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**THE DILEMMA OF THE AFRICAN
INTELLECTUALS IN *FRAGMENTS* BY AYI KWEI
ARMAH AND IN *AMBIGUOUS ADVENTURE* BY
CHEIKH HAMIDOU KANE**

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my endearing parents who guided and are still guiding my steps in this perpetual changing world ; to all my brothers and sisters specially to my late brother Mouhamadou DEMBELE (Vieux) ; and to my lovely niece Aïda Ndella SY.

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INTRODUCTION

Before going any further, we would like first and foremost to give a definition of what is a dilemma and an intellectual. According to the *Oxford Advanced learner's dictionary*, a dilemma is : *'a situation in which one has to choose between two undesirable things or courses of action'*¹.

To define an intellectual, we are going to refer to Mike E. Elate in his article entitled *The Intellectual as an Artist in Soyinka's Five Plays*. He says that :

"... an intellectual is one who has achieved a certain amount of education which lifts him a little above the others, and this elevation places him in a privileged position. As a result, he remains exposed to all types of conflicts, contradictions, polemics, ambition and even catastrophes. Whether he likes it or not, he becomes the centre of interest, of discord, of ridicule, of fashion or of scorn. His words are swallowed whole or spat out in disgust, and his action never goes unnoticed."²

In the light of this definition, we can assert without being contradicted that to be an intellectual is never an easy and restful task.

Admittedly learning may be a great privilege for he or she who holds it. It may help to throw light on what is muddled and obscure, to overcome the insuperable, to open new horizons of seeing, being and doing, etc...

But most of the time, it is synonymous with source of trials particularly in Africa. Indeed, in a lot of societies, the intellectuals are not always well seen. They are perceived as those who have always something to say in anything, those who spend all their time criticizing or denouncing, in a nutshell they are

¹ *Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary*, Oxford University Press, 1995.

² Mike E. Elate, *The Intellectual as an Artist in Soyinka's Five Plays*, extracted from *Mélanges Africains*, Yaoundé : Editions Pédagogiques Afrique, 1973, p. 221.

regarded as spoilsports. Consequently they are often persecuted, proscribed even murdered.

In this perspective, Jacques Baguenard quoting Roland Barthes highlights this dramatic aspect of the life of the intellectual. Sometimes misunderstood and most of the time rejected, he is treated in the same way as the sorcerer is by the people :

"Selon Roland Barthes, dans la plupart des sociétés politiques l'intellectuel est traité comme un sorcier pourrait l'être par une peuplade de marchands, d'hommes d'affaires et de légistes."⁵

Facing such a dire straits, the intellectual has only one alternative : either to keep on denouncing and to lay himself open to any kind of dangers or to give way to law of silence and to trample underfoot the deontology which his status imposes upon him.

Apart this political facet, it may occur too that on the social plane the intellectual has to take a tricky choice. That choice is closely linked to the society that is to say to identify himself with the aspirations or beliefs of a certain class of the society at the expense of the larger group and it does not matter if they are wrong and to work for their materialization or to stand in the way of those aspirations or beliefs with all the consequences it may entail in the name of the general interest of that society.

Finally another source of problem that may constitute a real headache for the intellectual is the cultural collision. Brought up in purely African values, certain intellectuals are all at once plunged in another cultural universe never known previously. Basically they will face there a problem of determination that

⁵ Jacques Baguenard, *L'Univers politique*, Presses Universitaires de France, Vendôme, 1978, p. 91.

is to say how will they find their way around in this vast cultural field now that they are deeply imbued with the essence of these very cultures.

Given all these considerations, we say to ourselves that though it may be a largely debated matter, the issue of the African intellectuals is far from being settled forever. So we have decided to re-visit it by basing our work on the works by Ayi Kwei Armah *Fragments* and by Cheikh Hamidou Kane *Ambiguous Adventure*. These are two writers who have played an outstanding role in the awakening of the black people and who have contributed too in a very significant way to the promotion of African literature.

As regards Armah, he has published six novels :

The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born, Fragments, Why Are We So Blest ?, Two Thousands Seasons, The Healers, Osiris Rising.

In his second novel *Fragments* which strikes the reader by its close relation with certain aspects of his life, Armah gives us a more painful depiction of the situation in Ghana. It goes deeper into corruption and its effects on individuals.

The conflict in the novel is essentially focused on one character that is to say Baako. After 5 years spent abroad where he was studying creative writing, he comes back home. But unfortunately his life in his country will amount to a series of disappointment and harassment. And hardly had he recovered from a nervous breakdown in the United States when he sinks once again into another depression under the social conventions. This time things are much more serious for his own family and his country are responsible.

Structurally *Fragments* is a complex novel and as it is shown by the title, its structure is made of bits like in a puzzle. Nevertheless it is not abstruse. This

complexity can be seen also in the preface 'Ama Ata Aïdo and Ana Livia'. Ama Ata is a Ghanaian woman playwright. Christiana Ama Ata Aïdo, an old friend of Armah, Ana Livia is a character in James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*.

Contrary to Armah who is a more or less prolific author, Cheikh Hamidou Kane has published just two novels:

Ambiguous Adventure and later *Les gardiens du temple*.

Like *Fragments*, *Ambiguous Adventure* is too an autobiography. What strikes the reader of this novel is its clarity due to the restraint of the tone as well as to the universal dimension of the philosophical reflection. Departing from the temporal and political aspect of his topic, Cheikh Hamidou Kane plunges us in a spiritual itinerary. He tells us the story of a wrench, a crisis of conscience of a young Diallobé Samba Diallo bewildered by the shock of the European and African cultures. Eventually it is a fool who will put an end to his disarray by stabbing him.

In our first part, we will try to trace back the genesis of the African intellectuals' dilemma. Initially there are the new aspirations of the African societies which were at the basis of the metamorphosis that affected the societies depicted in *Fragments* and in *Ambiguous Adventure*. These new aspirations find expression in the strong desire of people to relinquish the past and to conquer new values. Then there is the Africans' contact with the west. Two main levels can be noted in this contact : first Samba Diallo's move from the Koranic school to the Western one and second the discovery of the Western world by both Samba Diallo and Baako.

In our second part, our aim will be first to analyse the different attitudes that the different protagonists will adopt facing their dilemma. If Samba Diallo in his long contact with the West will not be able to take a stand and that doubts

and hesitations mark every one of his moves, Baako for his part will face lots of obstacles. He will show a glaring lack of conviction to change the course of things in his country. Finally we will end by questioning the fate reserved for those African intellectuals who have failed to adapt themselves. If Baako sinks into madness owing to the social misunderstanding, Samba Diallo will find the solution of his problem in death.

PART ONE**THE GENESIS OF THE AFRICAN
INTELLECTUALS' DILEMMA**

Chapter A - The new aspirations of the African societies

In this chapter, we will attempt to analyse the different causes which were at the basis of the metamorphosis that affected the African societies in the two novels on which we base our work namely *Fragments* by Ai Kwei Armah and *Ambiguous Adventure* by Cheikh Hamidou Kane. These changes undoubtedly were very determining in what are the African intellectuals in these very societies.

Talking about the two works, we observe a parallel between them : they do not belong to the same spatiotemporal area. In *Ambiguous Adventure* the events depicted took place in Senegal during the colonial era while in *Fragments* they happened in Ghana after independence. Nevertheless their similarity is very striking as regards the strong desire of the societies painted to depart from the tradition and to send its defenders to coventry. To get the gist of such a reversal of attitude, it is necessary we look further back to history.

1/- The relinquishment of the past

By delving into the past indeed, we realize that the meeting of the Diallobé with the West was not much gentle. It was tinged with an unheard-of violence :

*'The morning of the Occident in Black Africa was spangled over with smiles, with cannon shots, with shining glass beads.'*⁴

Resolute they were not to let themselves be neither invaded nor subjugated by men from elsewhere contrary to other Africans, the Diallobé took up arms but they were defeated without understanding anything :

¹ Cheikh Hamidou Kane, *Ambiguous Adventure*, London, Heinemann African Writers Series, 1972, p. 48.

'Some among of the Africans, such as the Diallobé, brandished their shields, pointed their lances, and aimed their guns. They were allowed to come close, then the cannon were fired. The vanquished did not understand.'⁵

This bitter defeat which is the true expression of the powerlessness of the Diallobé in relation to their white invaders will end up by sowing confusion among them :

*'The Diallobé country, helpless, was turning around and around on itself like a thoroughbred horse caught in a fire.'*⁶

Nevertheless that confusion will play a catalyst role in the Diallobé's realization of the gap existing between them and the West. This backwardness seems to be the immediate outcome of a tradition which far from contributing towards the blooming of the African societies and the liberation of man is in fact the receptacle where any ambition, any dream are turned into nothingness.

The Most Royal Lady who grasps the meaning of the transformations that history imposes upon her people and who grasps also to and fro the implications of the progress, no longer sees the necessity for her people to keep on living turned towards the past, a past which has stopped to be its nutritive sap, a past where people do not find their way around any more. That being the case, it turns out to be urgent for the Diallobé to call into question the past. But this will not be an easy task for a pathetic confrontation will oppose the upholders of the tradition to the partisans of the western values. The formers turn down the progress in the name of the religion and a certain conception of man as the principal of the school says : '... *We reject the foreign school in order to remain*

⁵ Cheikh Hamidou Kane, *Ambiguous Adventure*, London, Heinemann African Writers Series, 1972, p. 48.

⁶ Ibid., p. 12.

