spurred the Indian boycott of the Simon Commission, when it visited India for a similar

purpose. Indian youth spearheaded the boycott. Writing in another context a few months later, Gandhi reminded students that "...it is the students in Egypt who are in the forefront in Egypt's struggle for real independence". (*Young India*, July 12, 1928, CW, Vol 37, p. 47) He expected Indian students "to do no less". (*Idem*) But there was no escape from hard preparatory work. In the following year, on the eve of Zaghloul's second death anniversary, Gandhi cautioned a correspondent : "You do not seem to have understood the life of Zaghloul and Lenin. Both of them worked very hard at first and only then were they able to achieve what they did." [Letter to Rudranath, August 21/22, 1929, CW, Vol 92, (Supplementary Vol II), p. 64]

III

The commencement of civil disobedience in India and Gandhi's arrest in May 1930 were reported at length in the Egyptian Press which saw similarities between the Indian and Egyptian situations.³⁶ In India there was some public discussion also about minority rights in relation to the Egyptian experience and Zaghlul Pasha's offer to the Copts. (CW, Vol 46, pp. 61-62) Released from prison in January 1931, Gandhi left for Europe at the end of August to attend the Round Table Conference in London to discuss India's constitutional future. On its way, Gandhi's ship went through the ports of north-eastern Africa in September. Already espousing Indian independence, Gandhi had responded to a query from a correspondent a few months earlier to say: "Of course I wish the Egyptians full independence and all the prosperity that their ancient and fertile land deserves". (Letter to Abdur Razzaq Malihabadi, May 8, 1931, CW, Vol 46, p. 121) Warm messages of greetings were exchanged between Gandhi and Mustafa Nahas Pasha (1879-1965), former Egyptian Prime Minister and the President of the Wafd party of Egypt³⁷, Mohamed Mahmoud Pasha (1877-1941), leader of the Constitutional Liberal Party of Egypt, who had also served as Prime Minister, Safia Zaghloul Pasha (widow of Zaghloul Pasha³⁸, the pre-eminent leader of the Wafd) and Cherifa Riaz Pasha (President of Women's Saadist Committee).[CW, Vol 47, pp 400-401 and p. 403]. Referring to Gandhi, on "happy occasion crossing Egyptian waters", Madame Zaghloul wished success to the "Indian cause".³⁹ The way Gandhi and the Egyptian leaders greeted one another on this and successive occasions is reflected feelings of deep mutual regard. It is instructive to consider closely the exchanges that took place.

Nahas Pasha invited Gandhi to visit Egypt on his return journey. In his message of September 6, 1931, Nahas Pasha said : " In the name of Egypt who is now fighting for its liberties and its independence I welcome in you the foremost leader of that India who is also struggling to attain the same end and I convey to you my hearty wishes for a safe journey and a happy return. I also ask God to grant to you success in your quest, a success equal to the greatness of your determination. I hope to have the pleasure of meeting you on your homeward journey and trust that the land of the Pharoahs will then be favoured by your visit thus enabling the Wafd and the Egyptian nation at large to express to you whatever be the result of your journey both their appreciation of your noble achievements to promote the welfare of

your country and their reverence for the greatness of the sacrifice made by you in support of your principles. May God prolong your life and crown your endeavours with a victory far-reaching and abiding. Our representatives both at Suez and at Port Said will have the honour of conveying to you by word of mouth our welcome and our best wishes." (reproduced in CW, Vol 47, p. 400n)

Going beyond ordinary courtesy, the Egyptians were making an earnest attempt at reaching out to Gandhi and the Indian movement for freedom. To Nahas Pasha Gandhi wired to "sincerely thank" him and "to reciprocate the kind wishes", adding that he would "be delighted to visit your great country if it is at all possible." (*Ibid.*, p 400) And similarly to Mohamed Mahmoud Pasha, saying that he would "love (to) visit your great country if possible on return". (*Idem*) Gandhi replied to Madame Zaghoul Pasha, known as the "Mother of the Egyptians", conveying to her his "respectful thanks" for her "kind affectionate message". (*Ibid.*, p. 401). In a speech addressed to Indians living in Egypt, Gandhi hoped that they were "so conducting themselves as to be of service to the country where they are earning their livelihood". (*Idem*) According to Yunan Labib Rizk, the late Egyptian historian, the Egyptians had organised an elaborate welcome for what was "tantamount to a state visit": a delegation headed by the former parliamentary representative from Suez had been in place to greet Gandhi upon his arrival in Suez. In Port Said the Egyptian reception committee brought gifts, including a vessel of honey with a Quranic verse inscribed on it, "a large, grey camel-wool shawl 'to protect the Indian leader from cold during his stay in the British capital'", 20 litres of goat milk, and Egyptian dates, including a package of "the famous Egyptian red dates, known as *zaghoul*, 'because of the significance of the name'".⁴⁰ These were characteristic Eastern gestures of hospitality and affection. In a letter written on September 7 to Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) who had stayed back in India, Gandhi remarked on the affectionate nature of the Egyptian messages (CW, Vol 47, p. 402). To the nationalists of Egypt, Gandhi said in a statement given to *Al Ahram* as his ship set sail toward the historic Alexandria: "Like us you are an ancient people. I hope you will not slavishly copy all that is Western. If I have understood the events of your country correctly real freedom for Egypt has still to come...." (September 6, 1931, CW, Vol 47, p. 397). Approaching Alexandria, Gandhi could not have forgotten also the famous speech that Mustafa Kamil Pasha had delivered in that city on October 22, 1907 which Gandhi had much admired and virtually reproduced – several pages in length – in his journal in South Africa in June and July 1908. From Alexandria, which he passed sometime between September 7 and 11, 1931, Gandhi wired Cherifa Riaz Pasha, President of the Women's Saadist Committee to thank her for her good wishes. (*Ibid.*, p. 403).

Gandhi's passage seems to have caught something in the popular imagination in northern Africa, with the renowned Egyptian poet, Ahmad Showquie (1868-1932), composing a long poem of forty verses to mark the event.⁴¹ The poet had emerged as a major spokesman of Egyptian nationalism in the 1920s.⁴² Gandhi's secretary, Mahadev Desai, records of this voyage through the North East African ports: "A number of Egyptian press correspondents saw Gandhiji on board the ship and a representative of Nahas Pasha met Gandhiji both at Suez and Port Said. A deputation of Indian

merchants in Cairo, mostly Sindhis, waited on Gandhiji both at Suez and Port Said, and gave him an address of welcome and pressed him to pay a visit to Cairo on the return journey."⁴³ In a meaningful recollection which resonates with accounts that C F Andrews has left of colonial intent in East Africa, Desai continues: " I learnt definitely at Port Said that though no exception had been taken to this Indian deputation waiting on Gandhiji, the authorities were against granting permission to Egyptian deputations and it was with great difficulty that a single representative of Nahas Pasha could get the permission."⁴⁴ Desai drew parallels between the way the Press was treated in India and in Egypt, quoting the Egyptians as saying : "The police are posted at our presses, the first proof copy has to be shown to them and they suppress the issue if they think it contains objectionable matter ".⁴⁵

Desai recorded: " In spite of the strong press censorship, I may say that no less than twelve Egyptian papers -- three of them with a daily circulation of 40 to 50 thousand -- had special articles on Gandhiji, two issued special numbers, and all reproduced the telegrams and marconigrams sent to Gandhiji by Nahas Pasha, Madam Zagloul Pasha, Mahomed Mahmud Pasha and others."⁴⁶ He concluded : "No wonder. Egypt is as impatient of the British yoke as we are, and wants Gandhiji to visit Egypt on his return.... The talks after the evening prayer have all been about non-violence, and the Egyptian friends who boarded the ship at Suez had an opportunity of listening to one such discourse."⁴⁷ *Al Ahram* had "despatched its most important correspondent to Port Said" and Mahmoud Abul-Fath's interview with Gandhi "took up the entire front page" of the *Al-Ahram* edition of September 7 with the headlines : "An hour with Gandhi on board the ship. Gandhi's message to Egyptian nationalists. Gandhi warns that the civil disobedience campaign will resume if conference fails."⁴⁸ Abul-Fath has left a detailed account of his interview which he regarded as one of the most memorable hours of his life; other Egyptian papers which enthusiastically welcomed Gandhi included *Misr*, *Al-Siyasa*, *Kawkab Al-Sharq*, *Al Balagh*, and *Al Diaa*.⁴⁹ Gandhi had a special resonance with the Egyptian press.⁵⁰

With Gandhi committed to Indian independence, and to full Egyptian independence, his commitment to all of Africa could also be no less. While in London, Gandhi was asked on October 31, 1931: "For some years Britain would continue certain subject territories like Gold Coast. Would Mr Gandhi object?". "I would certainly object", was Gandhi's reply (CW, Vol 48, p. 255). He continued: "India would certainly aspire after influencing British policy..... I do not want India to be an engine of oppression". (*Idem*) He spoke on this occasion about the exploitation of Zulus and Swazis, which he described as "radically wrong" (*Idem*).

Leaving England on December 5, 1931, Gandhi passed through France. Reaching Paris the same day, he addressed meetings and rested the night there before moving on to spend a few days in Switzerland and Italy. While in Paris, Gandhi spoke at some largely-attended meetings and also gave some press interviews. It would have been natural for the representatives of the French colonies living in Paris to be curious about what Gandhi had to say. We have at least one confirmation of the presence of North African and other such representatives at the meeting that Gandhi addressed at Magic

City Hall on December 5, 1931.⁵¹ Soon he expected to be in North Africa, in Egypt if not in the directly Francophone areas.

British authorities were already wary of Gandhi's influence in Africa. More immediately too, there had been some, perhaps not unconnected, developments elsewhere in the neighbourhood of Egypt. British intelligence in Sudan reported: "There is no doubt that especially the younger element of the intelligentsia have a great admiration and sympathy for Gandhi, and that when the movement in India was at its height, they followed the news with keen interest. In private assemblies they discussed the efficiency of the boycott weapon and agreed that Gandhi had discovered in it the only weapon which the...East could employ effectively against imperialism. The influence of Gandhi and Indian politics can be unmistakably seen in the Gordon College strike (of 1931) and attempted boycott of sugar by pupils".⁵² Gandhi's writings had a certain popularity in Sudan.⁵³

After attending to his remaining programme in Switzerland and Italy, Gandhi prepared to leave Europe for his onward journey home via Egypt. Embarking from the south-eastern Italian port of Brindisi on the sea voyage as a deck passenger, he noted that the "deck is no good, hence there will be inconvenience". (*Diary, 1931, December 14, CW, Vol 48, p. 466*) The ship passed through Port Said and Suez. As we have seen, he had been invited by Mustafa Nahas Pasha and Mohamed Mahmoud Pasha, among others, to visit Egypt and had indicated that he would try to do so. (*CW, Vol 47, p 400*) Plans for the visit had to be dropped when the captain of the steamer notified that it was not to halt at Suez, where Gandhi would have had to re-board it had he disembarked at Port Said. In the event, the ship did halt at Suez.⁵⁴ Earlier, Gandhi had reached Port Said at 11 in the morning on December 17 and, according to a Reuter report, was met by "several deputations, including one of the Wafdists". (*CW, Vol 48, p. 427*)⁵⁵ Mahmoud Fahmi El-Nuqrashi of the Wafd was to escort Gandhi to Cairo where elaborate functions were scheduled, including visits to Zaghloul Pasha's mausoleum and the Pyramids at Giza and a tea party in Gandhi's honour to be hosted by Nahas Pasha.⁵⁶ Gandhi made a cryptic note on December 17: "Sindhis and Egyptians came to fetch me but as there was to be no halt at Suez, I could not go". (*Diary, 1931, CW, Vol 48, p. 467*) On the next day, Gandhi's ship sailed in the morning after the stopover at Suez and he recorded in his diary: "Left Suez at 5.30, Justice Holland, Lalkaka and others met me." (*Idem*) The disinformation earlier given to Gandhi about the itinerary was seen as a colonial ruse, and one scholar would write that Gandhi "was prevented by a trick from visiting Egypt".⁵⁷ Dr Edmond Privat, a Swiss national then teaching at a Swiss university, and his wife Yvonne Privat, had been persuaded by Gandhi to accompany him to India on the ship from Brindisi. Privat, who had during the First World War advocated the cause of Polish independence, described what happened at the Egyptian port: "There are big crowds on the piers of Port Said and a big delegation invades the ship. But the police surround the boat, prevent the journey to Cairo and put a stop to the grand reception arranged over there".⁵⁸

The Egyptian historian sums up: "The Indian leader had no choice but to remain on board and deliver another message to the Egyptian people. He prayed for their success in realising full independence, towards which end

he urged that they would give careful study to the Indian cause in light of their own recent experiences. He also stressed that Egyptian women were an instrumental force in the struggle for independence and conveyed to women's rights activist Ceza Nabrawi, who had accompanied the Wafd delegation to Port Said, his hope that the role of Egyptian women would become more prominent.⁵⁹ Ceza Nabrawi and Huda Sha'rawi were the two prominent feminists of their time; Nabrawi had, along with Sha'rawi, made a gesture in 1923 of publically removing her veil.⁶⁰ In India, the redoubtable Abadi Bano Begum (1852-1924), popularly known as Bi Amman, had set a similar example some years earlier; Gandhi had also been suggesting the discarding of the *purdah*. (See, for example, Letter to Abbas Tyabji, June 21, 1927, CW, Vol 34, p. 35, where Gandhi suggests that Abbas Tyabji's daughter Sohaila, settled in Lucknow after marriage, ought to help "by the sheer force of exemplary character" in the discarding of the *purdah* "in Lucknow and the neighbourhood.")

As the ship entered the Suez Canal, Edmond Privat and Gandhi discussed the struggles ahead. Based on this conversation, Dr Privat has provided us with some extraordinary and thought-provoking insights into Gandhi's mind and the vital place Africa occupied in his thoughts even as regards the future course for India. On relations between India and Britain, Dr Privat noted: "It is Gandhi's dream to have a voluntary association between the two. If he still holds on to the link with Britain, as amongst equals, it is to save the coloured races. Canada dominates the English attitude towards America. Gandhi desires that India should similarly have her say in favour of the oppressed Africans. The liberation of his own country is only the first stage for him. He wishes then to use that power to deliver the others and to add... its moral conscience to the practical genius of the English. A united India would be able to put pressure like Canada under threat of separation. Imperialism and colonialism would have a decided enemy. For India, such an ambition demands a humane conduct. It has to win its cause by irreproachable methods and has to cure herself of her own faults".⁶¹

Repression was to mount presently. On returning to India in the last week of December 1931, Gandhi was again arrested in the first week of January 1932. As in many of his earlier imprisonments, Gandhi kept himself busy and, among other things, set himself to read; the books he had read by early February included Rothstein's work *Egypt's Ruin*. (Letter to Narandas Gandhi, February 3/8, 1932, CW, Vol 49, p. 77)⁶² Africa spoke to Gandhi in prison, through Egypt. Messages of sympathy carrying greetings from the Egyptian people came from Safia Zaghoul Pasha and Mustafa Nahas Pasha at the time of Gandhi's fast in prison in September 1932. The fast had been undertaken, as Gandhi reiterated in a Press interview on September 20, 1932, "only against separate electorates, and not against statutory reservation of seats", for the Depressed Classes; the fast was also intended to quicken the conscience of 'caste Hindus' so as to bring about a change in their attitude and also, similarly, of the British and to create an atmosphere in favour of eradicating untouchability. (CW, Vol 51, p. 117 *et seq.*) Gandhi wired back his thanks to Madame Zaghoul Pasha for a "loving inspiring message" (September 24, 1932, CW, Vol 51, p. 133). To Mustafa Nahas Pasha, Gandhi telegraphed, "deeply touched", adding the hope that his fast might

"touch all faiths", and "bring them and us together in a living bond"; he referred to the "Egyptian blanket presented to me during last voyage" which "covers me during this struggle...". (September 26, 1932, CW, Vol 51, p.142). The warmth underlying the Egyptian messages had definitely inspired and touched Gandhi as they showed a deep interest in Indian events reflecting empathy with him in particular and a very sympathetic understanding of his point of view. Nahas Pasha had cabled on September 24 : "Your resolve to sacrifice your own life, rather than tolerate any measure promoting disunion or caste prejudices amongst Indians has deeply stirred the heart of Egypt, which has, since the last decade, been linked with India by the holy bond of suffering for the same ideal of national self-expression and liberty. Egyptians of all sects and religions, united in love of the Fatherland, are confident that the great Indian people will unite in preserving Mahatma's life by redeeming their sacred unity. All struggling nations of the East look upto India for fulfilling the noble ideal for which Gandhiji is giving up his life. In the name of Egypt and her people, I send you and the Indian people our brotherly love and heartfelt wishes for realization of ideals of truth, freedom and equality as embodied in the great example you are setting before the world." (Reproduced in CW, Vol 51, pp 142n-143n) Madame Zaghloul in her message, cabled a day earlier, had said : "Egyptian people, men and women, who have been following with brotherly sympathy heroic struggle India and her great chief Mahatma Gandhi for liberty are now watching with beating hearts Mahatma's sublime act of self-sacrifice for sake of India's unity and freedom. As one who had shared with my late husband joy of working for and obtaining sacred unity of Egyptian Christians, Mahomedans, Copts and also other communities of whatever religion or denomination, may I express my sincere hope that India's people inspired by Gandhi's sublime act of self-abrogation would unite in one great mass of brothers and patriots to save India's liberation and save life of her great son whose life and work are patrimony of East and humanity at large." (Reproduced in CW, Vol 51, p. 133n). On this occasion Gandhi would remain in prison till the following May. He would then be re-arrested in August 1933 for a short spell. A year later, as he began to prioritise activities of social reconstruction, Gandhi announced his retirement from the Indian National Congress even though he would in the coming years continue to provide a guiding hand to the organisation.

IV

As things progressed in India towards the establishment of provincial legislatures under the Government of India Act, 1935, the Ethiopian crisis began to loom large in Africa. Under pressure of events, mainly the Italian invasion of Abyssinia, an Anglo-Egyptian Treaty was entered into in August 1936. In the backdrop of the invasion England wished particularly to avoid having an unfriendly Egypt; likewise Egyptian leaders now saw advantage in the possibility of friendship with England and agreed, *inter alia*, to "the status quo in the Sudan and England's right to defend the Suez Canal" with England withdrawing troops from Cairo and Alexandria.⁶³ In India too, in the late 1930s there was a brief interlude when regimes led mainly by the Congress but also by certain other parties came to power in the Provinces.

During the first quarter of 1937, when Gandhi received several African-American visitors, he was sought out also by delegations from North Africa. An Egyptian Christian wanted to know whether Gandhi really thought that "the English will leave India to you and go back peacefully as a result of your non-violent agitation?" [Interview to an Egyptian, (January 22, 1937), *Harijan*, February 13, 1937, CW, Vol 64, pp 312-313] "I do think so", Gandhi had replied simply, saying that he based his faith "on God and his justice". (*Idem*) The visitor was moved to respond, "You are more Christian than we so-called Christians. I will write these words down in block letters". (*Idem*) A deputation from Al Azhar University followed in March. Led by Sheikh Ibrahim El Gibali, it included Prof Habib Ahmed and Prof Salah Eldin. They expressed the feeling that many visitors to India had at the time : " It was impossible to come to India and go away without seeing you". [Interview to an Egyptian deputation, (March 3, 1937), *Harijan*, March 13, 1937, CW, Vol 64, pp 415- 416] To them Gandhi suggested more exchanges among academics in the two countries; he also made an offer similar to one he had earlier, in 1929, made to a South African visitor: "If you kindly send an Egyptian lad of intelligence and resourcefulness, we will welcome him and adopt him here....and he will be like a seed which will grow into a mighty tree. Make our boys Egyptian and we will make yours Indian. Our different religions should not matter. If you will respect our religion and we respect yours, there should be no bar to a healthy development of these relations. Identity of hearts is what is wanted, and if that is there everything will follow." (*Idem*) Recommending greater academic exchanges, especially with the Delhi-based Jamia Millia Islamia, an institution born of the Indian freedom struggle, Gandhi suggested to the Egyptians from Al Azhar that "you can exchange boys and professors with the Jamia" where "there are fine men like Dr Zakir Husain, Prof Mujeeb...". (*Idem*) Similar discussions about mutual exchange had been current since at least the late 1920s. (For an earlier offer before March 1929 to the "highly educated" African who visited Gandhi from South Africa, see CW, Vol 40, p. 64).

