

Oral Tradition, Myth and Education in African Francophone Literature

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Introduction

It is generally admitted that Africa is a continent whose culture is based on oral tradition. It is a non written civilization, where the word has a powerful impact on the life of the people. A word can mean life sentence according to the circumstances under which it is spoken. The artistic use of the word has created a valuable poetry and a rich range of oral devices that constitute what is known as the African oral literature. In the recent decades it has been called orature, an Anglophone shortcut combining “oral and literature”.

Ritual, praising, epic, proverbs, storytelling were traditionally practiced in Africa since centuries, and the word was always at the centre of those performances. The advent of the colonial and written literature has profoundly translated or inserted the oral in modern forms of communication such as books, radio, cinema or television. Nonetheless oral tradition is still alive in Africa, it is present in modern forms of arts, despite all means used to eradicate it and dismiss it from the western Reason’s area of influence.

On the other hand there is a common sense received from birth that prevails beyond any rational attempt of acquisition. There are received ideas, which conduct the human’s behaviour but cannot be rationally justified. These ideas belongs to the area of myth with its numerous and polysemic significances.

In this paper, I will first of all examine the links between myth and African thought, then the ethnophilosophy issued from this perception, before considering the creative literature. The aim is to address the problematic of the hegemony of knowledge by some privileged cultures.

1. Myth and African Thought

Since its inception in the Greek community myth is conceived as opposed to Reason, Logos, considered as fiction, creation of the human mind whereas reason relates to the intellect. Myth is unreliable, vicious, fantasist, subject to error and arbitrary. Logos forms an attempt to eradicate errors and subjectivity in the intellectual process. So myth means unreality, fantastic fruit of the human dream. While reason tries to remove from its space of action any forms of doubts and strives to perfect logic, myth remains ambiguous, approximate, and empty of scientific meaning. It is not possible to found a rigorous science upon myth. Therefore the dominant world states that any culture mainly based based on myth and orature remains by far contrary to intellectual maturation and mind development.

According to Alassane Ndaw: “Sans doute, la référence au mythe pour expliquer la réalité est-elle une pratique constante de la pensée africaine, mais celle-ci sera caractérisée davantage par l’épistémologie analogique” (Ndaw 73) [Nevertheless the

reference to the myth to explain reality is a permanent praxis of the African thought, but this will be rather characterized by the analogical epistemology.]

Myth, etymologically *Mythos*, means fiction, arbitrary creation of mind or dream. Across the centuries the concept has taken so many connotations that its significance changes according to the scholar who uses it. My view point in this paper is however literary and philosophical. For heuristic purposes I define myth. as « une construction idéale – un modèle – à partir d’un ensemble de données issues de l’expérience ou de la tradition » (Mabana 4). [an ideal construction – a model – from a framework of data stemming from experience or tradition]

Commenting on Plato’s use of myths (Cavern, Menon), Gustave Gusdorf stated that myth is the shortcut to philosophy, i.e. the pre-metaphysics, pre-logic. The myth constitutes an essential step towards a reflexive and systematic thought on being and the world. Anthropology and ethnology, folklore, culture studies showed a much deeper link between myth and African knowledge by extending exaggeratedly it to all kind of possible thought. That myth explains everything in Africa brought thinkers like Lévy-Bruhl to develop their theory of the *Primitive Mentality* excluding all non written cultures from the noble logical sphere of manhood.

But things have changed in the meantime. Anthropologists, psychoanalysts and philosophers of culture like Claude Lévy-Strauss, Ernst Cassirer have put emphasis on myth as a fundamental device of all human nature, calling into question many stereotypes pretending to privilege the culture of the master over the one of the slave. Myths are part of the collective subconscious of a people. Therefore they have to be taken into account, because they reveal the deep roots of behaviors, deeds and reactions. As Yves Giraud wrote, “le mythe satisfait un besoin d’irrationnel non dissimulé de l’âme humaine et offre à celle-ci l’occasion de dépasser l’ordre de la logique et du raisonnement, le monde des apparences et de la perception directe” (Quoted in Mabana 4) [myth satisfies a need for a non dissimulated irrational of the human soul; it offers to it the opportunity to go beyond and transcend the order of logic and reasoning, the world of appearances and direct perception.]