*ourselves, and to preserve for God the place He Holds in our hearts*⁷ while the latters reject the tradition and set themselves up as the followers of the progress either by political realism or by deep conviction :

*'We must go to learn from them the art of conquering without being in the right.'*⁸

But with the passing days, we see the number of Diallobé who long for more weight for their inner and external welfare getting more and more important.

*'The people of Diallobé were each day a little more anxious about the stability of their dwelling, the unhealthy state of their bodies. The Diallobé wanted more substance...'*⁹

The other problem to be tackled is now the religion. This time of course, the relinquishment of the religion is not on the agenda. For the Diallobé in fact it is a matter of seeing how to adapt the religion to the new demands of the current context.

With a purist conception of the religion, the Master of the Diallobé thinks that the religion should be lived as it recommended by God. It is according to him the possession of God in all His Fullness. The presence of God should be in man at every moment, in his thoughts as well as in his daily actions. To reach this degree of devotion, it is necessary that man get rid of his materialistic preoccupations here below, and that is what he is trying to instil into the children he is given to educate :

⁷ Cheikh Hamidou Kane, *Ambiguous Adventure*, London, Heinemann African Writers Series, 1972, p. 10.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

*'At the Glowing Hearth, what we teach the children is God. What they forget is themselves, their bodies, and the futile dream which hardens with age and stifles the spirit.'*¹⁰

This self denial reminds us what Junayd wrote about real love. He said that we talk about love when the servant renounces the world and fills all his soul, his body and his existence with God. Then if he speaks, it is by God ; if he voices his mind, it is about God ; if he moves, it is on the orders of God ; if he rests, it is with God. He is by God, for God, with God :

‘L’amour, c’est quand un serviteur s’est quitté lui-même qu’il invoque constamment son Seigneur, qu’il accomplit tout ce qui lui est dû, qu’il regarde vers lui avec son cœur et que celui-ci est consumé par les lumières de Son Etre (huwiyya), qu’il boit l’eau limpide de son affection, et que celui qui impose Sa Volonté a enlevé pour lui les voiles qui recouvrent ses mystères. Si alors il parle, c’est par Dieu ; s’il s’exprime, c’est au sujet de Dieu ; s’il fait un geste, c’est sur l’ordre de Dieu ; s’il reste au repos, c’est avec Dieu. Il est par Dieu, pour Dieu, avec Dieu.’¹¹

But today such a vision seems to be out of place in a perpetual changing society. The Diallobé have always lived in a society where the precepts of Islam have been always and are still followed to the letter. They live in a society where death is an integral part of their lives, where the fear of God is a constant reality. So this omnipresence of death is so strong that if it is not revised it might kill in the Diallobé all their ambition, all their energy and in a nutshell all their lives. That is what the Most Royal Lady has understood right from the beginning. She thinks that the religion should not enslave man, particularly in our present times where those who did not manage to catch the train of progress might be relegated to a position of secondary importance and

¹⁰Cheikh Hamidou Kane, *Ambiguous Adventure*, London, Heinemann African Writers Series, 1972, p. 34.

¹¹Junayd, *Enseignement spirituel* Traité, lettres, oraisons et sentences traduits de l’arabe, présentés et annotés par Roger Deladrière, Paris, Editions Sindbad, 1983, p. 195.

even be erased from the world map. To avoid such a disaster it is necessary for the Diallobé to get rid of the obsessive fear of death and to try to live their lives in accordance with the new demands of their time :

... I believe that the time has come to teach our sons to live. I foresee that they will have to do with a world of the living, in which the values of death will be scoffed at and bankrupt.¹²

Lucienne the student goes further than the Most Royal Lady in her logic. She believes that the religion should not be a hindrance to the accomplishment of man under no circumstances :

*'I only wanted to say that the possession of God ought not cost man any of his chances.'*¹³

In *Fragments* by Ayi Kwei Armah, we find this same desire to depart from the tradition but here the motivations are no longer the same. The Diallobé want to forsake the tradition to learn *'how better to join wood to wood'*¹⁴ while the Ghanaians want to part with that tradition in the name of an unbridled conquest of the material.

If we analyse the Ghanaian society, we realize that the existence of the tradition is intimately linked to that of aged people. In fact it is embodied by these latter who devote to it a total respect. It is perpetuated through incantations and sacrifices. Such practices are intended to call upon the livings the protection of the 'old ones gone before'. If we remember, when Baako was on the verge of leaving his native country for abroad to carry on with his studies, instead of his mother, it was his grandmother who took care of the libations :

¹² *Ambiguous Adventure*, op. cit P. 27.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

'Nothing was left out before he was taken up to the sky to cross the sea and to go past the untouchable horizon itself.(...). Nothing at all was left out. The uncle called upon the nephew the protection of the old ones gone before. The circle was not broken. The departed one will return.'¹⁵

These practices were not only done in Ghana. They were widespread in Africa. Camara Laye in his novel *L'Enfant Noir* pinpoints this same attachment to the ancestral values which have made the originality and strength of Africa for a long time. The dark child is to leave Kouroussa for Conakry to go on with his studies. His mother, a woman very close to the tradition displays her contempt for the capital city. She will neglect nothing to give her son all his chance of success. The propitiatory sacrifices in which she indulges reveal the religious syncretism she lives :

'une semaine plus tôt déjà, ma mère avait entame la tournée des marabouts les plus réputés, les consultant sur mon avenir et multipliant les sacrifices. Elle avait fait immoler un boeuf à la mémoire de son père et invoqué l'assistance des ancêtres afin que le bonheur m'accompagnât dans mon voyage...'¹⁶

But nowadays this reverence of the tradition in Ghana seems to belong to a remote past. Obsessed by the worship of the material, the Ghanaians no longer regard that tradition as a safe refuge but as an impediment to their material blossoming. Some people even do not hesitate to trample underfoot it to quench their craving for money. It is the case of Efua and her daughter. They will bring forward the date of the outdoor ceremony of Araba's son so that it coincides with the payday breaking thus the customs and jeopardizing the life of the child :

'Five days. The child is not yet with us. He is in the keeping of the spirits still, and already, they are dragging him out into this world for eyes in heads that have eaten flesh to gape at. (...) Let me say this to them and inside their hearts they will accuse me,

¹⁵ Ayi Kwei Armah, *Fragments*, London : Heinemann, African Writers Series, 1974, p. 3.

¹⁶ Camara Laye, *L'Enfant Noir*, Paris : Plon, 1935, p. 135.

calling me witch who would take the infant life to lengthen mine.¹⁷

Today with the slow but sure death of the ancestral values, the aged can only express their helplessness and recall the time when their societies lived on traditions. In *Ambiguous Adventure* those who embody the tradition are regarded now not as references but as obstacles to be moved away at all costs. They have the impression to live in a world totally unknown to them, a world which denies them their place of long ago. In this connection the Chief of the Diallobé observes :

‘Today everything fled and crumbled around my immobility, as the sea does along the reef. I am no longer the point of reference, the landmark ; I am the obstacle which men walk around in order not to hit.’¹⁸

In *Fragments* the case of Naana seems more desperate. Instead of a minority of the society being kept aloof by a whole people as it is the case in *Ambiguous Adventure*, here it is a family which rises up against one person. Not content with having put aside Naana, her own family wishes now greatly her death :

‘Here I have become the remnant of something that passed by and was immediately forgotten ; the fruits that fell from my own entrails are looking hard for ways to push me into the earth deeper than where my navel is buried and to stamp the ground above me smooth with their hasty soles. And I have forgotten how to speak to them of the shame with which they have filled the last of my days, and the sourness.’¹⁹

¹⁷ *Fragments*, op. cit., p. 97

¹⁸ *Ambiguous Adventure*, op. cit., p. 124

¹⁹ *Fragments*, op. cit., p. 195

The only thing the elders have now is the memory of a rich past. And it is with a huge nostalgia they recall the time when their societies lived on God and drew their nutritive sap from the traditions :

*'The teacher lingered in meditation, reawakened to the memory of the vanished days when the country drew its sustenance from God and from the liquor of its traditions.'*²⁰

2/ The conquest of new values

In *Ambiguous Adventure* after the defeat of the traditionalists and the triumph of the modernists, the conquest of the new school turns out to be established :

'At the end of the prayer Demba announced that beginning the next day he would change the schedules at the Hearth. In this way, all the parents who might so desire would be able to send their sons to the foreign school 'For', he concluded, 'the prophet - may benediction be upon him ! - has said, *'You are to go in search of knowledge, even if it must be as far as China.'*²¹

But according to the Most Royal Lady, this unconditional adherence of the Diallobé to the western values should not be perceived as a deliberate will to identify themselves with the westerners but as a firm intention to penetrate the secrets of science they totally ignore and which the whitemen perfectly master. This viewpoint is well expressed by the Knight during a discussion with Pierre Lacroix :

'I have sent my son to the school because the external which you have check was slowly seeping through us and destroying us. Teach him to check the external (...). The external is agressive. If man does not conquer it, then it destroys man and makes him a victim of tragedy. A sore which is neglected does not heal, but becomes infected to the point of gangrene. A child who is not

²⁰ *Ambiguous Adventure*, op. cit., p. 24.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

educated goes backward. A society which is not governed destroys itself. The West sets up science against the invading chaos, sets it up, like a barricade.²²

The conquest of the new school became almost everywhere in Africa a watchword. It stands for the hope of a whole people. It is a sign that augurs better days for Africa. In this same perspective we can refer to *Kocoumbo L'Etudiant Noir* where Aké Loba says that the fathers no longer regard those who are going to the western school as simply their sons but as the builders to-be of Africa, the embodiment of their dreams. Tomorrow they will come back as masters to rescue those who do not know from ignorance. They will teach them the ins and outs of science :

«Les yeux des peres sont graves et traversés de lucurs d'espérance . ce n'est plus leurs simples fils qu'ils regardent, mais les futurs réalisateurs de grands desseins. Demain ces jeunes-là reviendront en maîtres pour leur apprendre ce qu'ils n'ont eux-mêmes jamais su.»²³

Nevertheless, a certain apprehension could be noted among some Africans and it has to do with their existence, their destiny. The Diallobé want to acquire the science in order to liberate themselves, to ease their minds and bodies. But learning they will necessarily forget. Now the question the Chief of the Diallobe asks is the following one :

«Would what they would learn be worth as much as what they would forget ? I should like to ask you : can one learn this without forgetting that, and is what one learns worth what one forgets ?»²⁴

²² *Ambiguous Adventure*, op. cit., p. 79.