Although, India and Egypt took different paths in some of the years that followed, the warmth and common concerns that characterised relations between Egyptian and Indian leaders continued to be shared. The visits to Gandhi had taken place at a time when the second world war was round the corner; by the first quarter of 1939 the political atmosphere within India too had become increasingly tense in terms of worsening relations between diverse strands of opinion both within the Indian National Congress and outside it. At this juncture, an Egyptian Wafdist delegation came to India in March 1939 to attend the Tripuri session of the Congress. In spite of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936, relations between the Wafd and the British had remained uneasy; there were continual intrigues between the British and Egypt's King directed mainly against Wafdist leaders. Welcoming the Wafdist delegation, Gandhi wired : "Their visit will forge an indissoluble link between Egypt and India." (*The Hindu*, March 9, 1939, CW, Vol 69, p. 42.) Nahas Pasha, the Wafd leader, wrote to Gandhi : "Egyptians, united to their Indian brethren by sacred bonds of common ideal and efforts to realize them through channels of suffering and abnegation, have ever been inspired by your great

example." and wishing him strength to pursue his service of "downtrodden humanity" (CW, Vol 69, p. 46n). As on earlier occasions, the Egyptians struck a chord with Gandhi which went beyond mere courtesy; he was much touched by their affection just as he had been eight years earlier during and after his two voyages through Egypt's waters and in the year thereafter during his fast in prison. "Thousand thanks for your warm kindly message. I reciprocate every sentence.", he wired to Nahas Pasha after March 9; two days later he sent another wire to the delegation : "Delighted your affectionate wire." (CW, Vol 69, p. 46) The delegation called on Gandhi at Delhi on March 18. On being requested for "a message to Egypt", Gandhi complied. He made two points: Firstly, as he had said in his telegram welcoming them, "there must be a real bond of friendship between India and Egypt". (March 18, 1939, CW, Vol 69, p. 67). "It is not a mere courteous wish. It is a wish from the heart. There is such a lot which is common between the cultures of the two countries." (*Idem*). Secondly, he expected that with India's large Muslim population, friendship between the two countries should help alleviate some internal tensions. (*Idem*) The delegation departed praying for Gandhi's long life "as you are the hope not of India only but of the whole world". (CW, Vol 69, p. 67, n. 3)

The forties in India were years of strife and Gandhi was jailed again in August 1942; he was released after nearly two years, in May 1944. The atom bomb was dropped by the United States on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. Two days later, on August 8, 1945, the anniversary of the Quit India movement that Gandhi had launched three years earlier against British rule in India, he paid tribute to the memory of Zaghoul Pasha, the Wafd leader : "I never had the pleasure of meeting Zaghoul Pasha, but I have always entertained high regard for his patriotism and bravery." (*The Hindu*, August 9, 1945, CW, Vol 81, p. 91) It was nearly two decades since the death of Zaghoul in August 1927 and in remembering him Gandhi was paying tribute to one who, like himself, had led one of the most outstanding challenges to imperialism and colonialism in the twentieth century. This would also be the last anniversary of Zaghoul's death to be observed in the lifetime of his widow, Safia Zaghoul Pasha, who had so warmly greeted and welcomed Gandhi when he had passed through Egypt's ports 14 years earlier.

In the first week of April 1947, Gandhi addressed the Inter-Asian Relations Conference then being held in Delhi. Speaking of his time in South Africa, Gandhi said: "I was a coolie lawyer". (CW, Vol 87, p. 191) If you really want to see India "at its best", he advised the delegates, they had to go to "the humble Bhangi homes" of its seven lakh villages. Africa was represented at the Conference. Attending it were leaders from South Africa, Dr Yusuf Dadoo and Dr G M Naicker both of whom stayed till May. They had called on Gandhi at Massaurhi in Bihar in eastern India on March 20, 1947, and then in Delhi on April 3, 1947.⁶⁴ They met him again on April 11 in Delhi and on May 19 in Patna, Bihar when he gave them a message for South Africa. (CW, Vol 87, p. 257, p. 492, p. 495 and p. 504) Among others attending the Inter-Asian Relations Conference were representatives from Egypt who also met Gandhi on April 4. British troops were still stationed in Egypt and the Egyptians' questions to Gandhi reflected their concerns : "If the British quit, would you still provide them with military facilities in India?" In his very quali-

fied and careful reply, including references to "certain circumstances" and "as a friendly concession vital to her (Britain's) existence", Gandhi hoped India would "consider the request on merits uninfluenced by the memory of past wrongs". (CW, Vol 87, pp. 201-202) He told the Egyptians that "I would advocate the policy of non-violence as far as we can stretch it". (*Idem*)⁶⁵

As Gandhi faced up to the looming prospect of Indian partition, which he had long sought to resist, he was asked about the possibility of the unity of Egypt and Sudan. The unity of the Nile valley had been one of the aspirations of early Egyptian nationalism. Gerald J. Rock of the United Press of America, asked Gandhi: "Do you believe that Egypt and Sudan should unite under one government when the British leave?"⁶⁶ Gandhi replied: "I have no doubt that they ought to". (Answers to Questions, June 1, 1947, CW, Vol 88, p. 48) The poignancy of this answer, published in *The Bombay Chronicle* on June 2, 1947, must have been enhanced a few hours later with the official announcement on Indian partition.

Gandhi had developed an early interest in North Africa, derived inspiration from Mustafa Kamil Pasha, much younger though the latter was, and the Nationalist Party led by him; the Indian leader frequently followed and commented on events in Egypt with which he saw some Indian inter-connections. He noticed also the post-1919 political developments under the leadership of the Wafd, admired Zaghloul Pasha, nine years his senior, and responded warmly to expressions of fraternity and solidarity from Egyptian movements. These contacts and impulses had left lasting impressions. There would be discussion within Egypt about the respective legacies of the Nationalist Party represented by Mustafa Kamil Pasha in the early years of the century on the one hand and the post-1918 Wafd, represented by Zaghloul Pasha and later by Nahas Pasha.⁶⁷ Interestingly, even as Gandhi defined his own methods, he straddled and absorbed these legacies, having derived early inspiration from the one and sympathetically observed and admired the struggles of both. There were several points of common interest in the Indian and Egyptian struggles and much overlapping of methods used -- not only by the dominating power but also by the nationalists in both countries. The Indian and Egyptian leaderships in the twentieth century compared notes frequently. While bearing in mind the differences in the two situations, each drew upon the experiences of the other.

References

1. The year 2011 marks the 75th death anniversary of Munshi Premchand (1880-1936), legendary literary figure of 20th Century India. This article is a slightly expanded and revised version of the written text of the Fourth Munshi Premchand Memorial lecture delivered by me under the auspices of Jamia's Premchand Archives & Literary Centre, Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi on March 22, 2011. References to Gandhi's writings and to his *Collected Works* have ordinarily been given within the main text while other references are given in notes to the text. Mr E S Reddy was kind enough to read earlier drafts and made valuable suggestions from which I have benefited.

2. For an account of the events surrounding the occupation, see Jawaharlal Nehru, 'Britain Seizes and Holds on to Egypt', a piece written as a letter from prison to his daughter on March 11, 1933, and included in J. Nehru, *Glimpses of World History*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1962, pp. 603-610, first published in 1934. Yet another early Indian account of these events and their far-reaching consequences is in Syed Mahmud, *The Khilafat and England*, published by Mohamad Imtyaz, Sidaqaat Ashram, Patna, (1921), pp. 66-70. Gandhi would refer to the latter work in an article in *Young India* on September 1, 1921.
3. Evelyn Baring, First Earl of Cromer (1841-1917); British Comptroller-General in Egypt, 1883-1907. He had earlier served as Private Secretary to Northbrook, Viceroy of India (1872-76).
4. Historically, the names of Mustafa Kamil Pasha and Muhammad Farid (1868-1919) are associated with the founding of the Nationalist Party of Egypt. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1958), who became a leading figure in the Indian National Congress and of the Indian freedom movement in its Gandhian phase, records visiting Cairo in 1908, apparently sometime after Kamil Pasha's death, and coming into contact with "the followers of Mustafa Kamil Pasha". (Maulana Azad, *India Wins Freedom*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1959, pp. 5-6). The spelling of Mustafa Kamil's name varies in the literature. Some variations are : Kamal, Kemal and Kamel. Kamil is now encountered most frequently; but this spelling does not seem to have been as prevalent in his own lifetime. For purposes of this lecture we have used Kamil but have retained other spellings wherever they occur in a quoted reference.
5. In our time this party has been characterised thus: "Created by men of the intelligentsia's first generation, the first Nationalist Party was by no means the party of the Egyptian bourgeoisie... At critical moments the party became the nation – whose potential it symbolised". (Samir Amin, *The Arab Nation*, (Tr. by Michael Parris), Zed Press, London, 1978, pp. 35-36)
6. Uttam Sinha of the National Gandhi Museum, Rajghat, New Delhi kindly provided me with an English translation of Mustafa Kamil Pasha's October 22, 1907 speech from the Gujarati version published in *Indian Opinion*, June 27, July 4, and July 11, 1908.
7. This is also referred to as the Dinshawai or Dinshaway incident. The event had long-term implications that may be compared with the subsequent Jallianwala Bagh massacre (1919) in Amritsar, India and the shootings at Sharpeville (1960) and Soweto (1976) in South Africa. Of the Egyptian incident, one scholar writes : "Within a few days it became clear that the incident provided the impetus which had up to then been lacking in the nationalist and pan-Islamic Press. Ali Yusuf wrote twenty-three articles ... and hardly a poet kept silent." (Jamal Mohammed Ahmed, *The Intellectual Origins of Egyptian Nationalism*, Oxford University Press, London, 1960, pp. 62-63) "I saw the heart of Egypt throb", wrote Qasim Amin, a contemporary of Mustafa Kamil, on the executions that followed Denshawai (*Ibid.*, p. 79). In England, the Denshawai repression was contemporaneously criticised by George Bernard Shaw. An English army officer in India noted that "accounts of it also reached India and Burma. In Ireland, Denshawai was used with effect, and of course the demand for Home Rule was stimulated". (*Must England Lose India ? : The Nemesis of Empire*, Arthur Osburn, Alfred A. Knopf, publisher, London, 1930 pp 66-67). One scholar writes that " There can be no doubt that Cromer intended the Dinshaway trial to serve as an object lesson to the Egyptian population of the way Great Britain dealt with serious offences against its rule". (Robert L. Tignor, *Lord Cromer : Practitioner and Philosopher of Imperialism*, *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol 2, No 2 (May 1963), pp. 142-159 at p. 155) In a passing reference, Wavell who served in the region, admits that in the "disastrous Denshawai incident", there had been "undue severity" which "had left a serious stain on the British reputation in Egypt". (Field Marshal Viscount Wavell, *Allenby : Soldier and Statesman*, George C Harrap & Co Ltd, London, 1946, p 314).
8. See Bernard Shaw, *Collected Plays with Their Prefaces*, Volume II, The Bodley Head, London, 1971 (based on the standard edition, 1931), pp. 805-892.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 861
10. Paul Dunbar has been described as the first African-American "seriously to take up the career of man of letters". (See Charles Larson, *The Novels of Paul Laurence Dunbar*, *Phylon*, 1968, Vol 29, No 3, p.257) Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was recognised at an early age as "a musical genius". (See Adelaide M. Cromwell, *An African Victorian Feminist : The Life and Times of Adelaide Smith Casely Hayford 1868-1960*, Howard University Press, Washington, D.C., 1992, p. 60)
11. The article, published in *Comrade*, Delhi, on September 26, 1914, was in response to an eponymous editorial in the *London Times* of August 29, 1914. The editors of the *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* refer to action taken against Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali in October 1914 for publishing an article entitled "Evacuate Egypt".
12. There appears to have been some confusion about the copy of the work related to Kamil Pasha, *Life of Mustafa Kamal Pasha*, that was reprinted in India for purposes of civil disobedience in 1919. It was apparently not the one that had been published from Gandhi's press in South Africa and banned in India. Gandhi noted : "I find that it is not a reprint of one of the prohibited books, but it was reprinted in mistake for a copy of Mustafa Kamel Pasha's speech which is a book included in the list of prohibited literature". (Letter to F C Griffith, May 14, 1919, CW, Vol 15, p. 308).
13. B R Nanda, *The Nehrus*, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1965, p. 163, relying on files of the British Indian Government.
14. *Idem*

15. Wavell, *op. cit.*, p. 269. Writing from prison on May 20, 1933, Jawaharlal Nehru would recall that the arrest of Zaghloul and other leaders "resulted in the outbreak of a bloody revolution". (See 'Egypt's Fight for Freedom' in *Glimpses, op. cit.*, p. 764) The inter-connection between events in India, Egypt and Ireland, the "classical centres of disaffection", was recognised by activists and scholars alike. Michael Davitt (1846-1906) of the Irish Land League believed that "the Irish, the Indians and the Egyptians should regard themselves as allies in the struggle against imperialism". (Brian Inglis, *Roger Casement*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1973, p. 296) In the context of the period 1919-22, John Gallagher, a Cambridge historian, wrote of the situation in India, Egypt and Ireland: "(n)o analysis of any of these crises will be complete without establishing its interplay with the others". *Nationalisms, and the Crisis of Empire, 1919-1922, Modern Asian Studies*, Vol 15, No 3, *Power, Profit and Politics: Essays on Imperialism, Nationalism and Change in Twentieth Century India* (1981), pp. 355-368 at p. 355; Gandhi, Zaghoul Pasha and Eamon De Valera (1882-1975) were identified at this time as the chief threats or irritants to the Empire. Egyptian opinion, as reflected, for example, in its media and poetics, saw the interconnection between India and Egypt even more starkly. The Egyptian poet, Mahmud Bayram Al-Tunisi (1893-1961) suggested in a poem written between 1921 and 1923 that "Egypt's occupied status is linked to British activities in India, for Egypt stands 'directly on the road to India'". (Marilyn Booth, *Force and Transitivity: Bayram Al-Tunisi and a Poetics of Anti-Colonialism, Afif: Journal of Comparative Poetics, No 7, The Third World: Literature and Consciousness*, (Spring, 1987), pp. 75-111). Al-Tunisi wrote a poem entitled 'Gandhi'; it was republished in *Al-A'mal al-kamila li Bayram al-Tunisi*, Vol VII, *Al-Hay'a al-misriyya al-'amma li-al-kitab*, Cairo, 1982, 21-24, (cited in Marilyn Booth, *supra*, p. 76 and p. 100, who appears to mention no date for the poem). The popular poet, who is identified with the 1919 rebellion, was already quite famous when he left Alexandria, Egypt "in late 1919 bound for twenty years as a political exile in France, Tunisia and Syria...". (Booth, *supra*, p. 75)
16. Ellis Goldberg, *Peasants in Revolt – Egypt 1919, International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol 24, No 2, May 1992, pp. 261-280 at p. 261. It was apprehended that Egypt was "slipping into full Colonial status".
17. Donald M. Reid, *The National Bar Association and Egyptian Politics, 1912-1954, The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol 7, No 4, (1974), pp. 608-646 at p. 618. See also Goldberg, *op. cit.*, p. 274. For the prominent role of women in the protests that followed, especially in Cairo, see Lisa Pollard, *Egyptian Uprising of 1919*, in Bonnie G Smith (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Women in World History*, Vol 2, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2008, pp. 168-169.
18. Goldberg, *op. cit.*, p. 275
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 262-263. On comparable consequences in India of colonial wartime priorities we now have an excellent study of the Second World War period by Madhusree Mukerjee, *Churchill's Secret War: The British Empire and the Ravaging of India During World War II*, Tranquebar Press, Chennai, 2010
20. Goldberg, *op. cit.*, p. 273
21. Wavell, *op. cit.*, p. 271.
22. For these events, and for the admitted toll at Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar on April 13, 1919 see Raja Ram, *The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre*, Panjab University, Chandigarh, 1969; a list of names of 381 persons killed, based on Punjab Government archives, is given at pp. 152-174. This appears to be a list of such dead persons whose names could be ascertained. Unofficial estimates are obviously higher. According to Raja Ram: "At least 2000 persons lay in the Bagh, either dead or wounded". (*Ibid.*, p. 119) The Commissioners appointed by the Indian National Congress had this to say: "In the matter of the death roll, it is interesting to note that according to the Government's own showing, they did not commence investigating the figure before the 20th August, i.e., four months after the tragedy. Mr Thompson then announced that not more than 290 had died. Now they have practically accepted the Sewa Samiti's figures viz., 500, which are based on actual tracing and represent the minimum. The exact figure will never be known, but after careful investigation, we consider that Lala Girdhari Lal's computation of 1000 is by no means an exaggerated calculation." (*Report of the Commissioners appointed by the Punjab Sub-committee of the Indian National Congress*, published by K Santanam, Secretary to the Commission of Inquiry, Lahore, 1920, Vol 1, p. 57.) This report has since been reprinted in 1994 by the National Book Trust, New Delhi with a different pagination.
23. See, for example, Goldberg, *Peasants in Revolt – Egypt 1919, op. cit.*, p.273
24. Jawaharlal Nehru, 'Egypt's Fight for Freedom', in *Glimpses, op. cit.*, p. 764. In this piece, penned in prison on May 20, 1933, Nehru noted of the Egyptian events of 1919: "But though the active insurrection was suppressed, the movement was far from being crushed. It changed its tactics and entered upon a second phase – that of passive resistance. So successful was this that the British Government were forced to take some steps to meet the Egyptian demand."
25. Clare Hollingworth, *The Arabs and the West*, Methuen, London, 1952, p. 10
26. Wavell, *op. cit.*, p. 288
27. See Jawaharlal Nehru, 'Egypt's Fight For Freedom', (May 20, 1933), in *Glimpses, op. cit.*, p. 764
28. Of the Milner Commission's response to the Egyptian boycott, Jawaharlal Nehru would recall: "The Commission were so impressed by the national resistance that they made some far-reaching recommendations. The British Government ignored these, and the struggle in Egypt continued for three years, from early in 1919 to early in 1922." (See previous reference)