The debate on human sciences remains basically the same over the centuries. When it comes about Africa, any science becomes debatable. African philosophy, African theology, African literature, African culture, African science... are all dismissed because Africa is fundamentally denied any sense of knowledge. Its stories and arts are subjects to despise, when they are not ignored. There has been a big struggle to impose them to the acknowledgement of the scientific body as Paulin Hountondji states: “African Studies, for instance, in all its professional and ideological ramifications, truth to tell, belongs to the roster of European inventions” (Hountondji 8). This was also the case for the Negritude movement. As Mawena Logan writes: “Negritude writing emerged in response to French colonial enterprise in Francophone Africa and the Diaspora, a response to European denial of the existence of an African epistemology and civilization: it was reactionary.”(Mawena Logan 151)

The denial of African thought and culture brought Africans and their Diasporas' counterparts to build their own thought, to revisit their past values and confirm the existence of their cosmos. The postcolonial turn rose when the colonized took over from the former colonizers and shaped up their own image. Negritude operated a fundamental turn in the history of the Francophone world by assigning to the Blacks the responsibility for their own destiny. (See Mabana: Negritude: « Du regard de l'autre au regard de soi »)

The result of such a process is that one cannot any more think of Blacks and Africans in particular in terms of ignorance, savageness or primitiveness. The West was confronted with an internal cultural crisis when it finally came to acknowledge the existence of culture, arts, intellectual skills or creative talents in Africa.

1.1 The ethno-philosophical approach

The attempt by many African philosophers to systematize and specify the African thought has been sometimes successful and sometimes catastrophic. Some reproduce the African way of life, others explain various forms of oral tradition, and some others repeat or imitate Western thought. In a society originally without written sources, oral tradition is the only device to spread culture and knowledge. Paulin Hountondji rightly speaks of "endogenous knowledge" instead of oral tradition.

Mbiti writes: "In proverbs there is a rich deposit of the wisdom of many generations. Every African society has its proverbs, and wise people know how to use them properly" (Mbiti 8) The knower of proverbs is highly considered in the society because he incarnates the wisdom of the ancestors; he is a master of the word. Proverbs work as argumentative assertions and rhetorical means to support a case during the indigenous judiciary. A short story or even a novel can be written on the basis of oral materials, by rewriting proverbs or adjusting their plots. From those kinds of statements to ethnophilosophy the pace is quickly done. The perception is that Africans have wisdom, a set of experiences that one can present as being its genuine philosophy. That is exactly what Fr Tempels did in his *Bantu philosophy*.

A Congolese linguist, professor Tshibangu used to state that, if one considers philosophy as a science of wisdom and culture, one would allow wise old Africans to lecture on African thought at all academic levels. By dismissing the philosophers trained in colonial universities, he actually wanted to show the fundamental contradiction that exists between African and Western education systems. Again, here, the reason of the most powerful prevails. Africans trained in the western school are alienated, they do not represent the essence of their traditional background.

1.2 Kagame and Hamadou Hampate Bâ

Rwandan Alexis Kagame (1921-1981) and the Malian Hamadaou Hampaté Bâ (1901-1991) have immensely contributed to the valorization of African oral tradition not only by publishing collection of poetry, oral stories, but also by their reflections that helped open the awareness on this matter. Kagame is known as an important philosopher; the first of African scholars who criticized Fr Tempels's *Bantu Philosophy* and oriented this

philosophy towards an investigation on linguistic productions. A noble trained in the original tradition of his ethnic group, he produced very valuable collections of oral poetry: *Avec un troubadour du Rwanda* (1949), *Une ode guerrière du vieux Rwanda* (1951), *La divine pastorale* (1952).

To him although he claims the authenticity of an African thought, the Western philosophy remains the reference one has to follow. He is obviously the disciple of his training school, as Samuel O. Imbo states:

“While Kagame’s work has obviously been influenced by Tempels, a stronger influence is Kagame’s scholastic background from which he imports categories to transplant in his own culture. As is to be expected, Kagame justifies his procedure using the Thomistic belief in the unity of rationality across human traditions cultures.” (Imbo: 17)

Hamadou Hampaté Bâ’s famous say is known all over the world: “In Africa when an elder person dies, it is a whole library that burns” The statement translates the deep immersion of African knowledge in Orature. The Old man is the knower, the one who has gone through many life experiences throughout the ages. Therefore comparing him to a library means underlining the high importance of his knowledge.