²³ Aké Loba, *Kocoumbo l'étudiant noir*, Paris : Flammarion, 1960, p. 36.

²⁴ *Ambiguous Adventure*, op. cit., p. 34.

We find also this same anxiety in *Kocumbo l'Étudiant Noir* when Oudjo, Kocumbo's father wonders whether his son would be able to keep and to respect his traditions :

«Croyez-vous qu'il garderait là-bas nos traditions et qu'il ne les transgresserait pas ?»²⁵

In this atmosphere of fear and uncertainties intervenes once again the Most Royal Lady whose boldness and clear-sightedness have turned her into an exceptional being. She is always there to decide when people are hesitating or to give solutions when people have not got any. She tells us that surely the new school will have some effects on their children. There will be some among them they will never recognize. But given the way the world goes now, the only choice they have is to run the risk. They have to accept to sacrifice a part of themselves if they do not want to be defeated once more :

«The school in which I would place our children will kill in them what today we love and rightly conserve with care. Perhaps the very memory of us will die in them. When they return from the school, there may be those who will not recognize us. What I am proposing is that we should agree to die in our children's hearts and that the foreigners who have defeated us should fill the place, wholly, which we shall have left free.»²⁶

In *L'enfant Noir*, the father of the boy dreaded this situation but decided not to go against the current. Hubert de Leusse in *Afrique et Occident, Heurs et Malheurs d'une rencontre* asserts that the blacksmith in sending his son to the new school did not ignore the risk. He knew that he could no longer bring up his son according to his family traditions :

²⁵ *Kocumbo l'étudiant noir*, op. cit., p. 29.

²⁶ *Ambiguous Adventure*, op. cit., p. 46

'Le forgeron en mettant son fils à l'école n'ignorait pas le péril. (...) Il avait dû trimer pour se faire une situation. Il n'en serait pas, de même pour son fils. Et, les larmes aux yeux, il l'avait confié à l'instituteur. Il savait, ce faisant, que l'enfant lui échapperait, qu'il ne pourrait pas l'élever dans les traditions familiales.'²⁷

Jean-Marie Adiaffi raises another dimension of the problem. He sees in this new school a new form of domination. He said in *Jeune Afrique* that after the military subjugation, the missionaries were given the task to finish the nasty job of the colonial troops. They had to subject us on the spiritual and cultural plane :

'Les missionnaires avaient pour tâche d'achever la sale besogne des troupes de la colonisation. Après l'asservissement militaire, jamais définitif, ils avaient pour mission de nous agenouiller spirituellement, culturellement, et cela est bien plus efficace parce que plus durable.'²⁸

This apprehension of the new school is well-founded and is very revealing of the dilemma the young African intellectuals will have to live once back in their societies. Will they be able to reconcile their African culture with the Western one ? We will attempt to answer this question later.

In *Fragments* the grounds of this conquest are utterly different from those we find in *Ambiguous Adventure* and that is where we can notice a certain complementarity between the two novels. In fact, after having penetrated the mysteries of science, the Africans now yearn for another stage in this conquest that is to say the acquisition of the material, source of respect and power. Materialism becomes a new religion, money a new god. So through the whole

²⁷ Hubert De Feusse, *Afrique et Occident, Heurs et Malheurs d'une rencontre*, Paris : Ed. de l'Orante, 1971, p. 40.

²⁸ Jean Marie Adiaffi, *Jeune Afrique* N° 1900, Du 4 au 10 Juin 1997, P. 67.

novel, we may see that the lust for money is present everywhere. It does not spare any class of the entire social hierarchy.

Among the masses, those who are the main victims of the Ghanaian rotten political system, this blind materialism is deep rooted. The confusion and great haste which prevail in the pier and which has engendered the death of Skidio attest a certain moral blindness and an insatiable greed. In this same perspective, we realize also that the family ties are undermined by this evil. Some people no longer attach any importance to the significance of the notion of 'family' that is to say a secured place favourable to any blooming. On the contrary it has become a real jungle where people are constantly at each other's throat. We see the mother and the sister of Baako who sacrifice the newborn in the name of Mammon. Naana says about this incident that :

*'The baby was a sacrifice they killed, to satisfy perhaps a new god they have found much like the one that began the same long destruction of our people.'*²⁹

In *Devil On the Cross*, Ngûgî Wa Thiong'o shows us how such people have lost any sense of morality and dignity. To acquire money they do not hesitate to indulge in any kind of baseness :

*'Mwaûra was one of those who worshipped at the shrine of the god of money. He used to say that there was no universe he would not visit, no river that he would not cross, no mountain that he would not climb, no crime that he would not commit in loyal obedience to the molten god of money.'*³⁰

If we move our analysis to the high hierarchy, we see that it is there that the craving for material is more present and it is there also that it has outstanding proportions. The Ghanaian élite instead of serving the people, are serving

²⁹ *Fragments*, op. cit., p. 46.

³⁰ Ngûgî Wa Thiong'o, *Devil On the Cross*, London : Heinemann, African Writers Series, 1983, p. 32.

themselves. With all the knowledge they have acquired and all the degrees they have obtained, they should embody the hope of their country. They should be those who after several years of colonization, deprivation, humiliation should at least take Ghana out of the beaten tracks of misery and put it in the right way that leads to social justice and economic development. But unfortunately their greed is much stronger than their intellectuality. They are the very destroyers of Ghana. To back up this argument, we can quote the episode where we are shown the arrival at Ghanavision a great number of T.V. sets officially destined for the villages. These T.V sets will be in fact taken by the officials :

‘The sets are being distributed today. The highest officials from the Residence are the Presidential secretariat will get theirs first, then the Ministries. Senior officers here at Ghanavision will get what’s left.’³¹

It is well worth noting that this blind lust for money and power is not without any harm. It has brought about immeasurable damages in the African societies where the watchword is now :

‘Reap where you never planted, eat for which you never shed a drop of sweat and drink that which has been fetched by others. Shelter from the rain in huts for which you have never carried a single pole or thatching grass, and dress in clothes made by others.’³²

The masses are getting poorer and poorer and some of them are constrained to indulge in robbery for they no longer have anything to eat, to drink or to wear. It is the case of Ndaaya wa Rahuria :

‘But by the truth of God in Heaven - yes, I swear by the Truth of Truths - I only steal because I’m hungry, because I need clothes.

³¹ *Fragments*, op. cit., p. 97

³² *Devil On the Cross*, op. cit., p. 101

because I have no job and because I have nowhere to lay this small head of mine at night.³³

The manners too are not spared, they are severely perverted. Girls who are the more vulnerable are compelled to give in to the sexual advances of the bosses in order to get jobs :

*'The Modern Love Bar and Lodging has become the main employment bureau for girls, and women's thighs are the tables on which contracts are signed.'*³⁴

These days, 'community' is a vain word, a word which has lost all its sense. In the past, people used to define themselves in relation to the community, their existence had a meaning because they were part and parcel of the society. In this same connection, Kofi Asare Opoku in an article entitled *L'Afrique sous domination coloniale, 1880-1935* tells us that to be a human being at that time meant to belong to a community. This implied an involvement in the beliefs, the ceremonies, the rituals and feasts of that latter. The community membership had more value than the personal individuality. In fact the society was based more on the obligations than the individual rights, and the individual asserted his rights in the exercise of his duties, what turned the society into a vast network of relationships :

*'Être humain signifiait appartenir à une communauté. Cela impliquait une participation aux croyances, aux cérémonies, aux rituels et aux fêtes de celle-ci ; l'appartenance communautaire avait plus de valeur que l'individualité personnelle. En effet, la société était davantage fondée sur les obligations que les droits individuels, et l'individu affirmait ses droits dans l'exercice de ses obligations, ce qui transformait la société en un vaste réseau de relations.'*³⁵

³³ *Devil On the Cross*, op. cit., p. 94

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

³⁵ Kofi Asare Opoku, *L'Afrique sous domination coloniale, 1880-1935* dans *Histoire générale de l'Afrique*, Vol VII, NFA, 1987, p. 550

But today the community is strictly limited to the family, and in the past if people consented to sacrifice themselves in the name of the community, such is no longer the case. Now the community spirit is sacrificed on the altar of the material well-being of the family and Baako pinpoints it in a very relevant way :

‘We have the old heroes who turned defeat into victory for the whole community. But these days the community has disappeared from the story. Instead, there is the family, and the hero comes and turns its poverty into sudden wealth. And the external enemy isn’t the one at whose expense the hero gets his victory ; he is supposed to get rich, mainly at the expense of the community.’³⁶

With that unbridled materialism, nothing resists or lasts. That very family which we regarded as an impassable fortress broke up. Consequently everyone becomes a potential enemy even the closest relative and people no longer hesitate to march against one another if at the end they obtain what they want. As we are going to see it at the end of our study, Baako will be the victim of his own family. Warringa too in *Devil on the Cross* is another example. If at a certain moment of her life she was completely lost, it was due to the greed of her own uncle who to get money will throw her in the hands of an unscrupulous Old Rich Man.