29. See Wavell, *op. cit.*, p.323; see also pp. 290-293 generally for a British version of these events. Wavell admitted, however, that in May 1921 the "Alexandria riots had been a direct sequel to an incident at Tanta at the end of April, when the police fired on an unruly and dangerous mob, killing a few and wounding others". (*Ibid.*, p. 291) Yet the British establishment claimed in December 1921 that the presence of Zaghloul and his colleagues was the cause of the trouble in Cairo and elsewhere and deported him first to Aden and then in March 1922 to Seychelles in the Indian Ocean.
30. The 'reserved points' included "the security of British Empire communications, the defence of Egypt against all foreign aggression, the protection of foreign interests and minorities and the Sudan". (Clare Hollingworth, *op. cit.*, p.10) These points, wrote Jawaharlal Nehru in 1933, "bear a family likeness to their cousins in India...". ('*Egypt's Fight For Freedom*', May 20, 1933, in *Glimpses, op. cit.*, p. 765) About the Declaration and the events immediately preceding it, the Egyptian poet Al-Tunisi has been paraphrased thus : "The first, with rifles they silenced those who revolted / The second, Lord Milner came to bind the free / The third, a declaration in February, and in truth it's jesting". (See Marilyn Booth, *Force and Transitivity : Bayram Al-Tunisi and a Poetics of Anti-Colonialism, op. cit.*, p. 84)
31. Robert A. Hill (ed.) *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, Volume IV, 1921-22; University of California Press, Berkeley, 1985, p. 568
32. The words in quotes are from C. Alvin Hughes who in *The Negro Sanhedrin Movement, The Journal of Negro History*, Vol 69, No 1, Winter, 1984, at p. 6 cites the Afro-Caribbean radical Richard B Moore referring to these impulses, at a meeting organised in New York in March 1923 for the purpose of creating a unified platform of Afro-American organisations.
33. Wavell, *op. cit.*, p. 323n. Martial law, which had been proclaimed in Egypt on November 2, 1914, was revoked, nearly nine years later, on July 5, 1923 (*Ibid.*, p. 322)
34. Jawaharlal Nehru, writing from prison on May 22, 1933, would sum up the purport of these demands : "Because some people had murdered Sir Lee Stack, the British Government immediately, and without even the possibility of an inquiry, treated the Egyptian Government as a whole, that is the Egyptian people, as if they had been guilty of the murder. Further they made a handsome financial profit out of the whole affair, and, most significant of all, made it the occasion to settle forcibly all the matters in dispute between themselves and the Egyptian Government, over which negotiations had broken down in London only a few months before. As if this were not enough, they added that all political demonstrations should be prohibited, thus preventing even the normal public life of the country from continuing." ('*What Independence Under the British Means*', in *Glimpses, op. cit.*, at p. 769). Nehru compares the de facto status of the British Resident in nominally independent Egypt at the time with that of similar British Residents in Indian Princely states; these Residents were "the real authority, pulling the strings". (*Ibid.*, p. 770)
35. Yunan Labib Rizk, *The Bitter Harvest*, Al-Ahram Weekly On-Line, Issue No 503, 12-18 October 2000. [[http:// weekly.ahram.org.eg/2002/617/chmcls.htm](http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2002/617/chmcls.htm)] Retrieved on March 21, 2011.
36. Yunan Labib Rizk, *Gandhi in Egypt*, Al-Ahram, Weekly On-Line, Issue No 617, 19-25 December 2002. [<http:// weekly.ahram.org.eg/2000/503/chmcls.htm>] Retrieved on March 21, 2011. Rizk, a prominent Egyptian historian, cited various reports in *Al Ahram* during 1930-31. Gandhi's release from prison in January 1931 was hailed in *Al Ahram* by the senior columnist Ahmed El-Sawi Mohamed as "The day of Gandhi, the day of India, the day of freedom".
37. The Wafd party got its name from "delegation" after a delegation, *Al Wafd al Misri* ('The Egyptian Delegation') to the British Resident sought in November 1918 permission to go to London to press for Independence, a request that was refused. (Clare Hollingworth, *op. cit.*, p. 10) Indian leaders highly regarded the Wafd party. In March and May 1933 Jawaharlal Nehru wrote comprehensively on political developments in Egypt. (We have referred above to his gripping pieces, written initially as letters from prison to his daughter, '*Britain Seizes and Holds on to Egypt*', '*Egypt's Fight for Freedom*' and '*What Independence Under the British Means*', and included in the 1934 publication : *Glimpses of World History, op. cit.*, pp. 603-610, and pp. 761-775). A brief and incisive analysis of the Wafd party was made by Acharya Narendra Deva, the doyen of the Indian socialist movement, in *Misr Ki Rajnitik Partiyani, Janvani*, February 1947 (reproduced in Narendra Deva, *Rashtriyata Aur Samajwad*, Gyan Mandal, Banaras, 1949, pp. 643-647). A more recent scholar whose characterisation of Mustafa Kamil Pasha's *Al Hizb al Watani* we had referred to in note 4 above, considers the Wafd to have had a relatively broad base : "The Wafd, whose history dominates that of Egypt from 1919 to 1952, was also not the party of the Egyptian bourgeoisie". (Samir Amin, *op. cit.*, p. 36)
38. Zaghloul Pasha had died on August 23, 1927. [See Nehru, '*What Independence Under the British Means*' (May 22, 1933), in *Glimpses, op. cit.*, p. 771]
39. Mahadev Desai, "*From Over the Waves*" in C. Rajagopalachari and J C Kumarappa (eds.) *The Nation's Voice*, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1932, (second edn, 1947) p. 101.
40. See Rizk, *Gandhi in Egypt*, supra. For three photographs related to this Egyptian welcome, see Waman P. Kabadi (editor and compiler), *India's Case for Swaraj : Select Speeches, Writings, Interviews Etcetera of Mahatma Gandhi in England and India (September 1931 to January 1932)*, Yeshanand & Co, Bombay, 2nd edn, 1932.
41. Omar El-Haqqaq, *Gandhi in Modern Arabic Literature*, in B. R Nanda (ed.), *Mahatma Gandhi : 125 Years*, Indian Council of Cultural Relations, New Delhi, 1995, pp 77-79
42. Albert Hourani, *A History of Arab Peoples*, Faber & Faber, London, 1992, p. 342
43. Mahadev Desai, in C. Rajagopalachari and J C Kumarappa (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 107

44. *Idem*
45. Mahadev Desai in Rajagopalachari and Kumarappa (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 108. According to Desai, considerable pre-censorship prevailed in Egypt.
46. *Idem*. Desai notes: "The women under Madame Zagloul, who is called the Mother of the Egyptians, are also astir, and what is known as the Moderate or the Liberal Party, which used to attack and criticize the Wafd, is now supporting the Wafd. Mahomed Mahmud Pasha, the President of the party, was belaboured during one of the disturbances and he has since been a staunch supporter of the Wafd". The previous year had been a troubled one in Egypt, involving an election boycott, a general strike, police firings and attacks by soldiers on workers at a railway workshop, killing 70 and wounding about a thousand. The railway workers, according to the version recorded by Desai, had thrown pieces of iron at the soldiers but were otherwise unarmed.
47. Mahadev Desai in Rajagopalachari and Kumarappa (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp 108-109
48. See Rizk, *Gandhi in Egypt, supra*.
49. *Idem*
50. In his record of a trip to Africa in the 1950s, Reginald Reynolds writes of a visit to the office of an Arabic daily in Cairo: "It was a pleasant surprise in this Moslem stronghold to find among the few pictures on the walls of the editor's room both a photograph and an original portrait of Mahatma Gandhi the latter a present from Gandhi to the editor, Ahmed Abdul Fath." (Reynolds, *Beware of Africans: A Pilgrimage from Cairo to the Cape*, Jarrolds, London, 1955, pp. 16-17) This is probably a reference to Mamoud Abul-Fath, whose interview with Gandhi at Port Said has been referred to by Rizk in '*Gandhi in Egypt*', *supra*.
51. See D Guerin, in *La Revolution Proletarienne*, N 122, December 1931, pp 306-309. *La Revolution Proletarienne* was the syndicalist revolutionary journal of Pierre Monatte, Robert Louzon and others.
52. Based on extract from Political History of Sudan, 1924 to 1931, Archives, Khartoum, reproduced in Muddathir 'Abd Al-Rahim, *Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan: A Study in Constitutional and Political Development, 1899-1956*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1969, p. 125n
53. See Heather J. Sharkey, *A Century in Print: Arabic Journalism and Nationalism in Sudan 1899-1999*, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, November 1999, pp. 531-549 at p. 540 and p. 547, n.58. A number of artisanal self-help groups were established under nationalist auspices in Sudan in the 1930s; according to Sharkey, one possible inspiration for some of these among the North Sudanese intellectuals was the Indian movement led by Gandhi "whose writings were popular in literary circles". She cites, for example, Mu'awiya Nur, *Mu'allafat*, 2 vols, Qism al-Ta'lif wa-al-Nashr, Jamial al-Khartum, Khartoum, 1970, 142-49. According to Sharkey, "[t]he nationalist Ahmad Khayr was an active supporter of the idea of producing local cotton weave-that is, 'dammur' cloth". She cites, in this connection, Mustafa Muhammad al-Hasan, *Rijal wa-mawqifi al-haraka al-wataniyya* (Khartoum, n.d.), 6-18.
54. C B Dalal, *Gandhi: 1915-1948 A Detailed Chronology*, Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi, 1971, p. 96n. See also Mira Behn (Madeleine Slade), *The Spirit's Pilgrimage*, Longmans, London, 1960, p. 152.
55. Rizk, *Gandhi in Egypt, supra*, mentions Gandhi's arrival at Port Said as 10 am on December 18. This is, of course, an error. According to Rizk, "[I]t was the captain of the liner who put the crowning impediment to the Mahatma's visit to Cairo".
56. See Rizk, *Gandhi in Egypt, supra*.
57. James D Hunt, *Gandhi in London*, revised edition, Promilla & Co, New Delhi, 1993, p 232 (first published 1978).
58. Edmond Privat, *Aux Indes Avec Gandhi*, Editions Denoel, Paris, 1960, p. 16; passage translated and quoted in P. C. Roy Chaudhury, *Edmond Privat: A Forgotten Friend of India*, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1976, p. 27. Mira Behn had also accompanied Gandhi, who she referred to as Babu (father), and would record in her autobiography: "When we reached Port Said there was mysterious tension and excitement. The Egyptian friends had come with a whole fleet of cars to take Babu and his party to Cairo and on down to Suez by road to pick up the steamer again there. Babu was all ready to go, but he was given to understand by officials that the ship was not going to call at Suez and if he landed he would be left behind – a thing he could not possibly afford to do at that juncture. So the whole plan fell through.... When we reached Suez, the ship did stop, and there would have been quite enough time for Babu to be brought alongside in a launch." Mira Behn (Madeleine Slade), *The Spirit's Pilgrimage*, Longmans, London, 1960, p. 152.
59. See Rizk, *Gandhi in Egypt, supra*. Ceza Nabrawi, b. 1893, also spelt variously as Nabarawi and even Nabaraoui, was one of the two leading feminist figures in Egypt at the time, the other being Huda Sha'rawi. Ceza Nabrawi's approach to feminist questions was that of a nationalist: "How could women hope to gain their freedom when Egypt herself was not free?" (See Miriam Cooke, *Telling Their Lives: A Hundred Years of Arab Women's Writings*, *World Literature Today*, Vol 60, No 2, Spring 1986, pp. 212-216, at p. 213.)
60. Margot Badran, *The Feminist Vision in the Writings of Three Turn-of-the-Century Egyptian Women*, *Bulletin*, British Society for Middle Eastern Studies, Vol 15, No 1/ 2 (1988), pp. 11-20 at p. 14. See also Mervat F. Hatem, *Egyptian Discourses on Gender and Political Liberalisation: Do Secular and Islamist Views Really Differ?*, *The Middle East Journal*, Vol 48, No 4, (Autumn 1994), pp. 661- 676 at p. 674.

61. Privat, *op. cit.*, p. 17; passage translated and quoted in P.C. Roy Chaudhury, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-29; this and the previous passage from Privat (cf. note 57 *supra*) have been translated by Leelavathy Rao.
62. Theodore Rothstein (1871-1953) was a Russian based in England who later went back to Moscow; after his return to the then Soviet Union he was entrusted in the 1920s with diplomatic and other assignments by the Soviet regime. His early work, *Egypt's Ruin : A Financial and Administrative Record*, Fifeild (publishers), London, 1910, was a critique of British policies in Egypt. A little before this he had written an article "The British in Egypt", for *Die Neue Zeit*; a translation of that piece was published in *The Social Democrat*, Vol XII, No 1, January 15, 1908, pp. 22-31 and is available online. Gandhi's letter to Narandas is in Gujarati. There are minor errors in the spelling of Rothstein's name and in the title of the 1910 book as transcribed in the English translation of the letter included in *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*.
63. See Jawaharlal Nehru, Note (October 1938), appended to the May 22, 1933 piece 'What Independence Under the British Means', in *Glimpses*, *op. cit.*, pp. 774 -775
64. C B Dalal, *op. cit.*, pp 156-157.
65. The Palestinians too met Gandhi on April 4, 1947, probably along with the Egyptians. (See C B Dalal, *op. cit.*, p. 157.)
66. Sudan has since had another severance, leading to the birth of South Sudan as an independent country in July 2011. The forces and process that have led to this require understanding and analysis, but it may be safe to say that external economic interests in southern Sudan are not conspicuous by their absence.
67. See Yoav Di-Capua, *Embodiment of the Revolutionary Spirit : The Mustafa Kamil Mausoleum in Cairo*, **History and Memory**, Vol 13, No 1, (Spring/Summer 2001), pp. 85-113 and Ralph M Coury, *The Politics of the Funereal : The Tomb of Saad Zaghlul*, **Journal of the American Center in Egypt**, Vol 29, (1992), pp. 191-200

L'Afrique entre Dieu et dieux : le mouvement pendulaire de la foi

Assouman Bamba, Université de Bouaké (Côte d'Ivoire)

Abstract

Gods and God in Africa, the faith dilemma

The religious spirit is a constant thought that crosses all the cultures of humanity. Every people of the world without consulting with the others have an innate manner, the intuition of the divine belief that translates in a precise terminology. Since the divine is plural in animist practices of traditional societies in Africa with a wide range of gods with diverse functions; all the gods are under the control of a supreme God, who is perceived in today's modern Africa as a unique God without any assistants. One can thus observe an interpenetration of the exclusive religious methods that shake constantly between the gods of the animistic, the God of the monotheists and without the God of Buddhism. This religious syncretism installs a deterioration of the faith that corrupts the values in Africa.

Résumé

L'esprit religieux est une constante qui traverse toutes les cultures de l'humanité. Chaque peuple du monde, sans consulter les autres, a, de façon innée, l'intuition du divin que traduit une terminologie précise. Alors que le divin se dit comme pluriel dans les pratiques animistes des sociétés traditionnelles d'Afrique avec un panthéon riche de dieux variés aux fonctions diverses que cordonne un Dieu suprême, il se vit de plus en plus dans l'Afrique dite moderne d'aujourd'hui comme un singulier sans assistants. On peut ainsi observer une interpénétration des modes religieux exclusifs qui vacillent constamment entre les dieux des animistes, le Dieu des monothéistes et le sans Dieu du bouddhisme. Ce syncrétisme religieux installe un pourrissement de la foi qui pervertit les valeurs en Afrique.

Que Dieu soit ou existe ne semble pas faire de doute. Son idée traverse toutes les cultures du monde et son être est pris en charge dans toutes les langues humaines par un vocabulaire adéquat. Selon les langues, il est Yéégo, Lago, Gnamien-gbli, Dieu, God, Zeus, Allah, Yahwé, etc. Mais ni les Koulango, ni les Bété, ni les Baoulé, ni les Français, ni les Anglais, n'ont eu à se consulter avant de lui attribuer ce nom. Toutes ces dénominations non concertées suggèrent que chacun le sent en lui en toute certitude comme ayant toujours existé sans savoir comment ni à partir de quand.

Ce qui fait débat, c'est son mode d'existence et les voies d'accès à son être. Pour les uns, il est Unique et retiré dans un ailleurs qu'il s'est aménagé. On entre en contact avec lui à travers toute réalité qu'il a créée et qui manifeste sa présence et sa puissance. Dans ce cas on parle d'ani-

misme qui voit Dieu dans tout. Pour les autres, il est Unique et on ne peut l'approcher que par la voie, tout aussi unique, d'une religion qu'il a inspirée à un messager. Cette position est celle des religions abrahamiques dites monothéistes. Pour certains autres enfin, Dieu est une entité unique qui, après avoir créé l'homme s'est fondu en lui sous forme d'énergie spirituelle à éveiller constamment. On parle de religion d'éveil ou de religion sans Dieu. Chaque type de religion a, dans une démarche exclusive, ses espaces d'exercice, ses procédures d'exécution du culte, et ses interdits. Le péché impardonnable pour chacune de ces religions serait de reconnaître les autres qui ne sont que de simples impostures qui abusent de l'image de Dieu. Le Coran le dit explicitement dans plusieurs de ses passages : « *Certes Allah ne pardonne pas qu'on Lui donne quelqu'associé. A part cela, Il pardonne à qui Il veut* »¹.

On remarque cependant que toutes ces religions partagent l'espace spirituel de l'Afrique dans une parfaite collaboration horizontale. Le même Africain croyant peut partager toutes ces sortes de manifestations de la foi avec une égale ferveur. Peut-on percevoir là le signe d'une originalité religieuse qui infléchirait l'exclusionnisme des religions sectaires ? Une telle pratique du mixage des genres peut-elle sérieusement contribuer au raffermissement de la foi ? Ne traduit-elle pas plutôt un effritement, un pourrissement de la foi conduisant à un déficit de la foi aussi bien en soi qu'en autrui ?

1. Les luttes de suprématie entre les genres religieux en Afrique

Aucune preuve matérielle ne peut attester de l'existence de Dieu. Mais tout dans le comportement des hommes donne la preuve matérielle que Dieu existe. Rien ni dans l'attitude des hommes ni dans la nature ne prouve l'existence matérielle de Dieu. L'existence de Dieu ainsi se résout dans un acte de foi dont différentes religions se disputent la « propriété » exclusive. En Afrique, cette lutte est assez tenace entre les religions polythéistes et les religions monothéistes d'une part et d'autre part entre les deux grandes religions révélées que sont le Christianisme et l'Islam.

A. La guerre pour le contrôle de Dieu et des hommes

Le seul verbe accrédité par les religions pour traduire notre rapport au divin est le verbe croire qui signifie avoir foi en..., faire confiance à... Avoir foi, c'est croire fermement en quelqu'un ou en l'existence de quelque chose à défaut de pouvoir l'expérimenter matériellement. On croit quand on est sûr de l'existence d'une chose ou d'un être dont on est incapable d'en rendre compte par des preuves matérielles parce que retiré dans une zone inaccessible à toute expérience humaine. Le verbe croire qui exprime une assurance inébranlable est un verbe de doute aussi. Il porte en son âme convaincue un doute indélébile et non convainquant. Le terme croire bénéficie alors de l'heureuse ambiguïté de pouvoir désigner à la fois la ferme assurance de l'existence d'un être ou d'une chose et en même temps le doute sur son existence réelle. Mais malgré cette assurance incertaine, cette certitude qui vacille, on se fait à l'idée que Dieu est en toute certitude du côté où nous

nous trouvons, dans la religion de notre obéissance. Ce qui met en scène une violente confrontation entre diverses certitudes opiniâtement convaincues de la vérité de leur foi, notamment le monothéisme venu d'Orient et d'Occident sous les noms d'Islam et de Christianisme et le polythéisme local sérieusement heurté dans son être.

La violence et le ton de ce heurt se disent sous le discours des religions révélées selon lesquelles l'Africain ne connaîtrait pas Dieu. Il n'aurait pas de religion non plus. Elles estiment que la véritable religion c'est la conscience qu'a l'homme d'une puissance supérieure par rapport à laquelle il se pose comme un être plus faible, plus humble. Autrement dit, la religion commence par la conscience qu'il existe quelque chose de supérieur à l'homme. Cette conscience n'existerait pas chez les Nègres qui seraient des magiciens. Or, dans la magie, on ne trouve pas la représentation d'un Dieu, d'une foi morale ; mais pour elle, l'homme est la puissance la plus haute, ayant vis-à-vis de la force de la nature l'attitude de commandement. Il n'est donc pas question d'honorer Dieu en esprit, mais de contrôler les mystères de l'existence par des procédés bien établis. Cette conception trouve sa systématisation philosophique chez Kant qui souligne qu'« on peut ramener toutes les religions à deux : celle qui recherche des faveurs (religion de simple culte) et la religion morale, c'est-à-dire de la bonne conduite »². C'est du côté de la première dite religion cultuelle qu'il classe le Nègre qui se flatterait que Dieu peut le rendre meilleur sans qu'il ait autre chose à faire qu'à l'en prier. Pour cela, il centre son attention sur le sacré extérieur, tel qu'il peut être condensé en des choses, des gestes, des paroles dont l'action peut contraindre Dieu à le servir. Mais selon Kant, il n'y a pas de religion là où gestes et formules ne sont que des procédés pour contraindre des forces obscures à nous servir. Dans l'*Emile*, Rousseau exigeait déjà qu'on ne demande pas de faveurs à Dieu. Lui demander de faire des miracles en ma faveur, « c'est vouloir qu'il fasse mon œuvre et que j'en recueille le salaire »³. Mais, selon Kant, suivant la religion morale, c'est un principe fondamental que chacun doit, selon ses forces, faire son possible pour devenir meilleur et ce n'est que lorsqu'il aura employé sa disposition originelle au bien, pour devenir meilleur, qu'il peut espérer que ce qui n'est pas en son pouvoir sera complété par une collaboration d'en haut. Et il n'est pas seulement nécessaire que l'homme sache en quoi elle consiste : « Il n'est pas essentiel, ni par suite nécessaire à quiconque, de savoir ce que Dieu fait ou a fait pour son salut »⁴. Il faut tout simplement savoir ce que l'on doit faire pour se rendre digne du secours de Dieu : se mettre à son service sans réserve.