He has a Peuhl background and also a muslim education. His publications include creative writings like *Le destin de Wangrin* and *Les contes d’Amkouel*. With Lylian Kesteloot, he published some collections of important literary, anthropological and cultural value. In *Aspects de la civilisation africaine* Bâ thoroughly addresses the topic of knowledge.

Le fait de n’avoir pas d’écriture ne prive pas pour autant l’Afrique d’avoir un passé, et une connaissance. (22)

[Not having scripture does not deprive Africa of having a past, and knowledge]

La connaissance africaine est immense, variée, et concerne tous les aspects de la vie. Le « connaisseur » n’est jamais un « spécialiste ». C’est un généraliste. Le même vieillard, par exemple, aura des connaissances aussi en pharmacopée, en “science des terres” (propriétés agricoles ou médicinales des différentes sortes de terre) ou en « science des eaux », qu’en astronomie, en cosmogonie, en psychologie, etc.» (22)

[African knowledge is immense, varied, and is about all the aspects of life. The “knower” is never a “specialist”. He is a generalist. The same old man, for example, will also have knowledge about pharmacopeia, in “science of the earths” (agricultural or medicinal properties of different sorts of earth) or in “science of the waters”, as well as in astronomy, cosmogony, psychology, etc.]

Bâ explains that the word has a deep significance; it word is more than just a production of sounds and sentences:

Dans les civilisations orales, la parole engage l'homme, la parole est l'homme. D'où le respect profond des récits traditionnels légués par le passé, dont il est permis d'embellir la forme ou la tournure poétique, mais dont la trame reste immuable à travers les siècles, véhiculés par une mémoire prodigieuse qui est la caractéristique même des à tradition orale (25)

[In oral civilizations the word engages man, the word is man. Hence the deep respect due to traditional tales inherited from the past, of which it is allowed to embellish the form or the poetic turn, but whose plot remains immutable throughout the centuries, transmitted by a prodigious memory which is the very characteristic of the peoples of oral traditions.]

That explains why the colonizers first of all tried to annihilate these traditions before imposing their western school and their languages.

Like the other writers of Negritude at that time, Kagame and Bâ strive to convince the world of the importance of the African tradition and orature. To them the written is just a support but not essential. At the semiotic level the oral material, where it is practiced, has the same rigorous scheme as the written. However, as Miller underlines it: Writing is speech as speech is silence: in both cases there is movement from authenticity to alterity, from truth to tropes" (Miller 95)

2. Orature and African creative literature

The idea here is to examine the statements made by some literary critics and writers on the issue of orature. Eno Belinga defines oral literature as follows: "l'usage esthétique du langage non écrit, et d'autre part, l'ensemble des connaissances et les activités qui s'y rapportent" (7) [the aesthetic use of non written language and, on the other hand, the totality of knowledge and the activities related to it"]

The following writers have in common the fact they believe in the relevance of the storytelling evenings. As Chinua Achebe could write a short story based on a proverb, the writers share the idea that Africa would die if it had no tradition, no historical or cultural backgrounds upon which it can stand. Hampate Bâ states that writing is just a tool, not the content of knowledge. In the creating writings Camara Laye retraces step by step the initiation in real life and Cheikh Hamidou Kane describes the case conflict of tradition and modernity. As John Mbiti writes, "Stories, proverbs, riddles, myths and legends are found in large numbers among all African peoples. They have been handed down orally. Some of them are a record of actual historical events but most of them are created by people's imaginations. They serve many purposes" (Mbiti 8)

Oral African literature is the only way to discover the African personality. That is why texts written by African in European languages differ from the ones written by Europeans themselves, even where there are apparently no syntactical discrepancies. So to say, orature remains in principle an essential background to seize the poetics or aesthetics of African works. Therefore African literature has to be taught or learnt along with orature, to seize its deepest significance, because orature inspires modern literature. At times

writers either translate, or create stories based on rituals or praising songs, even if some prefer not to do so. However the younger generation of African writers born in towns after the independences, are not fully aware of the impact of the mythical beliefs shared in their societies, simply because they have not been sufficiently exposed to them. However as Bayo Ogunjimi and Abdul-Rasheed Na'Allah state:

The presence of magic, charms, juju, wizards and witches explain this cosmic model of the African Universe. The faith and survival of the traditional people are anchored on these beliefs. It is therefore not surprising that religious poetry, funeral poetry, incantations, ritual and magical displays are derivations of these philosophical beliefs. (Ogunjimi & Na'Allah 16)

2.1 Ritual initiation in *The Dark Child*

In this Bildungsroman Camara Laye (1928-1980) presents a five or six year old boy who is initiated by his mother to know the mysterious world in which adults and his parents evolve. His mother warns him never to kill the snake that he happens to meet in the compound: "My son, this one must not be killed: he is not like the other snakes, and he will not harm you; you must never interfere with him. [...] This snake, my mother added, is your father's guiding spirit. (Laye 5)

The narrator discovers an unknown and magical universe where a terrifying creature becomes an usual family member. The learning process is direct, discrete as if it were the delivery of a vital secret. A very successful blacksmith specialized in making golden jewelleryes, the narrator's father caresses the snake's head when he works with gold.

Further more, he shows the magical powers of his mother when she brings to move a horse that refuses to move. Traditions and vital knowledge are transmitted orally, discretely filtered in the mind of the young during his maturing process. All vital steps are subjects to rites.

The Konden Diara ceremony or the awful night of roaring lions is the most impressive and fearful act of endorsement and initiation in the "adult" section of the community: "The night of Kondén Diara was a strange night, a terrible and miraculous night, a night that passed all understanding" (105). But when one discovers what really happens, that the lion's roaring is the result of a trick, one is bound by a kind of omerta. One has no right to disqualify this ceremony by betraying the secret because every young faces this enduring and tremendous test since generations. The circumcision ceremony is however the highest point of the initiation process, because this is a very important step towards adulthood.

In short, training to life is taken by the community through various ceremonies. The son of a traditional goldsmith however became an Engineer in mechanics, almost repeating in a modern or colonized context the destiny of his father. The difference between their training is that the father was magically initiated to his job, where the son was awarded a high degree of the western school.

2.3 The Most Royal Lady and the new school in *Ambiguous Adventure*

Cheikh Hamidou Kane (1928-) is a trained philosopher. The main topic of *Ambiguous Adventure* can be summarized as cultural hybridity. The protagonist is a student in philosophy in France who returns to his country. Samba Diallo who was expected to replace Master Thierno as the Koran school teacher, is killed by a foolish man after he has transgressed the Islamic tradition of the daily prayer. At the bottom line this is a direct consequence of a challenge raised by the Most Royal Lady who sent him to the European school, because she “believe[s] that the time has come to teach our sons to live” (Kane 27)

The perspicacious and modernist Most Royal Lady comes to notice that the secret of the Western resides in the institution of school. She observes the administrator and the evangelizer whose mission is to spread their civilization and religion, but both join in the institution of the school. Her brother, the Chief of the Diallobé, tried to resist the Europeans’ invasion with his magical forces, but the colonial master won the battle, defeating him so profoundly that he could never stand up again. To her, the school is rather a powerful weapon, cannon that kills without biting or harming: “the new school shares at the same time the characteristics of cannon and magnet. From the cannon it draws its efficacy as an arm of combat. Better than the cannon it makes conquest permanent. The cannon compels the body, the school bewitches the soul.” (Kane 49). The colonial school per se constitutes symbolically the dominance of the colonial master over their subjects, for whereas it shows a humanitarian face, it fairly assaults the mind of the colonised peoples and inculcates their way of thinking and leaving. This is the reason why she convinced the Diallobé to send their children to the new school; “we must go to learn from them the art of conquering without being in the right” (Kane 37); where we can learn “how to join wood to wood”. These expressions stem from the Diallobé proverbial background and show in their internal contradiction the powerful message from the Most Royal Lady.

Mawena Logan is particularly right when he comments: “It is quite possible that not only is the Most Royal lady aware of the intrusion of Western episteme on the Diallobe, she is equally preparing the youth for a confrontation with the West after mastering the tools of conquest – a mastering that would prove fatal to the likes of Samba Diallo.” (157)