In such an environment, the conception that the society has of the young Ghanaians who go abroad to carry on their studies is totally false. Instead of regarding this youth as those who will make the brightest days of their country, unfortunately, they are regarded as special kinds of beings : those who will turn poverty of the people into wealth. This way of seeing the Ghanaian intellectual will be very determining in the dilemma that this latter will have to live in his society.

³⁶ *Fragments*, op. cit., p. 103

Chapter B - The Africans' contact with the West

In this second chapter, we mean to dissect the different effects that the encounter of Africa with the Occident has on the young Africans, those on whom the hope of a whole continent is pinned and who are sent to learn from the whites : 'how better to join wood to wood.'³⁷

Two main levels can be noted in this contact : first Samba Diallo's move from the Koranic school to the Western one and second the discovery of the Western world by both Samba Diallo and Baako. Basically these two elements remain essential in the life and destiny of the two young men.

The transfer marks the first disruption in the life of Samba Diallo and the sojourn abroad lays bare the gap existing between the two worlds both in the spiritual and material plane and places the two young heroes in a situation of total confusion.

1/ The transfer from the Koranic school to the Western one

By reading *Ambiguous Adventure*, we realize that sociologically Samba Diallo lives in a very demanding milieu, in the intellectual as well as in the religious plane. He belongs to a big Muslim family which undergoes a crisis bred by colonisation ; and as central character, he will find himself placed in the heart of an intercultural confrontation insofar as he constitutes the demarcation line between the two camps which are in conflict in the country of the Diallobé. On the one hand the conservative camp led by the Master of the Glowing Hearth who has formed Samba Diallo and who would like him to be his successor :

³⁷ *Ambiguous Adventure* op. cit., p. 32.

*'Your son is, I know, of the seed from which the country of the Diallobé produces its masters.'*³⁸

On the other hand, the progressive camp represented by the Most Royal Lady who, without disowning totally the tradition, thinks that the weight of the past is too heavy to be carried and that it is necessary for the Diallobé to implement some changes essential for their survival. And here too Samba Diallo is sounded out to be the tool of these changes :

'We must send our élite there expecting that all the country will follow them. It is well that once more the élite should lead the way. If there is a risk, they are the best prepared to cope successfully with it, because they are more the most firmly attached to what they are. If there is good to be drawn from it, they should also be the first to acquire that.'³⁹

Eventually it is the reforming tendency which will prevail after a long and heated debate and the immediate outcome will be Samba Diallo's transfer from the Koranic school to the French one to learn the secrets of the white man's power. This passage to the new school will be the first serious disruption in the life of the young hero ; and the fundamental elements in this turmoil are the alphabet and the script. Indeed Samba Diallo will become acquainted with them and will not be able to prevent himself from being spellbound by their force. With that magic, Samba Diallo enters a new world, a world of discovery and total understanding. All that was closed and mysterious to him became open and familiar. Thus his happiness will be boundless :

'I remained for a long time under the spell of those signs and those sounds which constitute the structure and the music of their language (...). With these new skills I was suddenly entering, all one floor, a universe which was at the very first, one of marvellous comprehension and total communion.'⁴⁰

³⁸ *Ambiguous Adventure* op. cit., p. 12

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 37

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 159-160

This huge craze of the youth for the new school was widespread almost everywhere in Africa. The craving to penetrate the mystery which was that school of the white man was so strong in the children so much so that it had become a fixation.

Jack Woddis in his book *Africa, the Roots of Revolt* talks about it. He says that a schoolboy once wrote :

*'I think the happiest event in my life was the day when my father told me to go to school.'*⁴¹ and another adds that :

'The most unfortunate thing that could happen to me would be to have had no education, or to be sent away from school now, for then all my life would be wasted.'⁴²

We have to underline that the hold of the West over Samba Diallo shows itself long before he leaves for France by the adoption of the critical mind. He no longer contents himself with seeing things the way they are but he tries now to grasp the essence, the why these things are. Henceforth everything becomes for him a matter to be analysed thoroughly for chance is no longer acceptable. In this perspective we see him passing judgment on his father who was praying and he draws up a complete dichotomy between prayer and life. According to him, his father is among those who believe that if man is, it is by the will of God and if he has a destiny down on earth, it is to serve entirely God. But where the shoe pinches is that the regular and deep prayers done to extol God end up in wrecking in man any fondness for this life here below. Ultimately the life of man boils down to an everlasting praising of the Al-mighty and his father is a striking example :

⁴¹ Jack Woddis, *Africa, the Roots of Revolt* quoted by Kwame Nkrumah in *Africa Must Unite*, London : Panaf, 1974, p. 43.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 43.

"He is one of those who do not cease to pray when they have closed their prayer book. To him, God is a constant Presence, I believe, which stretches the skin tight across the bones of his forehead, and sets that luminous and profound expression within the deep-cut orbits of his eyes. His mouth holds no smile, nor does it hold any bitterness. All the profane prayers. My father does not live, he prays"⁴³

This critical way of seeing life which reveals a certain evolution and openness of mind can be backed up by another example where Samba Diallo tries to analyse the different implications that may exist between work and God. Work to some extent can be perceived as a hindrance to the accomplishment of God's recommendations in Samba Diallo's opinion. He who works to provide for his needs and those of his family attaches more priority and energy to his job than to the prayer. The bureaucrat for example does not pray in the same way when he is in his office than at home, so does the farmer. Thus the more the volume of work is important, the less interest is attached to the precepts of God. From that moment, it becomes quite easy to understand the atheism which characterized the western societies :

"I cannot struggle, work, to live and support my family, and at the same time to be fully with God (...). Carried to its limit, a work in which a man was completely absorbed would keep him all the time outside God. (...) But there are countries where great masses of men have long been alienated from God Perhaps... perhaps it is work which makes the West more and more atheistic..."⁴⁴

This critical attitude towards the world constitutes a crucial stage in the life of the young hero. In fact it marks the beginning of the realization of the ambiguity in which he swims and which is nothing else but the simultaneous and conflicting belonging to two antagonistic cultures.

⁴³ *Ambiguous Adventure*, op cit P. 94

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 95-96.

2/ The sojourn in the Western world

Travel remains one of the major and recurrent themes in African literature. It has a highly educational significance in the sense that it contributes to the training of the African élite.

But where a certain number of problems can be noted is that the youth are sometimes not well prepared for they are often innocent, almost always ignorant. Chosen in an intermediate phase between childhood and adolescence, these young Africans have to perfect or to diversify their training or to face the responsibilities inherent in the passage from one age to another. So they will be sent in a world utterly unknown with all the unexpected consequences it may entail.

Mouhamadou Kane pinpoints it in a very relevant way in his book *Roman africain et tradition* when he asserts that the young boy who is sent abroad to carry on his studies has to follow a kind of cycle, to get into a strange and foreign world, to initiate or to adapt himself to a new way of life and a new way of thinking. The travel he undertakes has a double meaning : travel through things as well as through himself. Once in this new world, he undergoes a series of determinations :

‘Le jeune héros doit parcourir une sorte de cycle, s’introduire dans un monde étrange et étranger, s’initier ou s’adapter à un mode de vie et à des façons de pensée élaborées en hors de lui. Qui dit parcours dit voyage mais voyage à double sens, à travers les choses comme à travers lui-même (...). Confronté à un nouveau monde, il subit une série de déterminations qui relèvent moins la minceur de sa personnalité que l’incohérence, l’inanité du monde dans lequel il évolue.’⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Mouhamadou Kane, *Roman africain et tradition*, Dakar, NEA, 1982, p. 216

Compelled to experience this initiatory travel, Samba Diallo once in France will have to face two main problems : a problem of integration and a problem of decision.

What differs fundamentally Africa from the West and makes the sojourn of Samba Diallo virtually impossible is that Africa has succeeded in keeping very preciously certain beliefs and in being intimately close to nature, what the Occident fails to do. Talking about beliefs, we realize that in the country of the Diallobé, people believed firmly in the end of the world. Death was a permanent reality. It gave a certain rhythm and authenticity to people's daily life. It embodied their fear for nobody knows when it will hit but also their hope for another eternal life hereafter.