Cette ligne d'attaques dépréciatives des adeptes du christianisme est prolongée par l'Islam qui voit dans les religions polythéistes, dont celles d'Afrique, l'incarnation du péché incommensurable qu'est l'associationnisme. Selon le Coran, « l'association est plus grave que le meurtre »⁵ et de préciser que les Associateurs sont « ceux qui associent à Allah d'autres que Lui ; cela comprend ceux qui adorent et vénèrent les idoles, les astres, les intermédiaires, les Anges, les héros, les grands hommes, etc. »⁶. Ces deux discours du coran auxquels restent solidaires les propos des philosophes Kant et Rousseau montrent bien que les adeptes des religions révélées n'admettent pas l'existence d'autres formes d'expressions religieuses qu'ils associent au diable. Dans cet esprit de diabolisation, les prêtres traditionnels appelés komian en

pays akan⁷, garants et principaux animateurs des religions polythéistes, sont dépréciés sous l'expression péjorative de sorciers dont la pratique consisterait à manipuler les forces surnaturelles pour peser sur le cours de la vie des autres « *par le truchement de rituels où intervient l'usage des objets matériels et des incantations verbales* »⁸. Sachant que le subconscient des sociétés et des individus est hanté par la crainte de la sorcellerie, les religions révélées, agissant en psychologues, poussent l'imagerie populaire à représenter les religions polythéistes comme de nature diabolique.

Les prêtres traditionnels sont désignés du nom répressif de sorciers justement et précisément parce qu'en réalité ils sont des résistants réfractaires aux nouvelles religions dominantes que sont devenues l'islam et le christianisme. Par leurs pratiques jugées subversives, ils sont accusés de perpétuer les anciennes religions traditionnelles qu'on veut voir mourir. La force répressive des religions nouvelles les pousse à la clandestinité. Ainsi, en face des religions dominantes célébrées « *en pleine lumière, va se maintenir à travers les âges un culte nocturne aux divinités vaincues. Il y avait là une révolte religieuse qui ne dit pas son nom* »⁹. Si cette bataille n'est pas soutenue par une stratégie de subordination, par des motivations autres que religieuses, on comprendrait alors mal son opportunité et l'agressivité de son ton au regard même du contenu de message de certaines prescriptions coraniques. Le Coran, dans une sorte d'exhortation à la clémence et à la tolérance religieuse, mentionne qu'il ne revient à aucun humain de juger les actes d'autres humains. Ce privilège est le partage exclusif du Tout-Puissant comme le recommande cette sourate : « *.... patientez donc jusqu'à ce qu'Allah juge parmi nous car Il est le Meilleur des juges* »¹⁰. D'où vient que les musulmans outrepassent cette prérogative dévolue à Allah pour porter un jugement de valeur sur la qualité de la foi d'autrui, fut-ce un polythéiste africain ?

A les regarder de près, dans leur forme comme dans leur structuration, le monothéisme et le polythéisme ne sont en rien tout à fait différents. Ils se reconnaissent en une même racine affirmative qui les irrigue. Ils sont traversés par le même souffle qui requiert une attitude de révérence craintive et un sentiment de dépendance à l'égard d'une réalité incontrôlable, mais essentielle au point de vue vital. Ils proclament tous, avec des variantes dans les voies, l'unicité de Dieu.

On pourrait ainsi relever que, derrière les images éclatées de Dieu qui peuplent les polythéismes, se trouve un principe suprême. En pays koulango¹¹ par exemple, sans nier les autres dieux, on peut donner à la figure de Yéégo tous les caractères que le monothéisme reconnaît à Allah, à Yahvé. Pierre Henri Gravrand conceptualise fort bien cette réalité. Il affirme que « *même si le culte populaire a polarisé l'attention sur les dieux secondaires, la pensée religieuse africaine va jusqu'à un Grand Dieu. L'exemple dahoméen éclaire le rapport qui existe entre le Dieu suprême et les dieux secondaires ou les Esprits auxquels il donne le gouvernement ordinaire du monde* »¹². Avec Gravrand, on pourrait parler véritablement d'une chefferie céleste sous l'autorité du Grand Dieu. Les fonctions de ces dieux secondaires est de gérer le quotidien des hommes sur la base des cahiers de charges que le Dieu suprême leur a élaboré pour les orienter et les canaliser dans leurs spécialités. Ils servent dès lors de lien de communication entre les hommes et le Dieu

suprême. Leur fonction est similaire à celle assigné aux prêtres, aux pasteurs et aux imams qui constituent le clergé, c'est-à-dire les ministres de Dieu. Ils officient les prières et les cérémonies sacrificielles qui sont des modes de communication avec le divin, des voies d'accès au sacré par lesquelles les fidèles se proposent de gagner ses faveurs.

Il en va des Dahoméens comme de la plupart des peuples africains traditionnels. Dans leur culture, on a affaire à des religions aux dieux multiples où les ancêtres disparus viennent continuellement enrichir le panthéon. Selon Vincent Mulago qui appuie son analyse sur le peuple bantou, cela se constate à la place qu'occupe le cimetière dans la vie d'un village Bakongo¹³. Sans le cimetière, le village n'aurait guère de stabilité, car c'est là que l'ancêtre a précédé ses descendants, et c'est là que ceux-ci le suivront¹⁴. Ainsi, chez les Bakongo, l'homme est non seulement l'héritier, mais aussi le continuateur de l'œuvre des ancêtres. On peut ainsi voir avec Mulago, et surtout avec Gravrand que dans les religions traditionnelles africaines, derrière le polythéisme apparent et un panthéon riche de dieux, d'esprits, de génies et d'ancêtres, s'affirme fondamentalement la croyance en un Etre suprême unique dans sa transcendance absolue. Alors, contrairement aux allégations des religions monothéistes tendant à disqualifier l'être authentique des religions polythéistes et à faire de l'Afrique une terre de magie et de sorcellerie, ce continent démontre que la religion en tant que système de croyances organisant la vie des individus se réalise simplement en des formes multiples différentes les unes des autres sans qu'aucune ne soit La religion.

Des indices historiques et bibliques montrent que le continent africain n'a jamais été ce que les religions abrahamiques ont toujours vu en lui et veulent que les autres voient en lui : une terre d'où Dieu a toujours été absent. Tout indique que l'Afrique est la terre de Dieu et le refuge de ses messagers. Moïse, le prophète du judaïsme, première religion abrahamique, y est né, précisément en Egypte¹⁵. Tout aussi biblique est l'exemple de Jésus Christ qui, dans une sorte de pèlerinage de murissement en vue de l'accomplissement de sa prophétie, va se ressourcer en Egypte, lieu de naissance de son prédécesseur Moïse pour être oint du message divin et en recevoir tous les attributs¹⁶. Pour ce qui est de l'Islam, « *les premiers musulmans aussi, pour échapper aux persécutions des idolâtres mecquois, se sont réfugiés en Afrique (Ethiopie), selon les recommandations du Saint Prophète de l'Islam. Ces aspects démontrent que l'Afrique est la terre de refuge pour l'humanité et pour les élus de Dieu* »¹⁷. Dieu est signe et c'est par signe qu'il se fait entendre et connaître. Il se fit connaître comme tel en terre africaine qui se pose ainsi comme le lieu de protection et de ressourcement de ses envoyés. L'Afrique est dès lors le lieu à partir duquel s'est diffusé le message symbolique de l'Etre et de la présence de Dieu.

Un regard centré sur l'essentiel de ce discours qui est la foi en un Dieu créateur de toute chose permet de soupçonner que ce qui se joue à travers la dépréciation des religions traditionnelles africaines c'est la lutte de positionnement des cultures. Il s'agit d'une lutte pour le contrôle spirituel des âmes africaines à soumettre à une logique culturelle ordonnée à des ambitions économiques. On pourrait parler d'un impérialisme spirituo-culturel

dont la visée est l'hégémonie de l'économie des Etats parrains du Dieu venu d'Orient et d'Occident ; deux pôles qui se livrent à un duel fratricide.

B. La bataille intestine des sœurs jumelles

Malgré l'évidence des preuves montrées par Dieu pour présenter l'Afrique comme la terre de fermentation et de murissement de la prophétie, les Arabes, tout comme les Hébreux, tiennent les Noirs pour des esclaves de naissance, selon une volonté attribuée à Dieu. Les premiers, « *les Arabes, première branche du peuple sémite par Ismaël, premier fils d'Abraham, étaient parfaitement au fait des mythes fondateurs construits par leurs Ancêtres, pour asseoir les fondements de la tradition du peuple sémite. Ils ont eu la même conception que les Hébreux et furent les premiers à réduire les Noirs à l'esclavage avant le VII^{ème} siècle* »¹⁸. Pour exclure les religions africaines traditionnelles de l'espace de la spiritualité, les religions monothéistes ont procédé carrément à la privatisation du Dieu le père, créateur de toutes choses. Dieu n'est plus celui de toutes les nations humaines, mais spécifiquement celui d'Israël, indiqué comme la nation élue de Dieu, de Rome et d'Arabie.

Dans cette privatisation de Dieu, les autres nations sont coupées de l'alliance avec Dieu. Plusieurs versets du chapitre 17 de la Bible, notamment de 1 à 22, de genèse excluent les autres nations de l'alliance de Dieu. Cela veut dire que tous les prophètes qui ne sont pas de la descendance d'Abraham sont faux. Mais l'incompréhensible, c'est le fait que l'alliance ne concerne pas les descendants d'Ismaël, premier fils d'Abraham, ancêtre des Arabes. Seuls les descendants d'Isaac, à travers Jacob appelé Israël, dont les douze enfants représentent les douze tribus d'Israël, sont considérés comme les seuls enfants bénis et élus de Dieu. Ainsi, les seuls prophètes qui comptent pour les Juifs sont ceux dont l'ancien Testament fait mention. C'est pourquoi, même Jésus le Christ, Fils de Dieu, est écarté de la liste des vrais prophètes mandatés par Dieu. Cela explique aussi que, le prophète de l'Islam, Mohammad, bien que descendant d'Abraham par Ismaël, et annoncé comme le dernier prophète par les Juifs, ne soit pas reconnu comme un prophète véridique et authentique par les Hébreux. « *Les Juifs annonçaient aux idolâtres arabes l'arrivée d'un des leurs comme prophète. Mais quand vint Muhammad (pbAsl), ils le désavouèrent* »¹⁹. Si l'héritage religieux d'Abraham est sélectif parmi sa propre descendance, comment pouvoir parler de prophètes qui seraient issus d'autres peuples ?

La guerre est ainsi ouverte entre les religions polythéistes depuis le début et se poursuit en Afrique avec une intensité meurtrière entre les deux camps dont la véridicité prophétique est contestée par les Hébreux : le christianisme et l'Islam. Cette dernière, inscrivant son être dans la continuité révélationnelle qui trouve son point de départ chez le patriarche Abraham, se pose comme le sceau de la révélation et la vérité de la prophétie. Son prophète est donc celui qui porte la dernière version de la volonté révisée d'Allah qui s'est accordé l'initiative de la parole pour la dernière fois dans le souci de situer les hommes sur la vérité de son être et de son dire. Il dit : « *Et sur toi (Muhammad) Nous avons fait descendre le Livre avec la vérité, pour confirmer le Livre qui était là avant lui et prévaloir sur lui...* »²⁰.

En opposition ouverte au christianisme, l'islam se pose clairement comme la meilleure religion en donnant ses adeptes à voir comme les élus de Dieu. Ils se définissent comme étant ceux qui sont sur le droit chemin et qui suivent les recommandations de Dieu qui les reconnaît comme tels : « *Vous êtes la meilleure communauté qu'on ait fait surgir pour les hommes. Vous ordonnez le convenable, interdisez le blâmable et croyez en Allah. Si les gens du Livre croyaient, ce serait meilleur pour eux* »²¹. L'expression « *Les gens du Livre* » désigne en général tous ceux qui se réclament de posséder un Livre révélé, les musulmans inclus. Mais au sens strict et même péjoratif, elle renvoie principalement aux Juifs et aux Chrétiens. Ils sont considérés comme des hommes à la foi inauthentique dont le contenu est supplanté par un nouveau message réajusté auquel ils refusent d'adhérer dans un acte de rébellion assumée. Le Coran les subsume sous la notion diffamatoire, aux visages et usages divers, de mécréants. Ce terme s'applique particulièrement aux chrétiens qui sont explicitement ciblés par la nomination descriptive que voici : « *Certes sont mécréants ceux qui disent : 'Allah, c'est le Messie, fils de Marie !'* »²². Mais, de son côté aussi, le christianisme se définit lui-même comme la seule et vraie religion en laquelle Dieu se reconnaît. Il est l'unique religion qui vaille ; l'islam n'étant à ses yeux qu'une simple escroquerie spirituelle. La confrontation se fait frontale et se veut violente entre les deux sœurs jumelles que d'importants enjeux économiques et hégémoniques opposent.

Le véritable enjeu de ces oppositions entre religions de la même lignée abrahamique, est moins spirituel qu'économique. Ces religions ont servi de base et d'arguments à toutes les politiques coloniales. La traduction la plus expressive de ces politiques se lit dans ce discours de Léopold II, roi des Belges, devant les missionnaires se rendant en Afrique, et précisément au Congo : « *Révérands pères et chers compatriotes. La tâche qui vous est confiée est très délicate à remplir et demande du tact (...). Le but principal de votre mission au Congo n'est donc point d'apprendre aux nègres à connaître Dieu (...). Votre rôle essentiel est de faciliter leurs tâches aux administratifs et aux industriels (...), vous veillerez entre autre à désintéresser nos sauvages des richesses dont regorgent leur sol et sous-sol, pour éviter qu'ils s'y intéressent, qu'ils ne nous fassent pas une concurrence meurtrière et rêvent un jour de nous déloger. Votre connaissance de l'évangile vous permettra de trouver facilement des textes recommandant aux fidèles d'aimer la pauvreté, tel par exemple "heureux les pauvres car le royaume des cieux est à eux. Il est difficile à un riche d'entrer dans le royaume des cieux". Vous ferez tout pour que les Nègres aient peur de s'enrichir pour mériter le ciel* »²³.

Pour atteindre ce but, il faut marquer l'homme noir au fer, il faut le déshumaniser pour pouvoir disposer de lui et de ses biens sans que la conscience humaine n'ait à souffrir d'aucun cas de conscience. Il faut le déposséder de lui-même et de ses biens. Il s'agit d'un sauvage ; aucun droit n'est rattaché à son être. L'Eglise catholique romaine le prouve assez bien, elle qui reprend l'injustice religieuse pour la prolonger avec d'autres accents. Elle n'a renié aucun aspect des préjugés et calomnies formulés contre la race noire. D'ailleurs, presque tous les pères de l'Eglise s'évertueront à réaffirmer cette réalité. C'est le cas du prêtre Las Casas qui, pris de pitié pour les Indiens

d'Amérique, chez qui il a découvert une âme, a poussé les conquistadors espagnols à aller chercher, pour les remplacer, les Africains destinés à toutes les servitudes. Cham, fils de Noé, l'ancêtre de l'homme noir, selon les Judéo-chrétiens, a été maudit pour avoir commis une faute. Sa descendance doit purger sa peine par le lien de sang. C'est un héritage biologique que l'ancêtre lui a laissé. Il doit se l'approprier pour l'assumer. En 1454, le Pape Nicolas V, père de l'Eglise apostolique et romaine, demande au monde éclairé de réactiver ce pacte. Il adresse une bulle au roi du Portugal, Alphonse V, alors maître du monde, l'autorisant, ou plus précisément lui ordonnant de réduire les Noirs en esclavage, afin de servir l'homme blanc et d'être convertis au Christianisme, pour les faire entrer dans la civilisation du maître. « *Nous avions jadis, par de précédentes lettres, concédé, au Roi Alphonse, entre autres choses, la faculté pleine et entière d'attaquer, de conquérir, de vaincre, de réduire et de soumettre tous les sarrasins, païens (Noirs) et autres ennemis du Christ où qu'ils soient, avec leurs royaumes, duchés, principautés, domaines, propriétés, meubles et immeubles, tous les biens par eux détenus et possédés, de réduire leurs personnes en servitude perpétuelle (...)*²⁴. Pour faciliter la main basse sur les biens de ces « autres ennemis du Christ », il faut préalablement saper l'esprit du peuple africain en sabordant les religions traditionnelles en lesquelles il s'exprime et les remplacer par de nouvelles religions auxquelles les Africains sont complètement étrangers.

La chasse aux âmes égarées des païens africains est ouverte. Il faut capturer et dompter le maximum d'esprits errants pour les rendre à Dieu. Par diverses méthodes, le christianisme et l'islam recrutent dans les « *rangs de Satan, du diable africain* » qui est en train d'infecter, de souiller la pureté du royaume de Dieu sur terre. L'islam dresse sa tente au Nord de l'Afrique pour amorcer la purification du continent par voie descendante. Des Etats islamiques se créent avec des constitutions qui s'appuient sur les lettres coraniques²⁵. On parle du Maghreb arabe interdit aux « mécréants » chrétiens. La quantité, la qualité et le volume des mosquées affichent la fiche signalétique religieuse et la ferveur islamique de la zone. Quant au christianisme, il bivouaque au Sud de l'Afrique, et par escaliers croissants, remonte le continent pour conquérir et délivrer les âmes noires damnées. Des nations d'obéissance chrétienne naissent sur son parcours Chaque religion délimite bien son territoire spirituel et politique pour le mettre hors de la souillure de l'autre considérée comme satanique et dont l'esprit désincarné rôde. Les églises, les temples et les mosquées se font face dans une défiance belligérante. Leurs fidèles de plus en plus fanatisés ou déjà fanatiques évitent soigneusement le voisinage de la foi, voisinage qui devient une pure provocation. C'est la guerre sans concession des tranchées religieuses qui trouve son expression radicale dans l'établissement d'écoles confessionnelles chrétiennes et musulmanes.

Dans l'espace philosophique, Platon, avec l'esprit de rigueur conceptuelle qui le caractérise, comprit le premier que la meilleure façon d'épargner la société de la corruption, c'est de la couper à sa racine de ceux qui sont déjà corrompus. Autrement dit, il faut séparer les bourgeons frais et sains de la société de la proximité morale avariée des feuilles jaunies ou en voie de l'être²⁶. Cela revient à dire qu'il faut mettre les jeunes pousses dont l'innocence permet tous les espoirs de pureté, de probité morale à l'écart des attitudes viciées des adultes. Un tel esprit de conservation de la pureté

des enfants de la cité a conduit Platon à concevoir un projet d'éducation qui se propose de les modeler de sorte à en faire sortir un nouveau type de citoyen différent du modèle déjà disponible. Ce faisant, il initie et installe une nouvelle cité qui ne doit rien, dans ses mœurs ou valeurs, à celle qui existe déjà. Il s'agit, non pas d'une création ontologique de cité, mais d'une création éthique et morale de citoyens.

La trouvaille de Platon inspire les créateurs d'empires religieux en Afrique. Des écoles missionnaires se mettent en place pour prendre en charge la configuration spirituelle des enfants sur une base chrétienne. Dans un contexte où les adultes résistent à la pénétration d'une religion qui ébranle l'ensemble des structures socio-traditionnelles, il s'agit de s'attaquer aux obstacles socioculturels du monde africain en faisant découvrir aux jeunes l'irrationalité des pratiques ancestrales. Il faut réduire les comportements traditionnels à des représentations archaïques et rétrogrades. « *Dans la stratégie missionnaire, l'école est le champ de bataille où l'on fait surgir une élite en rupture avec le paganisme africain. C'est un pari sur l'avenir* »²⁷ dans la mesure où elle va provoquer la mise en place d'un nouveau monde en opposition avec l'ordre établi depuis des millénaires. Plus précisément, il s'agit d'une juxtaposition de deux modes de vie étrangers l'un à l'autre où les enfants ne tiennent plus des parents, mais de l'étranger qui en devient le précepteur principal. Ces écoles administrées par des missionnaires, généralement blancs, dispensent un enseignement confessionnel qui oriente l'enfant à la compréhension et à l'adoption du message de Jésus. Tout s'y fait sous le parrainage du Christ, Fils unique par qui l'on va au Père Unique. A ces écoles d'inspiration chrétienne répondent les écoles coraniques ou médersas où se réalise le formatage religieux de ceux que Dieu a sauvés en leur donnant le privilège d'être musulmans. Tout s'y déroule conformément à la lettre du Coran. Que ce soit les écoles missionnaires ou les médersas, l'unique but de l'éducation est de couper les enfants de leurs parents en ne donnant pas à ceux-ci l'occasion de transmettre à ceux-là les valeurs liées à leur système religieux. Il s'agit d'effacer l'ordre établi sur les principes religieux traditionnels pour en installer un autre étranger aux parents et que seuls contrôlent les enfants. Ceux-ci deviennent ainsi étrangers à leurs propres parents et à leur monde²⁸.