2.4 Distorsion of social classes in Francis Bebey’s *Le ministre et le griot*.

In *Le ministre et le griot* Francis Bebey (1929-2001) shows how western education has tremendously changed the social classes and hierarchies in Africa. In the social habit a griot cannot sit at the same table with his master. There are strict codes regulating the attitudes and behaviours of different members in the community. Although Africa has seen all these old customs banished, there are still people who stick to those old fashion ways of life. In the Very Peaceful Republic of Kessébougou, Prime Minister Demba Diabaté stems from a family of griot, whereas Finance Minister Keita Dakouri is of Mandingué prince dynasty. In this tradition-enrooted society where the name precisely defines who one is, there are still strong survivals of the old order, no one has forgotten who everybody really is. Keita would like to invite his friend and former schoolmate the

PM to a party at his home, but he faces the resistance of his mother Binta Madiallo who refuses to sit at the same table with a man of griot's descent:

Je constate que les choses que tu as apprises à l'école des Blancs t'ont tout fait oublier de notre tradition. Demba Diabaté est allé à l'école des Blancs, comme toi. Pourtant, ce n'est pas pour rien qu'il s'appelle Diabaté. Qui lui avait demandé d'aller à l'école apprendre les mêmes choses que toi ? Maintenant il est Premier ministre, c'est lui qui commande le pays et tout le monde doit lui obéir... [...]

Depuis quand, dis-moi, depuis quand un griot comme lui devient-il le chef d'un noble comme toi? Et toi, mon fils, tu veux qu'il vienne s'asseoir à la même table que moi, et qu'il mange, en même temps que moi, la même nourriture que moi je mange. Cela, mon fils, jamais ! (Bebey 37)

[I notice that things you have learnt at the Whites' school have caused you to forget all about our tradition. Demba Diabaté attended the school of the Whites, like you. But it is not insignificant that he is called Diabaté. Who asked him to attend school in order to learn the same things as you did? Nowadays he is the Prime Minister, it is he who rules the country and everybody has to obey to him...

Since when, tell me, since when a griot like him becomes the boss of a noble like you? And you, my son, you want him to come sit at the same table as me, and to eat at the same time as me, the same food that I eat. My son, that will never happen!]

The colonial school has dismantled the fundamental principles of the traditional society by instituting the western knowledge, i.e. written knowledge, as the indispensable key to power and success in modern African society. So to say, by introducing school and making it available to everybody, regardless of original social classes, the colonial power has completely the traditional social hierarchy and imposed other values. The wise old man belongs from now on to folklore, not to modern society. The hard challenge of African intelligentsia remains for years to reach a lucid equilibrium between its traditional values and the acquisitions from the European education.

3. Dismantling or coping with the colonial project?

3.1 The burden of Western Education

I come from a community where the perception used to be as follows: when one goes to western school, one becomes an idiot, i.e. the individual loses his roots, even becomes unable to understand his mother tongue. My experience was painful, first of all in terms of languages. The first language I remember I consciously came to speak in Kabwita was not my own language it was Kiyaka. When my family moved from Kabwita to Mutoni, a Suku village, I could finally practice my mother tongue. But a year later, my family went further to Makiosi, a village where Kiyaka and Kipelende were spoken. I was confused once again. Another year later I came to the city of Kenge where Kikongo ya Leta was spoken. The only language I could really master under those circumstances was French,

because it was the only language I continuously learnt. Nowadays I can hardly write in Kisuku, but I can write in Kikongo, the reason being that Kikongo is more written, the liturgical language of the diocese of Kenge that employed me for twenty years. French nevertheless remains my main language of communication.

Although I know the tradition quite well, I always regret I could never master the proverbs of my tribe. I rarely lived the life of a village because my parents purposely avoided such opportunities. An *évolué* of the colonial time, my father was proud to see me rather speak French.

I guess this is the case of many people of my generation. We cannot speak in proverbs, maxims or apophthegms nor can we use the finest expressions of our mother tongues. We sometimes express ourselves much better in Kikongo, Lingala or French – a colonial language – than in our original native language. Our African background has been devastated and annihilated by the western wash braining, accurately inoculated in us since the first day of school.