Born in such an environment, imbued with these same values, death naturally exerted too a great fascination over Samba Diallo. He had become thoroughly familiar with it and constantly, with ease, he evoked it in his daily quest of his pittance :

‘Men of God, reflect upon your approaching death. Awake, Oh, awake ! Azrael, Angel of death, is already breaking the earth for you. It is about to rise up at your feet. (...). Men and women who sleep, think of peopling by your benefactions the solitude which will inhabit your tombs. Feed the poor disciples.’⁴⁶

It should be underlined that this attachment to death was strengthened by the Islamic education received at the Glowing Hearth where the master taught the disciples how to dominate life and death :

‘You see that I am injuring life in your young cousin (...). For me, however, the task is not agreeable, or easy (...). After this deep wounding, from a hand that is fatherly, I promise you that this child will never wound himself. You will see from what stature he too will dominate life and death.’⁴⁷

⁴⁶ *Ambiguous Adventure*, op. cit., pp. 13-14.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

One day after being severely thrashed by the teacher Samba Diallo decided to take refuge in a cemetery. This fact which was out of the ordinary, revealed a certain closeness with death, this mystery which he did not know, which intrigued him and which he would like too much to know. Stretched out by the side of Old Rella's grave, he asked himself a thousand of questions before falling asleep :

'For a long time, near his dead friend, the child reflected on the eternal mystery of death (...). How long did he sleep thus, close to that absolute which fascinated him and which he did not know.'⁴⁸

But in France, Samba Diallo misses too much death. He can no longer feel its presence. It is not part of people's worry. With the scientific and technological development, the white man is convinced that life in this world will never end as says Paul Lacroix : *'The world will not come to an end'*⁴⁹ and he considers himself as a supreme creator for with the keys of science he holds, life has no more secrets for him. Everything in his environment and everything in what he does renounce God. In such an atmosphere, Samba Diallo feels utterly stranger and he cannot help expressing the difficulties he has to find his way :

'It seems to me, for example, that in the country of the Diallobé man is closer to death. He lives on more familiar terms with it. His existence acquires from it something like an aftermath of authenticity. Down there, there existed between death and myself an intimacy made up at the same time of my terror and my expectation. Whereas here death has become a stranger to me. Everything combats it, drives it back from men's bodies and minds.'⁵⁰

⁴⁸ *Ambiguous Adventure*, op. cit., pp. 42-43.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

Another important thing that Samba Diallo cannot feel or see the presence and which makes his sojourn more complex is nature. If we remember, in the country of the Diallobé, Samba Diallo used to live in the heart of things, to live in nature, on nature and for nature. Nature was endowed with life in the same way as the other living beings. It was present everywhere, one could feel it, see it and communicate with it. It was a source of inspiration and equilibrium. There was between man and nature a close complicity as Samba Diallo says :

‘In former times the world was like my father’s dwelling : everything took me into the very essence of itself, as if nothing could exist through me. The world was not silent and neuter. It was alive. It was aggressive. It spread out.’⁵¹

But in France Samba Diallo can no longer live this symbiosis of long ago with nature. Here the relationships between man and nature should be seen in terms of domination. In fact the white man instead of merging into nature to become one with it, he turns against it. His daily combat is to find ways and means to subjugate it :

‘You have not only raised yourself above Nature. You have even turned the sword of your thought against her : you are fighting for her subjection - that is your combat, isn’t it ? As for me, I have not yet cut the umbilical cord which makes me one with her. The supreme dignity to which, still today, I aspire is to be the most sensitive and the most filial part of her. Being Nature herself, I do not dare to fight against her.’⁵²

And nowadays, everyday is a celebration of the victory of the Occident over nature. Marc in *Ambiguous Adventure* was right when he said that :

‘The west victoriously pursues its investiture of the actual. There is no break in its advance. There is no instant that is not filled with this victory.’⁵³

⁵¹ *Ambiguous Adventure*, op. cit., pp. 149-150.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 139-140.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 151

Everywhere what one can see are only towers, panes, pillars, roads which stretch away as far as the eye can see but everything bears the stamp of emptiness and silence.

We must stress that the problem of integration of Samba Diallo in the Western world is not a singular case. Lots of the Africans who have stayed in the West were deeply affected by this false atmosphere. It is the case of Koucoumbo, the hero of Aké Loba's novel *Kocoumbo L'Étudiant Noir* who suffered grievously from the absence of human warmth and that of the liveliness of nature during his sojourn in France. In his village, the spectacle of human life has left its mark on him. He has always been surrounded by noise, voices, laughter, the reassuring presence of nature and the spirit of the ancestors :

‘De plus loin qu’il se souvint, il avait toujours été entouré de bruits, de voix, de rires, il avait toujours eu sous les yeux le spectacle de la vie : (...). Mais ici, pas d’ancêtres, pas d’esprit, pas d’âmes qui palpitent, rien, rien, rien que des vitres, des carreaux, des piliers et ce petit jardin desséché, ridé, sans respiration, sans murmure...’⁵⁴

With his monstrous inventions which have relegated him to a position of secondary importance, the white man who has turned himself into a devilish being, has drastically changed his existence. Now the reign of the machine has stolen a lead over that of man :

‘Master, they have no more bodies, they have no more flesh. They have been eaten up by objects.’⁵⁵

And it is this artificial side of the Western society of which the fool was talking about that Senghor denounces :

‘he attacks what he sees as the soullessness of western civilization (‘no mother’s breast, but only nylon legs.’) and

⁵⁴ *Kocoumbo l'étudiant noir*, op. cit., p. 109.

⁵⁵ *Ambiguous Adventure*, op., cit. p. 170.

proclaims that African culture alone has preserved the mystic warmth of life that could still revive 'the world that has died of machines and cannons.' This culture, says Senghor, gains strength from its closeness and constant contact with 'the ancestors.' Western culture is out of step with the world's nature and ancient rhythm.⁵⁶

Beyond this problem of integration, the sojourn in the West will place Samba Diallo in the heart of the dilemma Europe-Africa. If he has chosen to study philosophy, it is in order to grasp the West in its essence :

*'You have chosen to become acquainted with us through what has appeared to you as the most characteristic, most fundamental.'*⁵⁷

But in his thirst to penetrate the secrets of the west, he will find himself caught in doubt. He will end his studies the mind torn by indecisiveness for he is not able to take a choice between Africa and Europe or to make a sort of synthesis between what these different continents offer as positive.

In *Fragments* the sojourn abroad seems more problematic. It is equated with a certain form of death of the hero. The opportunity to travel being not given to any common run of mankind, he who gets the chance to go abroad must depart from any personal preoccupation. He has to be at the total disposal of those who did not go. As 'been-to' he must embody the aspirations of the society everywhere at anytime. And he is perceived by this latter as a transmission belt of the material goods and also as a ghost that is to say the materialization of people's dreams :

'At any rate it is clearly understood that the been-to has chosen, been awarded, a certain kind of death, since cargo follows his return. Not just cargo but also importance, power, a radiating influence capable of touching ergo elevating all those who in the first instance have suffered the special bereavement cause by the been-to's going away (...). He is the ghost in person return to live

⁵⁶ *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 13, Macropaedia/Knowledge in Depth 15th Edition, 1989, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc, p. 138.

⁵⁷ *Ambiguous Adventure*, op., cit, p. 113.

among men, a powerful ghost understood to the extent that he behaves like a powerful ghost, cargo and all.⁵⁸

This conception that the society has of the 'been-to' constitutes an adequate means for some people like Brempong to assuage their thirst of power and to exploit the materialist obsession of that society to deify their own personality. Now they are worshipped like special kinds of being totally different from the others :

'Move back, you villagers. Don't come and kill him with your T.B. He has just returned, and if you don't know, let me tell you. The air where he has been is pure, not like ours. Give him space. Let him breathe.'⁵⁹

But for some other people like Baako, it is a psychological burden of which it is not at all easy to get rid. Knowing perfectly that his conception of the 'been-to' is utterly the opposite extreme of the expectations of his society and fearing a return to the native land which may be perceived as degrading and useless as Brempong says :

'You just have to know what to look for when you get a chance to go abroad. Otherwise you come back empty-handed like a fool, and all the time you spent is a waste, useless.'⁶⁰

Baako cannot help sinking into madness in the United States :

- 'What was on your mind ?'
- 'Many things'
- 'I suppose so', she said, 'but mainly ?'
- 'The worst thing was the fear of the return,' he said.
- 'What was frightening about it ?'
- 'I didn't know if I'd be able to do anything worthwhile.'⁶¹

⁵⁸ *Fragments*, op . cit, p. 157

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

Contrary to Samba Diallo who was unable to resolve the equation Occident. Baako in the United States did not have this particular problem. His own was directly related with his society and the question we would like to raise is will he be able to reconcile the expectations of his society with his conception of the world ?

His nervous breakdown speaks enough for itself. It foreshadows the attitude he will have once in his country. All the same we will attempt to answer that question later.

PART TWO**THE DILEMMA AND FATE OF THE
AFRICAN INTELLECTUALS**

Chapter A - The African intellectuals facing their dilemma

In this chapter, our intention will be to analyse the different attitudes that the respective heroes of *Ambiguous Adventure* and *Fragments* will adopt facing their dilemma.

As regards Samba Diallo, in his close and long contact with the west, he will become bewildered forever. He will not be able neither to prolong in his acquisitions the spiritual coherence, the happiness, the peace of mind of long ago, nor to restore that harmony when doubt creeps over him. From that moment, hesitations and doubts mark every one of his moves.

For his part, Baako facing a dilemma of different sort, will have of course to adopt a different attitude. But is his attitude the right one when we know that those who have the consciousness of what cripples their societies cross their arms and refuse to commit themselves ? In fact Baako once in his society will show a glaring lack of conviction to change the course of things in his country.