Les enfants sont désormais parents d'eux-mêmes dans l'abandon systématique du mode d'être de leurs parents qui ne sont plus, car le nouveau monde ne les reconnaît pas et ils ne s'y reconnaissent pas. Un nouveau monde est né avec les enfants ; l'ancien, celui des parents est mort dans un déchirement tragique que nous communique la Grande Royale. « *L'école où je pousse nos enfants tuera en eux ce qu'aujourd'hui nous aimons et conservons avec soin, à juste titre. Peut-être notre souvenir lui-même mourra-t-il en eux (...). Ce que je propose, c'est que nous acceptions de mourir en nos enfants et que les étrangers qui nous ont défaits prennent en eux toute la place que nous aurons laissée libre (...). Mais, gens des Diallobé, souvenez-vous de nos champs quand approche la saison des pluies. Nous aimons bien nos champs, mais que faisons-nous alors ? Nous y mettons le fer et le feu, nous les tuons. Nous voudrions bien les manger, mais nous les enfouissons en terre* »²⁹. La Grande Royale s'est donnée l'illusion d'un choix qu'elle n'a pas eu en réalité. La tornade qu'elle a annoncée avec les étrangers qui en

imposent aux hôtes l'a embarquée dans un violent tourbillon économique. Chrétiens et musulmans se sont voulus religieux. Mais les dividendes de la bataille d'occupation qu'ils se livrent sous divers modes en Afrique ont une visée et une réalité plus économique que spirituelle. Occupés à rentabiliser économiquement leur conquête, ils ont oublié la dimension spirituelle de ceux qu'ils ont conquis. Ceux-ci s'en servent comme ils peuvent dans un mouvement en balançoire qui va des dieux au Dieu et de celui-ci à ceux-là en retour.

II. Le mouvement pendulaire de la foi en Afrique

Les mouvements des prosélytes musulmans, chrétiens et bouddhistes dans la conquête spirituelle du monde trouvent leur point de rencontre au cœur du continent africain, dans une sorte de foire religieuse.

A. L'Afrique, une foire aux foies

Dans sa progression vers le Nord à partir du Sud du continent, le christianisme perd progressivement sa vigueur ascensionnelle. Sa force de pénétration s'émousse. Dans son expansion vers le Sud, l'islam s'essouffle. Sa capacité de captation des âmes s'étiolé. En somme, le christianisme et l'islam, après avoir délimité des « *territoires religieux* » aux frontières non étanches, en arrivent à perdre leur souffle. Il y a une déperdition stoppante de leur énergie qui les pousse à ne pas pouvoir couvrir convenablement tout le continent. Cela a pour effet de faire de la partie centrale de l'Afrique une zone de non droit spirituel où toutes les religions ont droit de cité. Il ne serait pas malheureux de parler d'une foire aux foies. Toutes les religions s'y rencontrent dans leur diversité radicale sans se repousser ou se persécuter. La guerre n'y est pas à l'ordre du jour. Les unes s'installent en face des autres dans un esprit de respect religieux. Chacune est la voisine de l'autre. L'espace ne se refuse à personne ; il y a de la place pour tout le monde et tout le monde se sent bien dans le voisinage de tout le monde. Cette cohabitation harmonieuse installe un esprit d'œcuménisme que le temps solidifie. Mais l'œcuménisme n'est pas à entendre à en son sens courant de vaste mouvement visant à rassembler les Eglises chrétiennes en une seule, d'ensemble des efforts visant à l'unité visible des églises qu'a voulu le Christ. Il déborde le cadre des églises chrétiennes pour promouvoir des actions communes, des cultes communs entre les diverses confessions religieuses en dépit des différences doctrinales qu'elles affichent. Il désigne ainsi un vaste mouvement religieux tendant à poser en asyndète toutes les confessions religieuses, de quelque obédience quelles soient, dans une unité d'esprit. Il ramasse pour les rassembler des groupes aussi conflictuels que le polythéisme et le monothéisme, des confessions aussi conflictuelles que le christianisme, l'islam et le bouddhisme au sujet duquel il convient de dire quelques mots pour mieux apprécier le radicalisme de son rejet de toutes religions qui revendiquent un dieu en dehors de l'homme.

Le bouddhisme est généralement compris comme une religion sans Dieu, tout au moins comme une religion dont le fondateur ne se déclare pas envoyé, interprète ou émanation du divin. Ce qu'apporte de neuf Siddhârta,

nom historique du Bouddha, c'est l'éveil. Et ceux qui croient en autre chose sont des athées, car Dieu n'est pas aussi dans le monde, il n'est précisément en aucun autre lieu que là. Swami Vivekananda, qui fit connaître la pensée hindoue en Occident, dit un jour : « *De même que certaines religions dans le monde nomment athée l'homme qui ne croit pas à un Dieu existant en dehors de sa personne, nous disons quant à nous qu'est athée l'homme qui ne croit pas en lui-même. De ne pas croire à la splendeur de sa propre âme, voilà ce que nous nommons athéisme* »³⁰. S'il montre la voie, c'est en tant qu'homme, simplement homme, ayant médité sur la vie, la souffrance et la mort. Ce qui lui permet d'indiquer des formules de méditations et de vie, et surtout un enseignement critique envers les religions révélées, « *source de tous les troubles du monde, depuis les conflits personnels jusqu'aux guerres entre nations. En bref, on peut faire remonter à cette vue fausse tout ce qui est mal dans le monde* »³¹, dit Rahula, un moine bouddhiste. Celui-ci relève deux idées psychologiquement enracinées dans l'individu : la protection de soi pour laquelle il a créé Dieu duquel il dépend pour sa sécurité et la conservation de soi pour quoi il a conçu l'idée d'une âme immortelle qui vivra éternellement.

Le but de l'enseignement du Bouddha est de détruire le comportement irrationnel en rendant l'homme éclairé. Selon lui, « *les idées de Dieu et d'âme sont fausses et vides* »³². Elles ne sont que des projections mentales subtiles enrobées dans une phraséologie métaphysique compliquée. Ainsi, la voie découverte par Bouddha est le sentier du salut. Il part de la croyance encore obscure que toute existence est souffrance et qu'il importe de se délivrer de la souffrance. Une fois prise la résolution d'une vie droite en paroles et en actes, il s'enfonce par degrés dans la méditation. Cette approche des bouddhistes rencontre la méditation philosophique sur la foi. Cette méditation tend et tient à purifier le contenu de la croyance, à en mesurer les insuffisances, à former de Dieu une idée plus raffinée et plus profonde pour qu'il ne soit plus celui dont parle tout le monde et que personne ne cherche à connaître réellement.

L'hostilité du bouddhisme à l'égard des autres religions qui posent Dieu en dehors de l'homme prouve que l'œcuménisme n'en est pas un véritable. Car il veut mêler des genres religieux que Dieu a démêlés et a toujours voulu distincts. L'hymne de la radicalité de cette distinction est consigné dans le Coran. « *A chacun de vous Nous avons assigné une législation et un plan à suivre. Si Allah avait voulu, certes Il aurait fait de vous tous une seule communauté. Mais Il veut vous éprouver en ce qu'Il vous donne. Concurrencez donc dans les bonnes œuvres* »³³. Dieu montre par là que le pluralisme religieux est de son fait. Sauf exception, c'est de Lui seul que l'unicité se justifie et Il est le seul Être Unique à pouvoir assumer l'unicité dans toute sa rigueur. Car Il le seul à avoir tous les attributs de son être en Lui. Il a son commencement et sa fin en Lui-même. Il n'a besoin de rien à l'extérieur de son être pour être ce qu'il est. Il n'a besoin d'aucun miroir pour se corriger afin d'incarner la perfection qu'il est déjà. Seuls les hommes ont besoin de cela. C'est pourquoi seuls eux sont au pluriel. En dehors de Dieu, tout est bien qui est au pluriel et d'un pluriel d'émulation. Il autorise ainsi la pluralité des religions avec, en toile de fond, une idée de compétition de perfectionnement. Il faut alors se battre à se montrer meilleur que de chercher à s'aco-

quiner avec d'autres qui n'ont peut-être pas cette prétention. Les croyants qui gauchissent la pureté spirituelle de leur religion en la rapprochant de ce qu'elle n'est pas peuvent-ils être dits des croyants sincères ? Ne créent-ils pas une foi qui n'a foi en rien ? Ne s'agit-il pas là d'un déviationnisme qui installe le pourrissement de la foi vraie ?

B. Le syncrétisme religieux, un pourrissement de la foi

Le faux de ou dans l'œcuménisme ne tient pas tant au voisinage de compromission des religions qu'à la cohabitation compromettante des différentes pratiques religieuses dans le même individu. Celui-ci pratique indifféremment le christianisme, l'islam, le bouddhisme, etc. avec une ferveur égale. Le profil de croyant qui procède de la sorte est frappé par le coran du qualificatif blasphématoire, et partant condamnable, d'associateur : « *Parmi les hommes, il en est qui prennent, en dehors d'Allah des égaux à Lui, en les aimant comme on aime Allah* »³⁴. Les associateurs sont ainsi des individus qui se créent une foi religieuse mixte à partir de fois religieuses exclusives. Il s'agit d'un hybridisme religieux qui se reconnaît dans toute religion et dans lequel aucune religion ne se reconnaît en tant que telle. Il est de toutes les religions sans qu'aucune d'elles ne soit en lui. Cette pratique du mixage religieux se lisait et se disait à demi-mots dans les postulats politico-philosophiques de Kwame Nkrumah qui faisait le constat d'un pluralisme culturel avec quoi il faut pouvoir composer désormais dans le paysage africain.

Fidèle à son idée d'unité de l'Afrique, Nkrumah la pose comme l'effet de la personnalité africaine dont l'être repose sur les trois dimensions culturelles qui se partagent la vie du continent dans une dynamique. Cet auteur montre, en des termes adéquats, dans quoi se ressource cette cohabitation confligène : « *Les trois fractions de la société africaine que j'ai distinguées au chapitre précédent (traditionaliste, occidentale et musulmane) coexistent difficilement : les principes dont elles se réclament sont souvent en contradiction* »³⁵. Si ce constat de Nkrumah peine à se traduire en réalité dans les domaines escomptés, à savoir la culture et la politique, il l'est largement déjà au plan religieux. En effet, dans le mépris des contradictions principielles à la limite insurmontables relevées par Nkrumah, ou dans un effort innovant de fléchissement des contraires pour les faire converger, les Africains ont réussi à tirer les divers bouts des différentes religions pour les mettre bout à bout. On a ici un islam au relent africain ; là un christianisme aux accents africains ; ici et là un animisme africain à la coloration islamo-chrétienne ; ailleurs un animisme, un islam ou un christianisme saupoudré de bouddhisme. Le paradoxe ici est la conciliation réussie entre des religions comme l'animisme, l'islam, le christianisme qui se réclament d'un Dieu et le bouddhisme qui ne se reconnaît dans aucun Dieu.

Cette situation installe une atmosphère culturelle des plus insolites. Le même individu, souvent garant de la tradition dont il supervise l'exécution des rites cérémoniels ancestraux, est bien souvent aussi soit le muezzin, soit l'imam de la mosquée. Il n'est pas aussi rare de voir le même homme assurer cumulativement les fonctions de prêtre traditionnel et de prêtre d'église. Le musulman ou le chrétien à la foi sincère peut être le meilleur des bouddhistes. De même, personne ne trouve scandaleux que le pasteur du temple soit le

maître de cérémonie d'une manifestation religieuse animiste. La fin du culte d'une religion donnée constitue, pour la même personne, le début d'une autre. On passe d'un culte à un autre sans restriction, sans interdit mais à travers des passerelles instituées par les pratiques de mixage. Cette flexibilité des genres religieux conduit à converger vers une revigoration de l'animisme traditionnel. Les chrétiens le renforcent en remplaçant les éléments de recueillement spirituel par des instruments d'animation musicale et autres pratiques animistes : « *Des chrétiens et des hommes de Dieu dissimulent leur pratique de gri-gri et magie en évitant d'aller voir les marabouts, les devins, les guérisseurs ou ngangas le jour. Ils préfèrent se rendre chez nous la nuit et acceptent toutes sortes de rites pour leur survie* »³⁶. Les rites auxquels fait référence ce texte sont essentiellement ceux de l'animisme et qui avoisinent la sorcellerie ou la magie. Les musulmans consolident ces pratiques animistes en convertissant les versets coraniques en amulettes ou autres « nansi dji » auxquels on accorde des pouvoirs insoupçonnés. Ce qui donne tout son sens à cette boutade caustique selon laquelle en Afrique il y a cinquante pour cent de chrétiens, cinquante pour cent de musulmans et cent pour cent d'animistes.

Dans un tel espace cultuel, l'identité des exécutants n'est pas catégorisée de façon fixe. Chacun devient un personnage scénique qui tient un rôle selon son profil, selon le profil du rôle à jouer et selon la spécificité de la scène de la représentation. La foi devient mouvante, faiblement robuste et fortement instable. Elle est fort mobile parce qu'elle manque de forts mobiles de stabilité. Elle vacille d'une croyance religieuse à une autre sans une véritable consistance spirituelle³⁷. Tout se fait au gré de nos attentes, de nos espoirs ou désespoirs. Dieu qui est celui qu'on loue pour sa miséricorde à l'égard des hommes devient une sorte de chef d'entreprise de bonheur à qui on adresse des doléances dont la satisfaction ou la non satisfaction déterminera la qualité, le contenu et l'orientation de notre foi. Cela se voit et se vit au quotidien dans les différents espaces de cultes des religions, surtout révélées, où on élève toujours une forte voix suppliante pour amener Dieu à se pencher sur son sort d'individu demandeur de grâce. Des doléances insistantes non satisfaites peuvent être souvent des motifs de remise en cause de la puissance de Dieu dont on déserte la maison pour un autre ailleurs jugé prometteur. Ce militantisme religieux s'observe également dans les religions animistes.

Dans leur conception, Dieu est le Père bienveillant qui pourvoit aux besoins de tous et de chacun. Il est celui à qui on s'adresse quand on est dans le besoin. Il a toujours donné et il donnera toujours. Il donne toujours et a toujours de quoi donner, car il est celui qui donne sans s'appauvrir. Il est l'Autosuffisant par excellence qui tend toujours la main pour donner sans jamais éprouver le moindre besoin de recevoir en retour quoi que ce soit de qui que ce soit. Ainsi, des processions sont quelquefois organisées en temps de sécheresse pour demander à Dieu qu'il fasse tomber la pluie ; des rituels sont régulièrement effectués pour lui demander de rendre la récolte abondante en fertilisant le sol ; aussi un cérémonial est-il fait de temps à autre pour rendre aux entrailles des femmes leur fécondité pour la perpétuation de la lignée ou de la communauté. Tous les soucis des hommes, de quelque

nature qu'ils soient, sont des motifs de s'adresser à Dieu qui analyse tout avec bienveillance. Il devient ainsi difficile de savoir qui a la foi et quelle foi.

CONCLUSION

En Afrique, la pratique religieuse mêle, et souvent fâcheusement, des données des religions monothéistes révélées et des religions sans Dieu à des données des religions animistes polythéistes. Ce mélange donne un syncrétisme religieux dont l'esprit est essentiellement plus proche de celui de l'animisme ambiant que de celui des religions révélées ou du bouddhisme. Les religions révélées dites abrahamiques instituent des rapports trop formels entre les hommes et leur Dieu, lesquels ont toujours vécu dans un voisinage fait de grande proximité en Afrique. La formalité de ces rapports hommes-Dieu est à l'image de la rigidité de ceux qui séparent les colons religieux venus d'Orient ou d'Occident de leurs hôtes africains qu'ils tiennent en piètre estime. Ces colons sont occupés par l'organisation économique du royaume de Dieu. Cette préoccupation majeure qui prime sur tout commande toutes les autres considérations, spirituelle y comprise. Est-là la destination finale de la foi ardente dont le Christ Jésus et le prophète Muhammad sont des porteurs douloureux ? Est-là le sens profond et véritable de l'intégrisme catholique, du fondamental protestant ou de ce qu'on appelle aujourd'hui en Occident islamisme ? En posant ces questions, nous ne militons guère en faveur de l'exclusivisme religieux dont les certitudes, facteurs de toutes les calamités, sont dénoncées par François Jacob qui dit : « *Rien n'est aussi dangereux que la certitude d'avoir raison. Rien ne cause autant de destruction que l'obsession d'une vérité considérée comme absolue. Tous les crimes de l'histoire sont des conséquences de quelque fanatisme. Tous les massacres ont été accomplis par vertu, au nom de la religion vraie* »³⁸. Notre propos vise à interpellier le syncrétisme religieux qui pousse la foi dans tous les sens pour finalement l'installer dans l'instabilité et l'affaiblir en la rendant inauthentique. Cette instabilité de la foi devenue inauthentique se retrouve dans l'espace politique africain sous les traits d'une transhumance, d'un nomadisme qui tue toute conviction et conduit à ne faire confiance à personne. C'est le règne du soupçon permanent et généralisé des uns à l'égard des autres mettant l'Afrique en situation de ne pouvoir produire de nouveaux grands hommes que l'histoire pourrait s'honorer de retenir dans ses belles pages.

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25. On peut se référer aux cas de l'Algérie où prospère le salafisme qui prône un islam originel et radical ; de l'Egypte qui est le siège des frères musulmans auxquels échoit aujourd'hui le pouvoir d'Etat.
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Socio-Cultural Stratification of India

Iqtidar Karamat Cheema, Markfield Institute of Higher Education (MIHE), Leicestershire

Résumé

Stratifications sociales et culturelles en Inde

La plupart des recherches sur l'Inde la considèrent comme une unité culturelle. Elles sont fondées sur des observations simples et intuitives. Cette contribution propose une approche de l'Inde comme une société multiculturelle, multilingue et multiethnique. La notion de nation comme un substitut de la culture est fort appropriée pour les pays comme l'Inde avec des cultures hétérogènes. Dans cette recherche, une tentative est également faite pour comparer les valeurs culturelles entre les différentes régions de l'Inde.

Abstract

Most of the research on any aspect of Indian culture or society considers holistic India as a single cultural unit and is based on mere observations and intuitive assumption and not based on empirical investigation. This paper is an attempt to create an understanding that India is a multicultural, multilingual and multiethnic society and that the usage of nation as a surrogate for culture is in-appropriate for countries like India with heterogeneous cultures. In this research an attempt is also made to compare the cultural values within the various regions of India.

Culture has been increasingly viewed as influencing the daily life and behaviour of the individuals. It is man-made part of environment and it largely determines the course of our lives (Herskovits 1969 p.305). Winick (1958 p.144) elucidates that it is everything that is "non biological and socially transmitted in a society, including artistic, social, ideological, and religious patterns of behaviour, and the techniques of mastering the environment." The term 'culture' still remains elusive and fuzzy, which has been defined and interpreted in innumerable ways. Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) have reviewed about one hundred and sixty four different definitions and the conceptions associated with culture (Henry 1976 p.122; Herskovits 1969 p.305; Usunier 2000 p.4). Groeschi and Doherty (2000 p.12) opine that the often quoted work of Kroeber and Kluckhohn in literature of identifying more than 164 definitions of culture suggests that culture defies a single all purpose definition and there are almost as many meanings of the culture as people using the term. Different definitions of "culture" reflect different theoretical bases for understanding, or criteria for evaluating, human activity. In general, the term culture denotes the whole product of an individual, group or society of living beings. It includes technology, art, science, moral systems and the characteristic behaviours and habits of the selected living entities.