3.2 « Je ne veux pas aller à leur école » Guy Tirolien

« I don't want to go their school » This is a sentence from a famous poem by Guadeloupean Guy Tirolien, “Prière d'un petit enfant nègre” (Prayer of a little black boy) published in *Balles d'or*. In this poem a child tries to explain why he refuses to go the western school:

“Les nègres vous le savez n'ont que trop travaillé / pourquoi faut-il de plus / apprendre dans des livres / qui nous parlent de choses qui ne sont point d'ici » (Tirolien 21) [Blacks have worked too much / why do they still need / to learn in the books – which speak of things that are not from here”]

The little black boy first of all identifies himself with his race; he not only denounces the inutility of books, because they are irrelevant to the blacks' world-view, but also he dismisses the books as being able to solve the people's problems. He reproaches the sorrowful school to be like “ces messieurs comme il faut / qui ne savent plus danser le soir au clair de lune / qui ne savent plus marcher sur la chair de leurs pieds / qui ne savent plus conter les contes aux veillées » (Tirolien 21) [This decent gentlemen / who cannot dance any more at clair de lune / who cannot any ore walk on the flesh of their feet / who cannot tell the stories at eves.]

For the little boy disqualifies the white man's book and knowledge, who pretends to know but cannot dance, nor can he be bound to nature or tell stories. That is what the village school is all about: real life, real nature, learning history through oral stories. It looks as if the child is legitimating the tradition that the colonial power has banished.

3.3 Beyond compromise and colonialism: ambiguous identity

Because of the training of its major figures, Negritude fell in the trap of Eurocentrism. Césaire, Senghor, Damas and their friends were all trained in the colonial schools and

have almost benefited from the same scheme of scholarship. Their opposition to colonialism was still part of the internal crisis within the colonial system. Their knowledge, even if they pretended the contrary, was extremely dependant on the development of the European human sciences and arts (folklore, musicology, history, archaeology). The European intellectuals who supported their adventure stemmed all from the colonial episteme. Therefore it is easy to understand why the first attempts in various African sciences were tributary of the European epistemology. In terms of Africans writing in French, the only writers accepted in France were the ones following the paces of their French masters. It is not by chance that André Breton was asked to preface the second edition of Césaire's *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*. The same can be said of "Black Orpheus", the preface written by Jean-Paul Sartre for Senghor's *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre*. This kind of patronizing, though apparently innocent and harmless, maintained on hold and controlled somehow the production of the Black francophone literature. This remark however does not undermine the fundamental importance of these two works.

Commenting on the debate about Francophone postcolonial studies, especially on a literary history "distincte de celle qui est centrée sur le canon national", Jean-Marie Moura states: « A sa racine se trouve la tension entre l'histoire littéraire, fixant cadres chronologiques et paradigmes », et les recherches historiographiques (posant les conditions de nouveaux modes délaboration et dexposition du savoir). » ((sic : Moura, 67-68) [There is at the basis the tension between literary history, fixing chronological frameworks and paradigms, and the historiography research (determining the conditions of new trends for the elaboration and exposition of knowledge)]

Colonialism first destroyed the basic roots of African episteme; it succeeded in imposing its norms, its language and its culture upon the colonized. Writing stories and epics can be seen as an attempt by the colonizers to remove the richness of orality from its cultural context. Miller states that from a certain perspective, "the incursion of the book into black Africa is an imperialistic process of conquest and pure loss" (Miller 103). But the historic reality is that the colonized never lost their mind radically, never completely alienated themselves. Even using the colonial languages they open the door to what is called today new postcolonial poetics. (Moura 69) Beyond all the recent historical developments, the initial ambiguous identity still persists.

Conclusion

The idea that the myth forms the background of African knowledge and creative writing helps to reflect on the relevance and limits of the African ethnophilosophical theory; it justifies the attempts made by the Negritude writers to focus on cultural values and customs; and it also enlightens the resistance of the African traditional initiation against the colonial Western education system. The cultural rupture involves more than just a submission to colonialism and its school. The question how the individual manages this dissociation of his self seems to be the decisive issue. This can partly explain the dramatic failure of African intellectuals to come out with a constructive balance between their native background and their knowledge acquired at the European school.

The debate on myth, oral tradition and education in Francophone literature is part of a wider debate not only on knowledge and the question of its acquisition, but also on the postcolonial status of all literature. Because of the new trends of globalization and the modern identities that arise beyond any geographical, racial, religious and linguistic borders, there is unconditionally a need for a postcolonial discourse on language and philosophy, an epistemology that takes into account the transcultural and the translinguistical aspects of the present world.

Senghor used to speak of cultural hybridity in order to contain or contradict the invading and alienating French colonial assimilation system. The postcolonial era of the literature obviously imposes on the African intelligentsia to initiate radical changes, and to unveil new voices and theoretical discourses for their liberation.

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