1/ The hesitations and doubts of Samba Diallo

Colin Turnbull in his novel *L'Africain Désesparé* gives us a complete depiction of the situation in which lots of the African intellectuals are. This situation is characterized by the delicacy of the choice to be made between two systems, two ways of seeing and being epitomized by Africa and Europe. He asserts that the African intellectual is accepted in none of the two worlds, at a pinch he is between the two, torn between two directions. To go forward amounts to renounce the past in which takes root and feeds one's soul ; to come

back means to cut oneself off from the future for the march of the progress is engaged and it is irreversible. In this connection he said :

‘Celui-ci n’est accordé à aucun des deux mondes, il est à la limite des deux, écartelé entre deux directions. Aller de l’avant, c’est abandonner le passé dans lequel s’enracine et se nourrit son être : revenir en arrière c’est se couper de l’avenir car le sens de l’évolution ne fait pas de doute’.⁶²

We must acknowledge that notwithstanding the social and psychological pressures linked to some preoccupations of different nature, certain intellectuals of the black diaspora have succeeded in transcending this tricky and worrying situation on several accounts. They have managed perfectly to position themselves in either camps accepting fully the consequences positive as well as negative which may ensue. It is the case Aimé Césaire who in his book *Discours sur le colonialisme*, rises up squarely against this plague which is colonialism and all that it has entailed. He attacks too vehemently the apologists of colonization who praise its benefits and realizations. He said that beyond the realizations, the eradicated epidemics, the improved standards of living what he can see is societies emptied of their essence, trampled cultures, eroded institutions, expropriated lands, annihilated artistic magnificences, tremendous possibilities destroyed :

‘... on me parle de progrès, de ‘réalisations’, de maladies guéries, de niveaux de vie élevés au dessus d’eux-mêmes. Moi, je parle de sociétés vidées d’elles-mêmes, de cultures piétinées, d’institutions minées, de terres confisquées, de magnificences artistiques anéanties, d’extraordinaires possibilités supprimées.’⁶³

⁶² Colin Turnbull, *L’Africain Désespéré*, Paris : Le Seuil, 1965, p. 9.

⁶³ Aimé Césaire, *Discours sur le colonialisme*, Paris : Présence Africaine, 1989, pp. 19-20.

To finish, Césaire holds the West to be the responsible for the blockage of the African cultures. And if we admit that culture is at the beginning and at the end of development, it becomes quite easy to make out the great wrong that Africa suffered.

In this same perspective Kwame Krumah too thinks that the European colonization far from having contributed to the blooming of the African societies, has played a key role in the degradation of the living conditions of the African people. To back up what he puts forward, he appeals to Ronald Segal in his work *The Agony of Apartheid* where he says that : ‘*the imperialist rule, far from bringing about progress, has led to a catastrophic decline in the standard of living of the African people.*’⁶⁴

Another example of writer who has succeeded in getting rid of the social and psychological burden of the dilemma Europe-Africa and voicing his mind is Mongo Béti. In his novel *Ville cruelle*, he stigmatizes colonization and its devastating effects on the traditional African societies. He devotes himself more particularly to laying bare another facet of the denunciation of the progress. He highlights its discriminatory role in the sense that it established a kind of barrier between the individuals. This distance is materialized on the spatial plane by the distinction between white city and black city, between the city of those who hold the reins of power and the city of those who are downtrodden. He dwells at length on the concept of inward distance which separates, on the one hand the proponents of the progress from those of the tradition, on the other hand, within the African community, the black men who look at the future and who are tempted by change from those who are first and foremost concerned with continuation :

‘*Deux Tanga... Deux mondes... Deux destins ?*’⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Ronald Segal, *The Agony of Apartheid* quoted by Krumah in *Africa Must Unite*, London : Panaf, 1974, pp. 36-37.

⁶⁵ Eza Boto, *Ville cruelle*, Paris : Presence Africaine, 1974, p. 20.

Like Césaire and Bédi, there were some other Africans who too dared to take a stand. But where a difference can be noted is that they opted for the reverse choice that is to say they came down in favour of the progress. It is the case of Malic, the hero of Amadou Mapaté Diagne's novel *Les Trois Volontés de Malic*. Spokesman of the writer, he accepts willingly the new world which the white men start to impose. He distinguishes perfectly the inertia of ancestral Africa and the opportunities of changes that are given to him. Determined to escape from the tradition, he replies to those who would like him to give up his project that it is longer time to speak of origin or cast. According to him what distinguishes basically men is now their intelligence and their virtues : *'ce n'est plus le moment de parler d'origine et de caste. Les hommes ne se distinguent plus que par le travail, par l'intelligence et par leurs vertus.'*⁶⁶

In *Ambiguous Adventure* this proclivity towards the progress is strongly embodied by the Most Royal Lady who sets herself up as its fervent upholder. For her the new school is a highly political choice. She says that she is utterly against that school and that if she has accepted to break with the tradition which she reverses it is in the grip of exceptional circumstances. She is convinced that the march of history takes the Diallobé towards the novelty introduced by colonization in the same way as that of life leads the little child to walk at the right moment for *'life is not suspended.'*⁶⁷ Thus with clear-mindedness, she has understood all the advantage that the Diallobé can take of the West : *'to learn how better to join wood to wood.'*⁶⁸ for the white men have a superiority in front of which she bows down and, of which she is eager to penetrate the secret :

'Our grand-father, and the élite of the country with him, was defeated. Why ? How ? Only the newcomers know. We must

⁶⁶ Amadou Mapaté Diagne, *Les Trois Volontés de Malic*, Paris, L'arose, 1920, p. 27.

⁶⁷ *Ambiguous Adventure*, op. cit., p. 46

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

ask them : we must go to learn from them the art of conquering without being in the right.⁶⁹

The understanding of such a mystery deserves according to her the greatest sacrifices : that of oneself, that of the tradition, that of the deep personality of the Diallobé's people.

Unlike all these people Samba Diallo is unable to voice his mind, to take a stand either for Africa or Europe.

If he has chosen to study philosophy, it is in order to get acquainted with the West through what it has as the most characteristic and fundamental, the source. But unfortunately his studies instead of helping him to find the key of the solution, will place him in the very heart of the dilemma Europe-Africa as he says to the pastor Martial : *I have chosen the itinerary which is most likely to get me lost.*⁷⁰

And if at the beginning of the novel he is presented in a state of primeval purity, he will move from that as doubt creeps over him. As we said previously, Samba Diallo is descended from a big Muslim family where the quest for the harmony between man and God and man and nature remain deeply rooted. Being himself imbued with this philosophy very early, he cannot accept the religion of progress which the West offers to him and particularly Lucienne, the communist student. Two main reasons justify this attitude.

The first is that in his pursuit of the domination of nature as Descartes advocates it, the white man has given up searching for Truth to the detriment of partial truths as the knight says to Paul Lacroix :

⁶⁹ *Ambiguous Adventure*, op. cit., p. 37.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

'I do not contest the quality of the truth which science discloses. But it is a partial truth ; and insofar as there will be a future, all truth will be partial. Truth takes its place at the end of history.'⁷¹

The consequence is that the white man has forgotten God.

The second reason is that Samba Diallo prefers his own mode of knowledge which is union and harmony with nature to that of the West which is discursive and which limits itself at the surface of things. But where the shoe pinches is that Samba Diallo in his long western sojourn has lost a part of himself which has merged itself into the deep soul of the West as he says :

'they interposed themselves, and undertook to transform me in their image. Progressively they brought me out from heart of things, and accustomed me to live at a distance from the world.'⁷²

Now like the Westerners, he is a man of appearance, a man who confines himself to seeing only the superficial side of things though he knows that *'that scene, it is a sham ! Behind it, there is something a thousand times more beautiful, a thousand time more true !'*⁷³

Later he will confess to Marc his feelings :

'Here, now, the world is silent, and there is no longer any resonance from myself. I am like a broken balafond, like a musical instrument that has gone dead. I have the impression that nothing touches me any more.'⁷⁴

His metamorphosis already engaged goes on and Samba Diallo is aware of it and suffers from it. He is unable to make a choice between the two options which are

⁷¹ *Ambiguous Adventure*, op. cit., p. 77

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 160.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

given to him owing to his belonging to two different cultural systems. Then he defines himself as a hybrid individual whose transformation that is to say the conversion by the western thought has not been complete :

"I am not a distinct country of the Diallobé facing a distinct Occident, and appreciating with a cool head what I must take from it what I must leave with it by way of counter-balance. I have become the two. There is not a clear mind deciding between the two factors of a choice. There is a strange nature, in distress over not being two."⁷⁵

This state of hybrid in which he is, is the main cause of his inner drama. If for some people the belonging to different cultures opens the doors of the universal civilization, that of to give and to receive of which Senghor was talking about, for Samba Diallo it marks the beginning of the alteration of his deep ego. And then instead of being solution, it becomes problem. In this connection, Zilpha Ellis in *La Foi dans l'Aventure Ambiguë* says that the state of hybrid of Samba Diallo is a degrading alienation regard to his people rather than being a means to serve it :

"L'hybridité lui paraît être plutôt une alinéation dégradante par rapport à son peuple qu'un moyen de le servir. Au cours de cette même année, il confirme que l'état d'hybride où il se trouve est un obstacle à la solution qu'il cherche pour son peuple puisque son doute est très grand pour qu'il puisse choisir dans le seul intérêt des Diallobé."⁷⁶

But as time goes by, the disarray of Samba Diallo grows greater and gradually he turns his back on the spiritual world. This world he has known since his childhood and which he has cherished so. Now he has lost his faith. He no longer believes in anything even what the teacher taught him at the Glowing Hearth :

⁷⁵ *Ambiguous Adventure*, op. cit., pp. 150-151.

⁷⁶ Zilpha Ellis, *La Foi dans l'Aventure ambiguë* in *Ethiopiennes* n° 7, Juillet 1976, p. 79.