In particular, it has specific more detailed meanings in different domains of human activities.

Culture operates at various levels of society: nation, industry, occupation, corporate and organization (Groeschl and Doherty 2000 p.15). Though there have been different frameworks proposed by different scholars for operationalization of culture but Hofstede's (1980) framework of cultural values at the national level has been the most famous and widely used for calculating the cultural values of nations.

Although using nation as a cultural unit has led to wide contribution to understand the cultural differences and behaviours across various nations but it has failed to recognize the differences between the various subgroups within the nations (Ogden and Jensen 2004). Lenartowicz and Roth (1999) observe that most existing approaches to studying culture use nations that are convenient to define but usually represent broad unit of analysis. They suggest that culture-based research should identify and examine multiple subcultures within a single country. India is a country with economic, caste, ethnic, religion and linguistic diversities (Stern 2003). The recognition of India as a single culture unit could lead to wrong comprehension of the phenomenon and lead to erroneous decisions. Large countries like India "can be divided into regions differing along geographic, climatic, economic, linguistic and/or ethnic lines and generally assumed to differ culturally" (Hofstede et al. 2007). The regions within many countries differ from each other substantially with regards to income, mobility, media access, employment and socio-economic characteristics (Roth 1995 p.166). Chatterjee (1998) as quoted in Rajagopal (1999 p.131) suggests "that in a country like India, the importance of negotiating national and sub-national contradictions increases rather than diminishes with globalization. He argues that these contradictions centre on the resiliency of community as a locus of affiliation and action, as means of resistance to the homogenizing impetus of capital, as a site of historic memory, and as a resource for alternative futures." So it becomes imperative to understand the difference between the various cultural communities with in India. There is the possibility of making wrong conclusions about cultural effects if the subcultures are not taken into consideration (Lenartowicz and Roth 2001 p.321).

India is home to several thousand ethnic groups, tribes, castes, and religions. The castes and sub-castes in each region relate to each other through a permanent hierarchical structure, with each caste having its own name, traditional occupation, rank, and distinctive subculture. Tribes usually do not have a caste hierarchy but often have their own internal hierarchical organization. The Indian society is "regionally diverse (north/south/east/west), communally differentiated (Hindu/Muslim/Sikh/Christian/ Buddhist, etc.), socially stratified (in terms of caste or class) and culturally discrete" (Uberoi 1993 p.45).

India is a multicultural country with multitudinous groups and subgroups. The total geographic area is 329 million acres (Datt and Sundharam 2003 p.92), which is roughly the size of Western Europe and is inhabited by one billion people (Rangarajan 2000 p.294). India is a vast country with diverse regional and sub regional variations (Kumar 2004). The country abounds with economic, caste, ethnic, religion and linguistic diversities (Stern 2003). The

size and heterogeneity makes it difficult to generalize its ecological record (Rangarajan 2000 p.294). This further makes it an arduous task to understand the consumption pattern and consumer behaviour in India.

The discussion of values of any society is a difficult task, and the difficulty increases manifold when it involves India, where values vary on the basis of religion, language, religion, sect, caste, class, and ethnicity (Srinivas 2003 p.172). The social structure, religion, family and kinship of the Indian society help in conceptualizing and comprehending its cultural profile to some extent.

The Indian social structure is marked by caste system and extended family system. The caste is "a purely social and possibly occupational association" (Weber 1974 p.28). Caste system is one of the most commented upon features of the Indian society (Chhokar 2007). It is an ancient historical legacy linked closely with Hinduism and still dominant (Raina 2004). The caste system is believed "to have been first enunciated by ancient law-giver Manu some time in Vedic period (1500-1000 B.C.)" (Chhokar 2007). This system consists of four *varnas* or social groups namely *Brahmin*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya* and the *Shudra*. The hierarchy was clearly established with Brahmin at the top and in the descending order with *shudra* at the lowest place in the social order (Rangarajan 1992 p.45). This was known as *varna* model of caste system, in which the first three groups were regarded as "twice-born" or *dwija* (Srinivas 2003 p.4). The structural distance between the various castes is defined in terms of pollution and purity as higher caste is regarded as "pure" compared to the lower caste (*ibid.*). The Brahmins constituted of the elite, learned and the landed, the *Kshatriyas* were the warriors, the *Vaishyas* were the traders and the *Shudras* included the menials and the lowest (Raina 2004). There are hundreds of *jatis* or endogamous groups, which can be grouped into these four *varnas* (Srinivas 2003 p.3).

Religion and culture are inextricably woven and religion has a potent influence on the peoples' lives across diverse cultures (Tarakeshwar, Stanton and Pargament 2003). Not only is the Indian society marked by castes and tribes, it is also abound with religious pluralism as the major religions have many subgroups (Deol 1995 p.25). Every major religion of the world except Confucianism is represented in India (Srinivas 2003). There are eight major religious groups within India: Hinduism is the main religion which is followed by 82.7 percent of the population, Muslims constitute 11.8 percent, Christians (2.6percent), Sikhs (2 percent), Buddhists (0.7 percent), Jains (0.4 percent), Zoroastrians (0.3 percent), and Jews constitute 0.1 percent of the Indian population (Bhatnagar 1995 p.39). Religion and spirituality have great effect on the Indian psyche (Das 2002). In earlier centuries religion was part of every aspect of lives of Indians (Mandelbaum 1996). Indian culture has strong religious roots and is a way of Indian life, which has evolved over many centuries (Venkatesh 1995). Every part of Indian culture has deep religious roots (Venkatesh 1995). Hinduism the main religion is difficult to define and is interpreted in number of ways (Chhokar 2007). It "represents a complex system of daily practices, rituals, beliefs, and symbolic patterns that overlap various aspects of social life" (*ibid.*). Some scholars have related caste system to Hindu religious beliefs and practices (Alley 2006 p.127) and have agreed that caste in the past was an integral part of Hinduism (Beteille 1993 p.445).

The other prominent religions groups are Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Jains, and Sikhs. Mandelbaum (1996) observes that Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Zoroastrianism are the religions that have been introduced into India by the foreigners while Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism are indigenous religions, which "rose out of Hinduism, bearing a social message and "modified the Hinduism of time". The religions that rose against the caste system, sooner or later were reabsorbed into the caste system as these movements grow, develop through a cycle and then devolve back in to the system (Mandelbaum 1996 p.525). This is true for most of the religions as is evident in Sikhism, which is comparatively a modern religion but has failed to eschew the caste system.

Language is the vehicle of culture (Herskovits 1968). It is the most recognizable part of culture (Hofstede 2001 p.21). India has amazing linguistic heterogeneity as more than 200 languages are spoken by different groups (Hasnain 2003 p.155). In India there are 1,652 languages out of which 350 are recognized as 'major languages' and 18 are the official languages (Chaudhary 2004 p.8) A single ethnic area may have many languages, as in Nagaland which has 19 languages and dialects (Deol 1995 p.25). The first language of most people is scheduled language attributed to them but about 38 million people speak "mother-tongues" which that are not included in the Indian constitution's scheduled language groups (Stern 2003 p.20). This multilingualism "developed historically by means of a series of conquest and amalgamations of a wide variety of linguistic groups, topped by the British conquest, and the imposition of English for those who wished to fill the important military, educational, business, and governmental positions" (Ross 1965 p.214). Hindi is spoken by about 400 million people, English by only the elites and Sanskrit which has great cultural, religious and sentimental significance is hardly spoken by anyone (Stern 2003 p.19). The languages spoken by Indian population can be divided into four language families (Hasnain 2003 p.156) :

1. Austric family (*Nishad*)
2. Dravidian family (*Dravid*)
3. Sino-Tibetan family (*Kirat*)
4. Indo-European family (*Aryan*)

There is a great diversity in the languages included in these four language families. Around seventy three percent people speak Aryan languages, twenty percent speak Dravidian languages, 1.38 percent speaks Austric languages and 0.85 percent speaks Sino-Tibetan languages (ibid.). The Austric family mainly includes languages spoken by the central Indian tribal belt: Santhals, Munda, Ho, Koraku etc.

The Sino-Tibetan family languages are spoken mainly by the tribal belts of the North-East. The Dravidian family comprises of languages like Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, Gondi etc. which are spoken by the people in Southern India. The languages in the Indo-Aryan language family are spoken by the majority of the population. This language family includes languages like Marathi, Konkani, Rajasthani, Gujarati, Marwari, Mewati, Hindi-Urdu, Chattisgarhi, Bengali, Maithili, Punjabi, Kumayuni and Garwahli etc (ibid).

English language was introduced by the British in the country. It is spoken by minority of people who are elites and who lead India towards modernization (Stern 2003 p.19). The English language is "sine qua non for entrance into the elite bureaucratic services, the officers' mess, the executive suite, the upper reaches of the professions, the circles of artists and intellectuals who are invited to international conferences, editorial rooms of influential newspapers and journals, the professoriate of leading universities, the student bodies and old boys' associations of "great public schools" and fashionable colleges, the company of the distinguished, the beau mode of the best people, the celebrations of the rich, the right clubs and, now crucially for India, the world of the Internet and of India's burgeoning information technology industries" (ibid). Though there are diverse languages but the "basic thought, ideal and focus, has been the mythology of India, the ancient lore of India, the ancient songs of India and they extend from the banks of Brahmaputra to Cape Comorin" (Prasad 1965 p.358). The above thought elucidates the unity in diversity within India. Kumar (2000 p.12) feels that new information and communication technologies can be expected consolidate linguistic identities along with sub-regional identities.

Indian kinship systems are extremely heterogeneous and diverse. They are "regionally diverse (north/south/east/west), communally differentiated (Hindu/Muslim/Sikh/Christian/Buddhist, etc.), socially stratified (in terms of caste or class) and culturally discrete (Uberoi 1993 p.45). Karve (1993) has divided the Indian kinship organizations on the basis of four geographical regions: Northern, Central, Southern and Eastern.

1) *Northern Zone* : This comprises of region between Himalayas in north and the Vindhya ranges in south. This region includes states like Sind (now part of Pakistan), Punjab (including western Punjab now in Pakistan), Kashmir, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, part of Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal, Assam and the independent kingdom of Nepal. In this area the languages derived from Sanskrit are spoken by the majority of the population and the languages are Sindhi, Punjabi, Kashmiri, Hindi, Bihari, Bengali, Assami and Nepali.

"The present northern family is a continuation of the family of the ancient times with slight modifications. It is patrilineal, patrilocal and patriarchal. Marriage is generally outside of the kin-group and the local group. It is a joint family in which the brides are all brought from outside and the girls are all given away. The behaviour is strictly regulated according to generation, according to whether one is born in the family or married into the family and finally according to whether one is a man or a woman. Customs like levirate and sororate, by which a widow lives with the younger brother of her husband and a man marries the younger sister of his wife, show that marriage is very much a relationship between families rather than between individuals. The giving and receiving of gifts also reflects the familial aspect rather than the individual aspect of the transaction."

2) *Central Zone* : This zone comprises of regions between the northern and southern zones and includes states like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Kathiawad, Maharashtra and Orissa. The main languages spoken here are Rajasthani, Hindi, Gujarati, Kathiawadi, Marathi and Uriya are spoken

which are of Sanskrit origin, so there is close affinity to northern zone. But within this region there are large segments of people who speak Dravidian and Austro-Asiatic languages. As this Zone lies between northern, southern and eastern zones it is influenced by all these regions though not uniformly. In Rajasthan, Kathiawad and Gujarat only Sanskritic languages are spoken and so the kinship pattern followed is predominately northern, though few customs are similar to southern zone. Some groups practice one type of cross-cousin marriage (marriage of man to his mother's brother's daughter) which is as a result of *mélange* of different ethnic elements. In Maharashtra majority of the people speak Sanskritic language, while many people in east speak Dravidian languages and Marathi includes many words of Dravidian origin. The majority of the people practice one type of cross-cousin marriage while other types of cross-cousin marriages are taboo but marriage to father's sister's daughter is followed in southern Maharashtra. In north junior levirate is allowed in many castes while in central and southern Maharashtra it is not allowed. The state is most affected by the southern practices as is evident in the kinship behaviour, kinship terms, folk-songs and literature. In Orissa more than one-fourth of the population is tribal and the languages spoken here belong to all three linguistic families in India. The region is not homogenous like Maharashtra but many agriculturists allow one type of cross-cousin marriage. This zone though diverse in its various areas but permits one type of cross-cousin marriage.

3) *Southern Zone* : This region encompasses those parts of southern and central India where the languages of Dravidian family are spoken and can be divided into five regions: Karnataka where the Kannada language is spoken; Andhra Pradesh or Telingana, where Telugu is spoken; Tamil Nadu where the language is Tamil; Kerala or Malabar where the Malayalam is spoken; region from north of Andhra Pradesh through Bastar and Western Orissa into Southern Bihar where a number of mixed languages are spoken. The Dravidian languages are related in both form and history (Trautmann 1993).

In this zone though patrilineal and patrilocal family is the dominant family type but there are some important sections which follow matrilineal and matrilocal and a substantial number whose systems possess features of both types of organizations. In marriages exchange of daughters is favourable and marriage among close kin is preferred. There are cross cousin and uncle-niece marriages but one cannot marry member of one's own clan. The girl can marry any of her older cross cousins or her mother's younger brother, so a boy can marry any of his younger female cross-cousins or daughter of any of his elder sisters. The children of brother and sister should marry while children of two brothers and two sisters must not marry (Trautmann 1993). In north there is clear distinction between the blood relations and in-law relations and one can't marry within a blood relation. But in south people can marry in blood relations and marriage strengthens the existing bonds of kinship. This brings in society that is totally different from north. The distinction between daughters and wives is not as sharp as in north and a wife enjoys greater freedom. Similarly the distinction there is minimal distinction between house of father and father-in-law and usually marriage takes place between

kins not living too far and there is much visiting between the two houses. The women in lower castes enjoy a comparatively higher position to the Brahmin women as divorce and widow remarriage is permitted, there is economic independence and gender equivalence within the lower castes (Gough 1993).

4) *Eastern Zone* : This zone comprises regions of regions in east and north- east where languages belonging to Austro-Asiatic family of languages are spoken. But there is not much known among the kinship patterns of these groups. The succession of property in Khasi community of Meghalaya devolves in the female line and sons have no right to it. It is a multilineal society but patrilineal principles are gradually introduced by modernization (Nongbri 1993).

The kinship systems and institutions of North India are different from Dravidian or the South Indian systems (Dumont 2000 p.111). While the family and kinship system in North-East India is totally different from the system and institutions prevalent in the other regions of India.

For most Indians, family ties are more important than others which closely bind an extended group which is more than a nuclear family and their parents (Stern 2003 p.37). In general the connectedness is more important in the Indian family and the family functions like a psychological unit. Chaudhary (2004 p.106) feels that people largely interact on "the principles of relationships linked with kinship, age and gender dynamics". She believes that there is an intense desire for social links as kinship terms are often invoked in conversations even though people are not linked to each other and the family functions like a psychological unit in the family. The young people strongly align with their parents and search for outside relationships only if there are problems within the family (ibid.).

North India is dominated by the Proto-Australoid racial elements (Hasnain 2003 p.153). The main languages spoken in this region belong to Indo-European or the Aryan language (ibid. p.156). The present northern family is a continuation of the family of the ancient times with slight modifications (Karve 1993). It is patrilineal, patrilocal and patriarchal. Marriage is generally outside of the kin- group and the local group. It is a joint family in which the brides are all brought from outside and the girls are all given away. The behavior is strictly regulated according to generation, according to whether one is born in the family or married into the family and finally according to whether one is a man or a woman (ibid.).

Punjab state in Northern India was the frontier region of the country which has faced hordes of invaders from Western and Central Asia who ultimately got absorbed in the main population and some of the surnames like hoon, sur, sobthi which are originally Central Asian are integrated in the ethnic mosaic of Punjab (Singh 2003b p.xiv). Punjabi identity is mainly defined by language. Most of the communities (86) live in plains, few in the hilly terrain and some in semi-arid regions (11) and there are no schedule tribes in Punjab (ibid.). The main diet of Punjabis consists of wheat, buttermilk, tea with plenty of milk, milk and meat. The consumption of rice is much more in south and East India as compared to other regions while North dominates in wheat consumption (Chatterjee, Rae and Ray 2007). Though traditionally fruit and

vegetables were not part of the traditional meal but there is general increase of the consumption of the vegetables and fruits. There is marked change from vegetarianism to non-vegetarianism and there is the largest incidence of drinking alcohol in Punjab as compared to the national average (Singh 2003b p.xiv). The majority of the communities profess Hinduism (71), followed by Sikhism (38) and Islam (13). The state is comparatively more egalitarian as there is less social differentiation (17.89 per cent against the national average of 48.39 percent). *Baisakhi*, the festival of harvesting is the most important festival (ibid.).

The South Indian region is dominated by the Negrito race (Hasnain 2003 p.153). This region encompasses those parts of southern and central India where the languages of Dravidian family are spoken and can be divided into five regions (Karve 1993): Karnataka where the Kannada language is spoken; Andhra Pradesh or Telingana, where Telugu is spoken; Tamil Nadu where the language is Tamil; Kerala or Malabar where the Malayalam is spoken; region from north of Andhra Pradesh through Bastar and Western Orissa into Southern Bihar where a number of mixed languages are spoken. The Dravidian languages are related in both form and history (Trautmann 1993).

In this region though patrilineal and patrilocal family is the dominant family type but there are some important sections which follow matrilineal and matrilineal and a substantial number whose systems possess features of both types of organizations. In marriages exchange of daughters is favorable and marriage among close kin is preferred. There are cross-cousin and uncle-niece marriages (Karve 1993).

Tamil Nadu the southern state of India has 364 communities which is the second largest number of communities in India and the social divisions are widely reported in 276 communities. All the communities are divided into subgroups. The Brahmans are divided into two sects: Saivites and Vaishnavites. The most interesting feature of the communities of Tamil Nadu is their division into two caste groups: right-handed and left-handed. The Brahmans are regarded as neutral and free from this division (Singh 1997 p.xxix). Rice is one of the staple foods of the Tamils from time immemorial and millets along with honey are also eaten. The consumption of rice is much more in south and East India as compared to other regions (Chatterjee, Rae and Ray 2007). Eating stale food was also common earlier. Alcohol made from coconut and palm trees is consumed. Milk as such is not consumed though mainly through coffee or tea, and vegetable consumption is higher among the urbanites than the rural people (Singh 1997 p.xxix). Hinduism along with local tribal religion is the main religion followed by Christianity and Islam. *Pongal* is the main festival celebrated by Hindus in which sweet rice is prepared for the cattle. The practice of drawing of threshold designs as part of household routine by females is prevalent in whole of Tamil Nadu (Dohmen 2004). This practice is unique to the region not prevalent anywhere in India.

The Western region of India comprises of regions like Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Maharashtra. The main languages spoken here are Rajasthani, Hindi, Gujarati, and Marathi, which are of Sanskrit origin, so there is close affinity to northern zone. But within this region there are large segments of people who

speak Dravidian and Austro-Asiatic languages. As this region lies between northern and southern zones it is influenced by these regions though not uniformly. In Rajasthan and Gujarat only Sanskritic languages are spoken and so the kinship pattern followed is predominately northern (Karve 1993). Some groups practice one type of cross-cousin marriage (marriage of man to his mother's brother's daughter) which is as a result of *mélange* of different ethnic elements.

In Maharashtra majority of the people speak Sanskritic language, while many people in east speak Dravidian languages and Marathi includes many words of Dravidian origin. The majority of the people practice one type of cross-cousin marriage while other types of cross-cousin marriages are taboo but marriage to father's sister's daughter is followed in southern Maharashtra. In north junior levirate is allowed in many castes while in central and southern Maharashtra it is not allowed. The state is most affected by the southern practices as is evident in the kinship behavior, kinship terms, folk-songs and literature (*ibid.*).