'I do not believe very much any more, of what you had taught me I do not know what I believe. But the extent is so vast, of what I do not know, and what I ought indeed to believe.'⁷⁷

We have to point out on the same occasion that the case of Samba Diallo was widespread among the black African students in Europe. To support this, we can take the example of Kocoumbo, the hero of *Kocumbo l'Étudiant Noir* which is a startling one. His long sojourn in France has killed his faith. He no longer believes in the shades of his ancestors and he disowns all that he has respected :

'Une nuit, une véritable angoisse s'empara de lui. Il crut avoir commis une grave faute en restant en France : il n'avait plus foi dans l'existence des mânes de ses ancêtres, il abjurait son père, il reniait tout ce qu'il avait respecté.'⁷⁸

Eventually Samba Diallo will come to think that God has betrayed him because he can no longer feel His Fullness as he did in the past : '*you no longer have the full sense of him that you had in the past.*'⁷⁹ But what he forgets is that man cannot blame God for what happens to him. He is free and he has to match every one of his actions and everyone of his thoughts to the precepts of God : to go to the Mosque, to pray, to make the profession of faith, in a nutshell to believe and that is the duty of a good Muslim. It is not God who betrays man but it is man who renounces God when he starts to wonder, to have doubts instead of complying with the divine rules. And the knight is right when he writes that the traitor is Samba Diallo for as he says :

⁷⁷ *Ambiguous Adventure*, op.,cit., p. 173.

⁷⁸ *Kocumbo l'étudiant noir*, op. cit., p. 141.

⁷⁹ *Ambiguous Adventure*, op. cit., p. 163.

‘It is not a matter of paying allegiance to him once for all, through a general and theoretical profession of faith. It has to do with your making yourself bring everyone of your thoughts into conformity with the idea you grasp of his order and discipline.’⁸⁰

More or less constrained by the Most Royal Lady to send his son to the new school, the knight thought that the metamorphosis was possible and profitable to his people. He wished ardently the birth of the future citadel which only the under-developed people could build thanks to his son :

‘The future citadel, thanks to my son, will open its wide windows on the abyss, from which will come great gusts of shadow upon our shrivelled bodies, our haggard brows. With all my soul I wish for this opening. In the city which is being born such should be our work - all of us, Hindus, Chinese, South Americans, Negroes, Arabs, all of us, awkward and pitiful, we the under-developed, who feel ourselves to be clumsy in a world of perfect mechanical adjustment.’⁸¹

But Samba Diallo has failed from start to finish. He has smashed the dream of his father and worse his love of God has faded away. And when the knight realized that his son has forgotten ‘*the merits of religious practice*.’⁸² he said to himself that what he has learnt undoubtedly is nothing compared to what he has forgotten. Finally he enjoined his son to come back home :

‘It is high time that you should come back, to learn that God is not commensurable with anything, and especially not with history, whose vicissitudes are powerless in relation to his attributes. I know that the Occident, to which I have been so wrong as to send you, has a different faith on that score - a faith of which I recognize the utility, but which we do not share.’⁸³

⁸⁰ *Ambiguous Adventure*, op. cit., p. 163

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 80.

⁸² Ibid., p. 163.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 162.

Conscious of his failure today, Samba Diallo cannot help expressing his bitterness and his regrets :

'I loved them too soon, unwisely, without knowing them well enough. Do you understand ? They are of strange nature. They do not inspire simple sentiments. No one should ally himself with them without having observed them well before-hand.'⁸⁴

An important fact which deserves to be underlined is that Samba Diallo is not the only person who has doubts. If the western school has become a reality in the Diallobé's country it is because at a certain moment those who are the landmarks were unable to pronounce themselves. It is the case of the Chief of the Diallobé. His fundamental problem is that the categorical and definitive commitment that the people expect from him for or against the new school gives him a scare :

'If I told them to go to the new school, they would go en masse. They would learn all the ways of joining wood to wood which we do not know. But, learning, they would also forget. Would what they would learn be worth as much as what they would forget ?'⁸⁵

Preoccupied with the future of his people, he would like to secure a material comfort for them and here the foreign school is the adequate tool. But as Diallobé and moreover believer, he would like too to safeguard the traditional values among which the most important is the religious faith. Such is his dilemma. Another worthy who was unable to voice his mind is the Master of the Diallobé! He distinguishes himself by his sternness and his shrewdness. He grasps fully the wish of his people to learn '*how better to join wood*'⁸⁶, to conquer the world. He expresses in an image their concern to conquer weight :

⁸⁴ *Ambiguous Adventure*, op. cit., p. 158.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

"Tell them that they are gourds. The gourd is of a droll nature. When young, it has no other vocation than to achieve weight, no other desire than to attach itself lovingly to the earth. It finds the perfect realization of itself in weight. Then one day everything changes. The gourd wants to take flight. It reabsorbs itself, hollows itself out, as much as it can. Its happiness is a function of its vacuity, of the sonority of its response when a breath stirs it. The gourd is right in both instances."⁸⁷

In equating the Diallobé with gourds, the Master wants to contrast a period of youth, of fullness with a period of maturity, of vacuity when one opens his mind to the four winds of heaven. In other words he wants to show us the culture of the Diallobé before and after the encounter with the West. Yet he refuses to judge the choice of the people, to save what can be saved while it is still time. Cheikh Hamidou Kane during an interview has tried to justify the stance of the Master. According to him the Master of the Diallobé is a man of God. His main characteristic is to be mystic, to be entirely full of God. Now people ask this Master to leave his role of teacher in charge of training the children and to say if the society should or not accept to open up to the outside world. Very honestly, he too, refuses to say yes and refuses to say no. He says that his role is to educate on the religious plane. Consequently he does not want to make a choice of which he does not know the ins and the outs.

"Le maître des Diallobé, quant à lui est un homme de Dieu. Sa caractéristique principale, c'est d'être un mystique, tout entier pénétré de Dieu et du Dieu de l'Islam, du Dieu unique. Ce maître des Diallobé, on lui demande maintenant de sortir de son rôle de pédagogue chargé de former les enfants pour dire si la société doit accepter de s'ouvrir ou pas. Très honnêtement, lui aussi, refuse de dire oui et refuse de dire non. Il dit que son rôle, c'est d'éduquer. Eduquer sur le plan religieux, mais éduquer aussi la totalité des élèves, des enfants confiés à sa garde ; il ne veut pas choisir, il ne veut pas faire un choix dont il a l'impression qu'il le dépasse un peu."⁸⁸

⁸⁷ *Ambiguous Adventure*, op. cit., p. 33-34.

⁸⁸ Interview by B. Kotchy, *Etudes Littéraires*, Vol. 7, Décembre 1974, p. 483.

Despite these explanations of the author, we remain nevertheless confirmed in the idea that the Master of the Glowing Hearth was not able to take a stand when people appeal to him. Paradoxically, it is at the moment when the monopoly which he exerted over the education of the youth and the society directed towards the quest for salvation which he has helped to build are questioned that he refuses to pronounce himself. If we can understand his ascetic rejection of the world, we cannot follow him in his refusal to fight which verges on defeatism.

In going to the west and in choosing to study philosophy Samba Diallo said to himself that he has certainly opted for the quicker and the surer way to penetrate the secret of the power of this continent. But unfortunately at the end of his studies, he did not find what he was searching for and worse he got lost. He no longer knows who he is in this immense contradictory field Europe-Africa. Consequently and unavoidably he renounces his faith which links him to his people and which determines his cultural identity. As a result, with his failure it is the dream of a whole people which crumbles down.

2/ The lack of conviction of Baako

There comes a time in the life of man when it is no longer sufficient to have only good intentions or good ideas but what is fundamental is that man be able to give concrete expression to them, to impose them. For that he must have faith in himself, he must be convinced of the relevance and the legitimacy of his ideas for himself and for his people and he must consent to making sacrifices if necessary to defend them. That is what we call commitment.

About commitment, Tanella Boni in an article entitled *L'écrivain et le pouvoir* published in the review *Au delà du prix Nobel. Colloque de Lagos sur*

les littératures Africaines puts forward the idea according to which there is no dichotomy between action and the artistic creation. At first sight they seem to be totally opposed but in fact they aim at the sole and same target : to change the society, the mentalities, to transform the reality somehow. The writer as such plays a great role in his society. He takes a stand whenever he takes up his pen. All things considered, the fate of the writer is sooner or later to take his protest onto the street, to go into action if the soul of the creation turns out to be ineffectual :

‘Mais l’action et la création artistique aussi éloignées qu’elles puissent paraître au premier abord, ne visent-elles pas un seul et même but : changer la société, les mentalités, transformer la réalité d’une manière ou d’une autre ? (...). L’écrivain en tant que tel joue un rôle précis dans une société donnée. Prend fait et cause, chaque fois qu’il prend la plume et dans ses oeuvres littéraires et dans ses discours. Et à la limite, le destin d’un écrivain n’est-il pas, tôt ou tard, de descendre dans la rue, de passer à l’action après avoir dans un premier temps utilisé l’âme de la création.’⁸⁹

This vision of things was largely understood and shared by some African intellectuals who did not hesitate to stand in the way of a system which they consider unpopular and oppressive. It is the case of Ikem in *Anthills of the Savannah*. Notwithstanding the false and brutal world in which he lives and where a complete silence reigns, where fear and suspicion punctuate people’s life : ‘there were unconfirmed rumours of unrest, secret trials and executions in the barracks’⁹⁰, he has succeeded in remaining himself and in remaining true to his convictions. And as a journalist conscious of his deontology, he refuses to bargain his freedom of speech. He dared to stand up and to denounce overtly the

⁸⁹ Tanella Bôni, *L’écrivain et le pouvoir* in *Au-delà du prix Nobel* (Colloque de Lagos sur les littératures africaines). Clef Notre librairie n° 98. Juillet/Septembre 1989, p. 86.