Gujarat historically has strong links with Rajasthan and Sindh from where many communities came, and has a larger percentage of trading and business communities and has the largest proportion of communities identified as Kshatriyas (28.8 per cent) (Singh 2003b p. xxv). The Parsis arrived in Gujarat in the nineteenth century and emerged as landowners, moneylenders, traders and industrialists (*ibid.* p.xxiv). The staple food consists of wheat, bajra, maize, gram and urad. Though there is increasing instance of non-vegetarian food (17.1 per cent) but incidence of vegetarianism is very high. Alcohol is consumed by males in communal feasts and rituals (*ibid.* p.xxvii). The state is a meeting ground of the kinship systems of north and south and so marriage and customs of both north and south India exist here. Majority of the population follow Hinduism (89.53 per cent) followed by Muslims (8.53 per cent). Other religious groups include Christians, Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs (*ibid.* p. 17). Diwali is principal festival of the Hindus.

The Eastern region is dominated by the Mongoloid race (Hasnain 2003 p.153). The Sino-Tibetan family languages are spoken mainly by the tribal belts of the North-East but Bengali which belongs to the Indo-Aryan language family is predominately spoken in West Bengal (*ibid.* p.156). But there is not much known among the kinship patterns of these groups. The succession of property in Khasi community of Meghalaya devolves in the female line and sons have no right to it. It is a multilinear society but patrilineal principles are gradually introduced by modernization (Nongbri 1993).

The population of West Bengal consists mainly of Hindus, followed by Muslims and Christians. British imperialism in India did not only bring in political and economic change but also social and cultural changes (Bandyopadhyay 2003 p.1). In Bengal Durga Puja is the most popular religious festival of the Hindus and it has emerged from a household ritual to an elaborate festival with the coming in of the British (Ghosh 2000 p.289). The cultural practices have been institutionalized in modern Bengal and Durga puja has become secular entity with participation of different castes, classes and gender (*ibid.*). There is rise of street-food consumption in urban Bengal as there "is decline of the familial meal as a ritual activity and the rise of non-ritual eating (snacks) directed at sensual stimulation rather than

assuaging hunger-pangs" (Mukhopadhyaya 2004 p.39). People are fond of tea and usually have it in clay cups called 'bhar'. The males often consume alcohol and women were observed consuming 'bhang' during Holi by the researcher. Football which was introduced by the British in Bengal became a strong unifying force among the Bengalis in the late nineteenth century (Bandyopadhyay 2003 p.2). It is most popular sport in Bengal even today, which is not that popular in any other part of the country.

There is no single culture which can be called 'Indian culture' as "each regional, linguistic, religious and caste group has its own culture" (Kakar et al. 2002 p.241). The social and cultural patterns of India exhibits pluralism in terms of language, geography, ethnicity, religion and culture (Singh 2000 p.44).

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The 'Universal' in science as a Dilemma for scholarship in Africa

Olajide Oloyede, University of the Western Cape

Résumé

L'universel dans les sciences, un dilemme pour la recherche en Afrique

La domination de la science occidentale dans la compréhension des réalités sociales en Afrique est largement reconnue. Les tentatives de contrebalancer cette domination perverse ont poussé les sciences sociales en particulier la sociologie, à progressivement admettre qu'il y a au moins deux domaines différents de la connaissance - scientifique et non scientifique. Ceux-ci sont généralement pris en considération pour caractériser savoir occidental et connaissances non occidentales. L'idée qu'il existe des domaines de la connaissance pose en quelque sorte le problème de la relation entre la connaissance et la pertinence pour laquelle la préoccupation est avant tout de la pertinence des connaissances acquises dans la quête de la compréhension de notre monde pour l'action sociale. Ce problème de la différenciation entre connaissance et pertinence est celui de «l'universel». Cet article soutient que tel est le dilemme pour les sciences sociales en Afrique. Il revient sur l'histoire de la pensée occidentale pour mettre en avant le caractère durable des 'outils' de compréhension que les savants de l'Afrique (Africains et Européens) utilisent pour donner un sens au contexte africain dans le cadre de ce dilemme.

Abstract

The dominant of western knowledge in the understanding of the complexion of the social reality in Africa is widely acknowledged. The attempt at a corrective to this perverse dominance has seen the increasing acceptance in the social sciences, in particular sociology, that there is at least two different realms of knowledge to be gained – scientific and non-scientific both of which are generally considered to characterize western knowledge and non-western knowledge respectively and how, to a different extent, we relate ourselves to our world intimately connected to these realms. The idea that there are realms of knowledge somehow poses a problem of the relation of knowledge to relevance where the concern is primarily with the relevance of knowledge gained in the quest for understanding our world for some kind of social action. The problem of knowledge to relevance becomes the problem of the 'universal'. This paper argues that this is the dilemma for African social science. It steps a back into the history of western thought to point to the enduring nature of the 'tools' of understanding that scholars of Africa (Africans and Europeans) use to make sense of the African context as part of the dilemma.

The study and understanding of the complexities of social reality in Africa, as indeed other societies that are not western, is dominated by western knowledge or what is referred to as science. The general intellectual lands-

cape is one in which the philosophies, epistemologies, analytic categories and strategies produced in the west become the source of "universal truth". This state of affairs in the quest for the search for the elusive truth about the life world has been contested in the form of what is known as indigenous way of knowing or indigenous knowledge. The premise of the contestation is that there are two realms of knowledge to be gained: the scientific and non-scientific. Both of which are generally considered to characterize western knowledge and other knowledge respectively. It is argued that we relate ourselves to our world intimately connected with these realms. The idea that there are realms of knowledge somehow poses a problem of the relation of knowledge to relevance where the concern is primarily with the relevance of knowledge gained in the quest for understanding our world for some kind of social action. If we take the route, which displaces our focus onto one of values, which ultimately the argument is about, then the question that such a route raises, which is a familiar one, is: Are there universal values or are all values relative (to a context, to a historical moment)? The problem of knowledge to relevance, in this case, becomes the problem of the 'universal' and the 'particular': the concentration here in this paper is on the 'universal'. It is argued that the 'universal' in science, that is, the claim that the only systematic 'route' capable of providing us with the truth of things, is the dilemma for students of Africa. This would seem clear in the term 'science' in social science. Doing social science in an African context is thus epistemologically problematic and this is a dilemma for students of the African context.

The problem of universalism is by all means an issue that is hardly new for it has been widely explored throughout many centuries resulting in polarized positions. It has been visited and re-visited with such visits falling in to what has been described as the oldest branches of philosophical thinking: *ontology*, or the question of what the basic constituents of nature are; *epistemology* or the question by which tools the human mind can acquire knowledge about the external world. The visits are, in many cases, prompted by a sense of urgency to deal with issues that bear heavily on practice or everyday human experiences. For example, two issues of concern in many African countries, education and development have often raised the questions: What sort of education? What sort of development? Both questions continue to be raised by academics and policy makers in most African countries, which, in recent times, has, as indeed most countries in Asia and Latin America, seen a rapid integration into the western world resulting in what Alexander (1995:65) describes as "perhaps the most dramatic set of spatially and temporally contagious social transformations in the history of the "world", a transformation which is producing for many and "unwelcome convergence" in political organisation (ditto western democracy as the ideal socio-political organisation of human groups) and social thought.

The issue discussed in this paper continues with the kind of issues that motivated what I have been trying to do in recent times, an offshoot of which is the ideas set out in another paper (on mental illness) titled *Mental Illness in culture, Culture in mental Illness. An anthropological view from South*

Africa, to which there has been worthy reactions.¹ My thesis is elementary and obvious: intellectual paradigms are culturally mediated, that is, they are contextually situated and relative. With this widely expressed assertion, one is faced with a deeply problematic situation; how can one do 'social science' without the 'science' in the social given that the 'science' is a mode of inquiry and a body of knowledge that is 'alien' to the African cultural context but recognised as the major avenue into valid knowledge about the social world. This paper limits itself to pointing out the epistemological dilemma of doing social science in Africa. A much more ambitious contribution has come from Adesina (2003) who, using Akiworo's work as a platform, suggest a foundation for epistemic intervention. He argues for what he refers to as *Ti-bi-t'ire* Logic, which argues for mutually inclusive and interpenetrating sources of epistemic vocation. Future discussion will go beyond what is contained in this paper, which takes the form of a dialogue in line with the more recent techniques and strategies for the exposition of philosophical ideas whose primary dimension include the unveiling of their various facets in terms of the necessity, equivalence, effectiveness and limitation of these ideas, but as Todorov (1993:52) remarked "does not consist in the juxtaposition of several voices but in their interaction".

A piece of knowledge, I do not want to take it for granted that its meaning is widely shared and as such find it of importance to make clear my understanding of it right from the beginning. One finds diverse definitions of knowledge in the literature (*somehow dealt with extensively in sociology of knowledge*). For the purpose of the present paper, I am inclined towards McCarthy's view of knowledge as "any and every set of ideas accepted by one or another society of people, ideas pertaining to what they accept as real" (McCarthy, 1996:2). As Podynowski (2003:738) suggested "knowledge understood as such do not have an inherent epistemological claims to 'truth' or the most valid representation of reality".

My discussion of the concept of universal, which follows in the next section, draws from the debate in the metaphysics of properties. The issues and questions in the debate, to me, have more general application. In other words, they are not specific to the metaphysics of properties. What I draw from it is however limited but it serves my discussion, which is brief and by no means intended to be complete. I offer it as an on-going engagement as I have earlier pointed out. My discussion also takes me into the history of thought, which can be distinguished from the history of ideas and the history (or the study) of works. The distinctive feature of thought "is that it emanates from an individual subject. The history of ideas, for its part, examines anonymous ideas by situating them not in synchronic context in which someone conceived them, but in the diachronic series composed of other formulation of the same idea. The history of works, in turn focuses on the description and interpretation of particular texts, not on the integral thought of a single author" (Todorov, 1993:xii-xiv)

¹ See Oloyede, O (2002) *Mental Illness in Culture* in *Mental Illness: An Anthropological View from South Africa*; Braakman, Mario, H. All sciences are equal, but some sciences are more equal than others; Oloyede revisited; Ventevogel, Peter, Everything in culture, but culture is not everything: Comments on Oloyede's paper on mental illness and culture; van Dongen, ELs, beyond the common debate on culture and psychiatry; A comment on Olajide Oloyede; Oloyede, O, A call for cultural sensitivity is not cultural relativism: Response of comments on 'Culture in Mental Illness'. All in *Medische antropologie*, Volume 14, number 2, 2002.

The Universal through the Particular

The point of departure for universalism is that the universal is deduced in the basis of a single particular. I would like to think that this point is an accepted one, at least, to a considerable extent, a in mind the controversy surrounding the 'universal' and the 'particular'. We see two sides to the conception of universals, distinguished as the Platonic and Aristotelian, a distinction, which has been suggested as turning on whether universals have a spatio-temporal location. The former, it is noted, denies them thus making universals abstract entities; whilst the latter sees universals as having a location and as such begs the question: where are universals located? To which the answer is that they are in some way located in their instances and so are wherever their instances are. Now, as it has been suggested by those who take side in the age-long controversy about the status of universals, this leads to "some queer" features of the location of Aristotelian universals: "(i) one universal can be wholly present at different places at the same time and (ii) two universals can occupy the same place at the same time". The point is made that given that we want to satisfy the second adequacy condition even where the property is instantiated by two particulars at the same time, we must say that the universal is in both particulars at the same time. However, there is the claim that this is not how universals are in their instances; they do not have parts, which are spread around their instances. Instead, they are wholly present in their instances. So, we have to conclude that (i) is true.

We must however bear in mind that the Aristotelian universals and the Platonic conception are but two of many conceptions. Such conceptions tend to differ on their attempt to answer the questions: "What are the identity conditions of universals? What universals are there?" I can do no more here than repeat the sentences by which Aristotelian and Platonic conceptions are often expressed, without guaranteeing that their meaning will be fully clarified. Universals, in Aristotelian realism, have "no independent existence" but exist only as characters or properties of particulars. The issue, as Pap noted almost sixty years ago, is, what literal meaning can be attached to the phrase "universals have a being independent of particulars" as well as to the phrase "the being of universals depends upon the being particulars." If, he remarked, the former, the Platonic phrase, means "no universals are exemplified by particulars" and the latter, "all universal are exemplified by particulars" which is Aristotelian, then both views are false. For him, the truism is that some universals are exemplified and some are not.

In Armstrong's theory of universals, which, in fact, is Aristotelian, universals are wholly present wherever they are instantiated; their instances literally have something in common. This is to say that universals are entities capable of having instances. If we accept this, then, we can argue that western knowledge is wholly present wherever they are instantiated. such instantiation I would like to argue, is in sciences: and given that science has become at different places across time, western knowledge thus is universal. But does the fact of its 'universal' make it superior to other forms of knowledge? This would seem implied in the philosophy and claims of scientific knowledge and almost explicit in the history of western thought. There is the idea of the

existence of certain ineradicable *ontological* differences between the West and others (Africa, Asia and South America). We see this idea in the iconic European philosophers including Hegel, Condorcet, John Stuart Mill, Karl Marx and such 20th century philosophers and thinkers as Bertrand Russell, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger and so on (Halbfass, 1988). We see it clearly expressed in the *History of Philosophy* by Hegel, described as “one of the quintessential European thinkers” (Halbfass, 1988:84) and generally considered as “one of the most important (Western) philosophers” (Findlay, 1964:320) an unashamedly declaration of the universality of western thought.

He suggests, for example, that the *superiority* of Europe over non-Europeans follows from the fact that Europe alone is capable of Universal history and philosophy. In a paragraph that might perhaps embarrass those who subscribe to his ideas, he writes blatantly, expressing the superiority of the West and its exclusively claim to universal thought, that:

“ Africa proper, as far as History goes back, has remained – for all purposes of connection with the rest of the world – shut up; it is ... The land of childhood... Enveloped in the dark mantle of Night (1900:148)... The peculiarly African character is difficult to comprehend for the very reason that, in reference to it, we must give up the principle which naturally accompanies all our (emphasis in the original) ideas – the category of Universality... At this point, we leave Africa, not to mention it again. For it is no historical part of the World (emphasis added); it has no movement or development to exhibit... What we properly understand by Africa, is the Unhistorical, Undeveloped Spirit, still involved in the conditions of mere nature... Europe presents on the whole the centre and end (emphasis added) of the world” (1900:157-158)

We see also in Condorcet the philosophy of the universal: “human nature is the same everywhere, since our rational faculty constitutes part of human nature, this faculty is therefore likewise universal. only reason is capable of distinguishing what is just from what is unjust; therefore it is incumbent upon universal reason to formulate the principle of justice that are valid everywhere and for everyone” (cf. Todorov, 1993:24). Thus for Condorcet, natural law becomes rational law, while remaining just as universal as its predecessor. This point laid the foundation for Condorcet to state further that since the principles of justice are everywhere the same, laws, must be the same as well. in other words, laws must not result from natural law and from the physical, social and historical condition of a nation, as Montesquieu suggested, but must proceed from the principles of justice alone. We see in this view how reason and its finest incarnation, science, began to take hold of constructing reality beyond its ‘habitus’ as ‘particular form of knowledge’. In Saint-Simon, this view, the scientific doctrine, was given a definitive form in his quest for a universal and eternal constitution, which he saw as proceeding from the nature of things and from the rigour of syllogism.

However, it was in Saint-Simon’s prodigy, Comte’s *Preliminary Discourse* that we see in very clear terms, the truly universal doctrine, which is accorded the task of helping human kind to progress in the direction of a single society. It is worth noting that Comte’s observations, which are hardly referred to in very many writings and reflections on the issue of universals, are as Todorov (1933:27) noted “occasionally so compelling that we are obliged to credit

Comte with prophetic clairvoyance". For example, he "uncovers several characteristics of contemporary society that are destined he believes, to spread throughout the globe: industrial life and a certain organization of labour, homogenization of aesthetic tastes, international agreement in the content and method of science, the preference for a particular political form, the democratic republic" (Ibid: 27)

Todorov notes that Comte's observations are coupled with a programme of action designed essentially to facilitate and accelerate the course of history. This programme has several phases beginning with a qualitative ripening, then a quantitative extension starting in France, the core of humanity. The temporal power will be carefully distinguished from spiritual power and the focus will be entirely on the latter. Only after the spiritual unity is established will it be possible to focus on political institutions. The most appropriate means for this universal expansion is education of the elites: this has the double advantage of being rapid and gentle. We see in the history of education in the colonies. From the other pole, we can argue that the universalism cannot be totally accomplished and perhaps, this explains the crisis of education in Africa. This is but a perhaps; for it we are to examine the relativism of Gustave Le Bon which is premised on cognition, the idea that "members of different cultures do not inhabit the same worlds; they have nothing in common", then the universalism of Comte cannot be accomplished since Le Bon "pushes the relativism of values to the point of establishing a discontinuity among the subspecies of humanity" (Todorov, 1993:55).

However, the judgement Le Bon brings to bear on the relativity of values is ambiguous, as Todorov (1993) pointed out, noting that on one hand, he can only rejoice in what strikes him as a triumph of science, and he admires that "the sense of the relative dominates contemporary thought" (Ibid. 56). But on the other hand, a civilization that no longer believes that its own values are absolute is a weakened civilization. The drama of relativism is that it represents "both a higher degree of civilization, the one to which the flourishing of reason gives us access, and a lower degree, to the extent that such form of civilization is weaker than those forms that believe in absolutes" (Todorov, 1993:56-57).

The relativism of values, cultural or historical, has become commonplace of our social world, accompanied, quite often, by assertion that we belong to different species and subspecies. Post-modernists, in a subtle but technically sophisticated way tend to make this known. However, this has not prevented the attribution of a dominant place to the universal. According to Levi-Strauss, perhaps, the most influential of ethnologists – those whose very object may be identified as cultural difference – "the outer differences conceal a basic unity" (Levi-Strauss, 1973:59). This point from Levi-Strauss, which echoes the classical spirit of Enlightenment philosophy, that there is such thing as "human nature" "constant and universal" is all the more disconcerting. But should one be disconcerted? After all, the ethnologist's ultimate goal, according to Levi-Strauss, is to reach the universal forms of the human mind. Although, the initial aim of the ethnologist was to study differences. This would seem to be *Rosseau-esque* in approach: reaching a goal by heading first in the opposite direction.

Levi-Strauss conceives of the universal inspired by Leibniz: from the observation of particular facets, one deduces general properties in such a way that each fact appears to be one combination – among various possible combinations – of these general and elementary features (Todorov, 1994:62). As Todorov (1994) rightly noticed, it is indeed Levi-Strauss's structural project: he refers to "that general inventory of societies which anthropology attempts to construct" and the observable data are then nothing more than "the equivalents of so many choices, from all the possible ones which each society seems to make" (Levi-Strauss, 1973:11). "Only the particulars" according to Todorov, "is observed, but the particular is understood only by way of detour through the general" (Ibid:62)

However, as rightly noted, in as much as Levi-Strauss 'preserves the image of the inventory of abstract properties, common to all cultures', he was prepared to jettison "universal forms of morality" (Todorov, 1993:62). Levi-Strauss writes that: "We must accept the fact that each society has made a certain choice, within the range of existing human possibilities, and that the various choices cannot be compared with each other" (Levi-Strauss, 1975:385). We are thus confronted with "the impossibility of arriving" at any moral or philosophical criteria by which to decide respective values of the choices which have led each civilization to prefer certain ways of life and thought while rejecting others" (1971:636). This is striking for we see here the general Universalist programme of Levi-Strauss giving way to 'radical ethical relativism' (Todorov, 193:63)

Todorov remarked, "The same thing is suggested by the famous comparison of cultures to moving trains: there exists no fixed point – that is, no point beyond a culture – from which we can judge others. We have the impression that a culture is *developing*, and we think we are making an objective judgement about it; in reality, all we see is that it is going in the same direction as we are. Or else, on the contrary, we think that another culture is *stagnating* that is another optical illusion, for we are in fact only designating the difference of direction between its movement and ours" (Ibid, p.63)

Levi-Strauss uses the image of moving trains to justify his ethical relativism. 'In order to demonstrate that the dimension and speed of the place of bodies are not absolute values, but functions of the observer's positions, we are reminded that, for a passenger sitting by the window of a train, the speed and length of other trains vary according to whether they move in the same direction or the opposite way. And every member of a culture is as closely linked to that culture as the imaginary passenger to its train" (Levi-Strauss 1973:340). However, Levi-Strauss cautions us from the logic of this relativist declaration: "we hope to introduce an additional exigency into our disciplines: do discover, beyond men's ideas of society, the hinges of the 'true system' (1973:67), the ultimate role of knowledge remains "the scrupulous search for truth (Levi-Strauss, 1971:642)

Here, he recedes back to the universalist horizon of his approach, which is significant in that the discourse of universality is already secured in Western society through science defined by Levi-Strauss as "structural interpretation". According to him "Only structural interpretation can account both itself and for other kinds ... it consists in making explicit a system of rela-

tionships that the other variants merely embodied" (Levi-Strauss, 1971:628). He thus feels justified, as Todorov pointed out, in defending "scientific knowledge which, however harmful it may have been, and further threatens to be, in its application is nevertheless a mode of knowledge where absolute superiority cannot be denied" (Levi-Strauss, 1971:636).

This would seem, in a way, rather perilous because Levi-Strauss dismisses other cultures but as suggested by Todorov, "affirming this superiority does not mean locking oneself up in categories derived from a particular culture while excluding the others, for the categories of science are never definitive and they can be modified through contact with categories from other cultures" (Todorov, 1993:86). We see something akin to this in the progress of science, which is but a way of constructing social reality, in that "the truths enshrined by scientific progress were not so much discovered, as they were but constructed" (Rule, 1997:52) as some sociologists of science, known as constructivist, would argue.² The constructionist argument invoked here relates to a different but almost identical problematic: "What social conditions led to the 'discovery' of these 'truths' rather than others?" as captured by Rule (1997). The question, of course, was a counter to the Mertonian view of science as progressive, authentic and bountiful, a view, which derives from the concern to chat the "social arrangements and process shaping scientific work" posing the question: "What norms and social arrangements help discovery of scientific truths proceed as rapidly as possible" (Rule, 1997:54).

We can readily identify two general views of science: Popper's and Polanyi's. Popper's idea of science, one would assume, is well known: articulate questions, theories and argument constitutes science. In Polanyi's view, science is constitutive of personal knowledge or commitment to one's views in the face of difficulties. For Popper, critical detachment is crucial, whereas, for Polanyi, it is critical attachment. Many of those who have critically engaged both viewpoints, seem to equate Polanyi's views with Thomas Kuhn whose idea of scientific revolution is replacement of incommensurable paradigms. Science consists of competing paradigms or culture each defined by their own paradigm where one culture becomes dominant; it is usually the paradigm of the younger generation. This is of course science in a revolutionary state.

Polanyi sees the theory of paradigms as best one of partial description of how scientific knowledge is created; the creation is through the use of tacit knowledge. Scientists, he argues, generate new theories by applying their tacit knowledge. The explicit or objective dimension of scientific knowledge can only be understood from the framework of a body of tacit or personal knowledge. The scientist, he argues, relies on tacit knowledge to understand theories and formulate. He/she uses the tacit knowledge to resolve difficulties, puzzles and problems. Discoveries are made by the scientists through the use of tacit knowledge as the means of extending the known to understanding the unknown.

We read in the sociology of scientific knowledge that this is a problem in that the role of the objective side of science is peripheral to scientific knowledge. However, for me, there is no problem to this. The problem is

²For those known as constructionists, "scientific truth consisted simply of what scientists agreed to be true to any specific moment". Thus, the truth established by scientific enquiry were factitious and arbitrary as Rule remarked (1997)

the supposed objectivity of scientific knowledge. Some writers have argued that science does not transcend culture; that it is an artefact of a specific culture and indeed the artefact of Western culture and such produces a language and form of thinking that constructs a reality relative to Western culture. Merchant (1980) further suggest, for example, that the mechanical framework for scientific investigation was transferred to societal understandings of, and orientations to, nature. She sees this 'conceptual framework' of a mechanical order as associated with a "framework of values based on power, fully compatible with the direction taken by commercial capitalism" (Merchant, 1980:193). In this analysis, ideas and interpretative structures from science are generalized and imbibed by political, economic and social aspirations as remarked by Pedykowski (2003). Merchant (1995) suggested that western commonsense reality is the world of classical physics, that is, 'a common' reality infiltrated by Newtonian physics and mechanistic world-views. With world-historical transformation, this mechanistic world-view, that is science, became dominant rapidly transforming society and social thought. We begin to see the particular become the universal in the history of science.

The history of science

In the history of science, western thought began to be dominant. A useful illustration of this is social theory, which attempts to explain social reality. As Alexander (1995) rightly noted, social theory is both science and ideology. he uses 'modernity' illustrate this point. in 'modernity' we see the particular becoming the universal. Through the discourse of 'modernity', we see the doctrine of the universal. In the science of 'modernity', we see particulars instantiate the universal. Modernity, Alexander reminds us, citing Pocock, after all has always been a highly relativist term. "It emerged in the fifteen century when a newly Christianized Rome wished to distinguish their religiosity from two forms of barbarians, the heathens of antiquity and the unregenerate Jews. in medieval times, modernity was reinvented as a term implying cultivation and Learning, which allowed contemporary intellectuals to identify backwards with the classical learning of the Greek and Roman heathens themselves" (Alexander, 1995:66)

The look backwards entailed a rejection of the Middle Ages as dark, barbarous and rude; the self-conscious revival of antiquity discarded the medieval pre-occupation with theology. The world became depicted and explained without reference to a higher supernatural realm of meaning. As contained in Burckhardt's classic, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, Christian belief was not that challenged nor was the validity of the Bible questioned. What was implicit in the educational ideal of those in the forefront of the look backwards, known as the humanists, was a radical transformation of the Christian idea of human beings. In the medieval view, men and women were incapable of attaining excellence through their own efforts because of their sinful nature. Recalling the classical Greek concept of human beings, the humanists considered the achievement of excellence through individual striving the end of education and life itself. In their thinking, individuals were capable of this goal; their duty was to pursue it as the end of life.

The emphasis on the creative powers of human beings in the humanist thinking was one of the most characteristic and influential doctrines of the Renaissance as historians tell us. We are cautioned though, that the Renaissance image of the individual and the world was the exclusive prerogative of a small, well-educated urban elite and did not reach down to include the masses. However, it was said to mark the birth of 'modernity'. In the middle of the seventeenth century, Aristotle and Ptolemy were overtaken by the work of Copernicus, Kepler and Galileo. Both Aristotle and Ptolemy of Alexandria, who produced the *Almagest* (A.D. 150), a handbook of Greek astronomy based on the theories of Aristotle (the earth, being the heaviest object, lay stationary and suspended at the centre of the universe), had their ideas integrated in to the Christian framework that distinguished between the world beyond the moon and an earthly realm. Copernicus who made calculations about the movement of heavenly bodies challenged the geocentric idea of the universe in Aristotle's theory and Ptolemy's theory. Kepler was to give a mathematical proof to this. There was a completely new philosophy of nature and a new science whose essence lay in the mathematical expression of physical laws that describe matter in motion. What was needed was a law that could explain the observed motion and Isaac Newton provided this in his *Principia Mathematica*. Here, he formulated universal mathematical laws and offered a philosophy of nature that sought to explain the essential structure of the universe: that matter is atomic in structure and is acted upon by immaterial forces placed in the universe by God.

In essence, what we had in this period was the condemnation of all vestiges of medieval culture. Resulting from this was a 'modern liberal' thought initiated by the Enlightenment. "With the Enlightenment, modernity became identified with rationality, science, forward progress, a semantically arbitrary relationship that seems to have held steady to this day" (Alexander, 1995:66). The Enlightenment thinkers sought to put in place a rational system of ethics and philosophy based on scientific truth. Newtonian science, which had viewed space as a distinct physical reality, a stationary and motionless medium through which light travelled and matter moved was extolled. For the educated classes, to know was to have the knowledge of Newtonian science. Scientific knowledge became the gold standard for all knowledge. For example the sociological thought of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, was wrapped in science: knowledge could be based upon observation, experimentation and rational deduction, it could be systematic, verifiable, progressive and useful. As one historian put it "the science of Newton became the science of Western Europe: nature mechanized, analyzed, regulated and mathematicized" (Perry, 1990). This was to be altered by Einstein's theory of relativity which hold that time differs for two people travelling at different speeds. For Einstein, the only way we can describe the motion of one body is to compare it with another moving body.

Final remarks

What I have tried to do in this paper is to point out the epistemological dilemma of doing social sciences in the context of Africa. The dilemma

remains, I suggest, so long as "science" instantiates. As Adesina (2003) points out in the specific case of sociology, we need to recognize what is idiographic about western sociology. He suggests, in an ambitious contribution to resolving this dilemma that we need to make a distinction between contextual application of received wisdom and a fundamental challenge to and the displacement of received wisdom at all the levels of distinct paradigms and epistemology. He notes that the former is about what he refers to as the deployment of existing largely western paradigms and epistemologies, while the latter is about the mechanism for distinct production of knowledge. This suggestion, which I subscribe to is not about displacing one modality of knowing with another not is it the postmodernist solution of relativising experience. It is indeed not about the former precisely because as some have argued, that the coherent world-view of the Enlightenment, which had produced an attitude of security and optimism, may have been dissolved by the early twentieth century, but 'modernity' still holds sway all over. In social theory modernization, which Alexander (1995) characterized, as a symbolic system that functioned not only to explain the world in a rational way, but to interpret the world in a manner that provided 'meaning and motivation is still the dominant framework of development in the countries of the South. It functioned, Alexander points out, as "a metalanguage that instructed people how to live" (1995:69).

Because modernization is social theory and social theory is science, which is itself an explanatory effort, that is, an attempt at explaining reality, modernization was characterized by, in Alexander's words, the following ideal-typical traits:

- 1) "Societies were conceived as coherently organized systems whose subsystems were closely interdependent.
- 2) Historical development was parsed into two types of social systems, the traditional and modern, statuses which were held to determine the character of their societal subsystems in determinate ways.
- 3) The modern was defined with reference to the social organization and culture of specifically Western societies, which were typified as individualistic, democratic, capitalist, scientific, secular and stable, and as dividing work from home in gender-specific ways.
- 4) As a historical process, modernization was held to involve non-revolutionary, incremental change.
- 5) The historical evolution to modernity – modernization – was viewed as likely to succeed, thus assuring that traditional societies would be provided with the resources for what Parsons called a general process of adaptive 'upgrading', including economic take-off to industrialization, democratization via law, and secularization and science via education." (Alexander, 1995:67-68)

In as much there has been extensive critique of this model from all sorts of writers whose work are collectively called *dependency theories*, some, if not most of the "ideal-typical traits" characterizing the model are becoming a 'reality': we see evidence of this, for example, in the universalization of culture (postmodernists have written extensively about this coining the term, 'macdonalization'), the dying need and almost blinding effort to be a 'player' in the global economic market, the relentless orientation of the organization of society towards democracy. The fact of wanting to be a player in the global economic market, which countries of the South, generally referred to as the Third World, set as a goal in their 'development' effort, suggests active participation in the universalization doctrine of the West. As Alexander (1995) puts it: "we are in a new age of social thought characterized by a renewed sense of involvement in the project of universalism rather than some lipid sense of its concrete forms" (p. 101). However, it is not so much wanting to be involved because already, the particular has become universal; western knowledge is instantiated in science and science somehow envelopes contemporary thinking in form of social theory of human development. This is the real dilemma for students of the African context but the new intellectual production from the West, post-modernism, assures us that the West is no longer the centre of the world. Those welded to postmodernism point out that it represents the decentralization and decolonization of Western thought.

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Françoise Raison-Jourde et Gérard Roy, *Paysans, intellectuels et populisme à Madagascar. De Monja Jaona à Ratsimandrava (1960-1975)*, Paris, Karthala, coll. Hommes et sociétés, 2010, 490 p.

Solofo Randrianja, Université de Toamasina, Madagascar

Coécrit par Françoise Raison-Jourde, Gérard Roy et (en retrait par modestie) Lucile Jacquier Dubourdieu, l'ouvrage traite de l'histoire politique de Madagascar des quinze premières années de l'indépendance, témoin de la véritable tentative de mise en place d'une souveraineté nationale si ce n'est authentique du moins effective dans les limites imposées par le monde moderne.

Dense par les informations fournies (dont au moins une inédite !) et par les questions soulevées, l'ouvrage tente de restituer la quête de l'essence citoyenne de cette souveraineté qui prime sur l'incontournable décorum nationaliste. Ce faisant, il met le doigt sur les paradoxes d'une société cloisonnée au delà de ce qu'une sensibilité républicaine allochtone peut supporter. Les précautions oratoires sur l'extranéité des auteurs dans la conclusion sont révélatrices du projet. Mais le regard extérieur, particulièrement celui de l'« étrangère intime », est attendu par les insulaires et les assimilés. Ce perpétuel jeu de miroirs se joue entre les uns et les autres depuis Flacourt (1607-1660), et même la globalisation a du mal à le réduire !

« L'histoire malgache par le bas », projet du livre, souhaite y lier la paysannerie et ne concède qu'un chapitre à la première « République revisitée » et à son bouvier de Président. Elle est en fait structurée autour des soubresauts caractérisant les années qui font immédiatement suite à une « indépendance » imprégnée par une « présence française ... envahissante et abusive » (p 9).

En dépit de cette promesse, trois figures étatiques principales sont présentées comme les acteurs incontournables sinon principaux de la quête: le colonel Ratsimandrava, éphémère chef de l'Etat et maître d'œuvre de la répression dans le Sud en 1971 (plusieurs milliers de morts !), Ratsiraka, à la tête de l'Etat pendant près d'un quart de siècle et chassé du pouvoir par deux fois (plusieurs milliers de morts ?) et Monja Jaona, dirigeant d'un parti nationaliste devenu Conseiller Suprême de la Révolution au moment de la première vague de démocratisation, après avoir conduit en 1971 ses partisans vers une insurrection sans perspective et à l'issue tragique prévisible.

S'adjoignent à eux, les coopérants français, les intellectuels malgaches et la paysannerie. Evoqués à travers leur rôle de vecteurs de certaines valeurs de mai 1968 dans un contexte néocolonialiste, (l'occultation de la question du genre et de la sexualité, pourtant emblématique de mai 68 et de mai 72, relève t elle de l'inconscient ou du tabou ?), les premiers

enrichissent ils la quête des intellectuels malgaches soucieux du devenir de leur société et de la place qu'ils y occupent (beaucoup deviendront des politiques de la période socialiste) ? Et au bout de cette chaîne se trouve la nébuleuse paysannerie, plus de 80% des 8 millions de Malgaches de l'époque. Absente et présente à la fois, cette dernière est victime (une fois de plus) de son hétérogénéité, car comment appréhender comme un tout le Tandroy migrant, l'agriculteur betsileo, le pêcheur vezo pour n'évoquer que ceux qui se prêtent le plus aux clichés chers aux anthropologues. Le casse tête ne fut pas seulement celui des Monja Jaona et autres Ratsimandava.

En tous les cas, la fine analyse des interactions entre les uns et les autres restitue de manière convaincante leurs interrogations. Celles ci politisent progressivement cette période dès la cinquième année de l'indépendance pour aboutir aux mouvements du début des années 70. La fin peu glorieuse de la Première République laisse la place à cinq années de transition à l'issue desquelles émergea un régime socialiste qui mit du temps à dépasser à la différence des illusions des intellectuels des années 70. Il succombera à la vague de démocratisation des années 90.

Ces cinq années de confusion et de prédilection pour les politiciens de tous bords furent aussi celles qui virent toutes les couches de la société prendre part d'une manière ou d'une autre aux débats citoyens. Le *Zaika be* de 1972 tout comme les tournées paysannes de Ratsimandrava furent autant de points d'orgue des prises de parole de sections de la société généralement réduites au silence. Par touches successives quasi impressionnistes, l'ouvrage rend remarquablement justice à l'atmosphère qui caractérise cette période et en divers milieux.

C'est dans ce cadre que se situe la tentative de restitution du rôle de la paysannerie ou plutôt de sa place. La majorité des 8 millions de Malgaches de l'époque étaient des ruraux illettrés. Ils ne purent donc laisser des traces qu'à travers des porte-paroles plus ou moins attirés. Ce n'est pas là le moindre des paradoxes de cette histoire par le bas.

En effet l'histoire contemporaine se caractérise par la surabondance des sources en particulier celles produites par le bas or la liste des archives et des collections de journaux consultés est des plus classiques. Le journal du MFM (le parti des prolétaires), pur produit de ces années 70, *Ndao* (dont une collection conséquente est consultable à la Bibliothèque nationale) n'a pas bénéficié du sort qu'il mérite. Par ailleurs, les personnes interviewées sont pour une bonne partie des gens du haut, en tous les cas si l'on se réfère à la liste située à la fin de l'ouvrage, liste qui ne rend pas justice aux chapitres de G Roy consacrés aux paysans du Vakinankaratra. Le chapitre 2 se référant aux cahiers de doléances conforte d'ailleurs l'idée de la prééminence des porte-paroles et des intermédiaires.

En fait de paysannerie, ne s'agirait il pas là plutôt de la vision que différents acteurs en ont eu. Comme sous d'autres cieux, elle est « incapturée ». Les photos sont parlantes, la seule qui montre le paysan en action est celle

du Général Ravelomanga vêtu d'un pagne et sorti de prison pour interrogatoire ! Sur les autres, ils sont soit en posture anthropologique soit spectateurs ou encore membres d'une assistance à l'écoute de discours officiels.

Est-il si cloisonné qu'une approche holistique du monde rural malgache n'est pas possible ? L'uniformité des réactions des subalternes du monde rural aux grands changements qui affectent le pays, comme les actuels vols d'ossement humains, n'est pas une donnée récente.

De même la tentative de restitution de la place de paysannerie dans la vie politique semble avoir obéré la compréhension d'un phénomène majeur qui caractérise les années 70, la prétorianisation de la vie politique pour plusieurs décennies. En effet le colonel Ratsimandrava se mue en héros d'une saga alors qu'il n'est qu'un des épisodes de cette militarisation achevée sous Ratsiraka.

Dans la même veine, l'origine paysanne de Monja Jaona ne peut le transformer en ce qu'il n'est pas. Sa trajectoire n'est pas fondamentalement différente de nombre d'éléments de sa génération entrés en politique, tels Jacques Rabemananjara, (né en 1913) ou Alexis Bezaka (né en 1921) : scolarisation tardive, soutien d'un mécène providentiel, passage par le séminaire, confrontation avec le mode colonial, emprisonnement, etc.....

Assimiler Monja Jaona comme Ratsimandrava au monde de l'en bas sous le prétexte que l'un fut côtier et l'autre *mainity* interpelle sur l'une des particularités des années 70 : le paradigme révolutionnaire. Avril 71 comme mai 72 reposent sur la foi qu'un bouleversement social rapide est possible, avec comme préalable l'existence d'un dirigeant charismatique. Or 60 ans de colonisation prolongée par 10 ans de néocolonialisme n'ont que peu altéré ces « prisons de longue durée » dont le cloisonnement social, impossible pour un individu à transcender, fut-il un héros, à moins d'être un monarque c'est à dire bénéficiant d'un appareil de légitimation autrement plus sophistiqué. Un renversement des rôles, par mai 68 et son avatar urbain malgache interposés est à la source de la gouvernance schizophrénique. Implicitement mise à l'index dans différentes parties du livre, celle-ci, depuis la période coloniale résulte de l'impossibilité de concilier *Fanjakana* (les valeurs fondant le désir de vivre en commun) et *fitondrana* (ce qu'en font les élites). Telle est l'équation à résoudre par la quête citoyenne.

Cette dernière doit passer, à l'instar des exemples asiatiques, par la confrontation de l'histoire politique insulaire et de ses modes de régulation institutionnalisés pré coloniaux avec la modernité occidentale (et d'ailleurs) pour produire des modes de légitimation du pouvoir.

Il est des démocraties dans d'autres parties du monde, reconnues comme telles, qui s'accommodent de ces cloisonnements de facture multi-séculaire tout en assurant le bien être de leurs populations.

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