⁹⁰ Chinua Achebé, *Anthills of the Savannah*, London : Heinemann, African Writers Series, 1987, p. 141.

ongoing public executions in his country and to display his total disagreement with the policy of the government :

‘The prime failure of this government began also to take on a clearer meaning for him (...). It is the failure of our rulers to re-establish vital inner links with the poor and dispossessed of his country, with the bruised heart that throbs painfully at the core of the nation’s being.’⁹¹

And like in any other dictatorial regime, Ikem becomes the enemy to shoot down. So he is dismissed from his post by Sam, the head of state who accuses him wrongly of acting in connivance with the Abazon agitators : ‘*while investigations continue into Ikem’s link with Abazon agitators, he cannot continue to edit the Nation Gazette.*’⁹²

By suspending Ikem, Sam thought he has succeeded in shutting him up forever, but he is mistaking. Steadfast in his principles and determined in his actions, Ikem can’t help keeping on his struggle against this corrupt and brutal regime of Sam. So he gives lectures at the university of Bassa to insist on the necessity for the students and the workers to join hands so that the struggle may be efficient. Sam sensing his regime jeopardized, orders the abduction and execution of Ikem.

We find this same commitment also in *The Voice* by Gabriel Okara. Through the behaviour and deed of Okolo the hero of the novel, it is a certain category of young African intellectuals which is depicted. Those who are downcast even indignant at the system which governs them and which urges them inevitably to rebellion. Surely this will not be an easy task for the people whom Okolo addresses seem not to grasp the essence of his quest which boils

⁹¹ Chinua Acheb . *Anthills of the Savannah*, London : Heinemann, African Writers Series, 1987, p. 141.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 143.

down to 'It', worse they take him for a dangerous beast and they track him down. Indeed he is a danger but for a certain class of man like The Big One, Abadi who are only obsessed by power, money... These latters will persecute him everywhere, they will force him to go into exile to get rid of him. In doing that they think they will recover their quiet of long ago marked by the unconsciousness, the intimidation and the submission of the masses. But it still remains that the voice of justice is stronger and when it thunders, the only thing one can do is to answer. So Okolo in Sofoga, cannot prevent himself from answering the voice of duty and deliverance which is calling him from Amatu. He has to root and to cultivate in the mind and heart of his people the seed of consciousness, truth, knowledge, wisdom, morality. And in the name of dignity and righteousness, he refuses to give up his beliefs to join the clan of the Elders where surely he will be in security : *'keeping your thoughts in our inside alone will not do. Your hands will only be untied if you agree to be one of us.'*⁹³

Finally he will be killed to check the awakening which he starts to arouse among his people. But no one can prevent the sun from shining for as long as there is life, justice and truth will always end by springing up and by triumphing.

'When day broke the following day it broke on a canoe aimlessly floating down the river. And in the canoe tied together back to back with their feet tied to the seats of the canoe, were Okolo and Ture. (...). Then the canoe was drawn into a whirlpool. It spun round and round and was slowly drawn into the core and finally disappeared. And the water rolled over the top and the river flowed smoothly over it as if nothing had happened.'⁹⁴

In such a context, the African intellectuals have no other alternative, either they are among those who say 'no' or among those who say 'yes'. Ngûgî Wa Thiong'o pinpoints in a very relevant way in his book *Writers in Politics* :

⁹³ Gabriel Okara, *The Voice*, London : Heinemann, African Writers Series, 1970, p. 47.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

'I have titled the book, 'Writers in Politics', because literature cannot escape from the class power structures that shape our everyday life. Here a writer has no choice. Whether or not he is aware of it, his works reflect one or more aspects of the intense economic, political, cultural and ideological struggles in a society. What he can choose is one or the other side in the battle field : the side of the people, or the side of those social forces and classes that try to keep the people down. What he or she cannot do is to remain neutral. Every writer is a writer in politics. The only question is what and whose politics.'⁹⁵

In *Fragments*, Baako contrary to Samba Diallo who did not know what to choose or to do seems to opt for the side of the people. But his choice verges more on indifference than total commitment. This lack of conviction can be analysed from three different levels :

1) Baako's lack of conviction toward himself.

After having read the novel, the conclusion which we may draw is that Baako is a man who dare not follow his ideas or actions through to their logical end. This want of boldness and determination can be explained fundamentally by his lack of self-confidence. If we know that faith in oneself is at the basis of everything and that the behaviour is nothing else but the reflection of the state of mind in which one is, it becomes quite easy to grasp the subsequent attitude of Baako. He always prefers to shy away from his obligations instead of taking on them. And what is aberrant about all this, is that after a long sojourn abroad, he comes back to his native country without a warning. To our mind if he were responsible enough towards himself and towards his family, he would have informed them about his return. Worse when he came back, he did not go straight at home he put up at a hotel :

⁹⁵ Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o, *Writers in Politics*, Oxford : James Currey, 1997, p. XVI.

'The car picked up speed, its lights making the low gutter culverts flash yellow as it left intersections behind, then turned left and followed the slow curve of a gravel drive and stopped before the Avenida Hotel.'⁹⁶

These can be perceived by some as minor misdemeanours but in fact they are full of meaning for they reveal a certain evasion of responsibilities. If Baako had a strong personality, if he were a decisive man able to say 'yes' or 'no' at the right moment, he would have taken his courage in both hands to face the reality. But unfortunately this is not the case. May be he says to himself that as a 'been-to' he has failed in his duty. He has failed to fulfill the expectations of his family and those of his society that is to say to be a very special kind of being :

'The member of the family who goes out and come back home is a sort of charmed man, a miracle worker. He goes, he comes back, and with his return some astounding and sudden change is expected.'⁹⁷

Consequently he finds shameful the fact of joining his family empty-handed and he prefers to sneak away. But in doing that he worsens his situation for no one can escape from oneself.

2) Baako's lack of conviction towards his family.

Apart Naana who clear-sightedness and righteousness are no longer to be proved but who is unfortunately marginalized. Baako is the only person sounded out to lead the changes expected in his family. Two main reasons work towards this choice.

⁹⁶ *Fragments*, op. cit., p. 63.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

The first is that as said Fifi, Baako is ‘*Aunt Efua only one son*’⁹⁸, and as we may know it, in traditional Africa man has always a casting vote. His decision is unquestionable and it does not matter whether it is right or wrong. Women have always to submit themselves uncomplainingly.

The second is that Baako is apparently the only intellectual of the family. Thus he is expected to bring light wherever lies darkness, to change the mentality of his family, to teach those who do not know. It is up to him to destroy the myth of the ‘been-to’ which is dwelling in his family. He has to instil into them some virtues such as the love of what is good and right, the love of man not for what he has but for what he is. He has to teach them that the material which is blinding them is something fleeting and that what is essential is the spiritual.

But the reality turns out to be something else. In fact, we did not see at any time in the novel Baako taking decisive decisions tending to show his willingness to change the way things go in his family. Consequently his family keep on persisting in their greed and their scorn for the ancestral practices. They do not hesitate to regard Baako as the embodiment of their failure and their shame for he turned all their dreams of better days into everlasting nightmares. If we remember, it was a tradition for those who have the chance to go abroad to come back loaded with plenty of goods as said Brempong :

‘I have learned to take precautions, myself. There are important things you can’t get to buy at home. Every time I go out I arrange to buy all I need, suits and so ar. It’s quite simple. I got two good cars on this trip. German cars, from the factory, all fresh. They’re following me. Shipped.’⁹⁹

⁹⁸ *Fragments*, op. cit., p. 67

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 45

So having a 'been-to' among one's family could be equated with a source of power, domination and even fear. Given that way of seeing things, Efua naturally, longs for all these enjoyments but this time the machinery seems not to work and Baako is the main cause. Instead of coming back with ships full of goods, he came back empty-handed but with a head full of good ideas. This marks the beginning of his problems for his family will never stop to rule him with an iron hand. But also this should have been at least the starting point of his struggle. He should have convinced his family that if he had been abroad, it was not with the intention of accumulating money or contributing towards the perpetuation of the myth of the 'been-to'. He had been there only in order to acquire the required knowledge to save his people from the material and spiritual poverty which was slowly but surely killing them. But unfortunately he contented himself with noticing very passively his powerlessness in face of the schemes of his family. Worse, he should have voiced his mind very firmly when Efua and Araba had decided deliberately to bring forward the date of the outdooring ceremony of the new born just to amass more money. Yet as uncle he had his say in such matter since in the Akan tradition the maternal family has always the last word. But indifferent he was, he has left it to Kwesi, the father of the child who has no decision-making power. And Naana was right when she said that she had a grudge against Baako because he had the means to do something but he refused to do it : *'Still, I'm not forgetting my anger. You should have saved the child.'*¹⁰⁰

His family being a reflection of the society, Baako by succeeding in changing their mentality, inescapably and indisputably would have succeeded in winning an outstanding part in his struggle.

¹⁰⁰ *Fragments*, op. cit., p. 183

3) Baako's lack of conviction towards his society.

It is generally said that people have always the leaders they deserve. We utterly share this viewpoint and we go further by saying that people have always leaders who are in the image of their intellectuals. If the intellectuals are aware of their deontology, if they carry out their role in their society and in their country without any ulterior motive other than to serve their people and their country then they will have the ways and means to impose a positive line of conduct on their leaders who will fulfil their task according to the will of the people. But if it happens by chance that the intellectuals be or do something else other than what they should be or do then they will contribute towards the possible abuse of their leaders for they are the pillars of the power if they stand firm everything is in security but if they sway everything collapse.

In *Fragments* we dare not say that people have the leaders they deserve because in this ocean of rottenness still live some virtuous persons such as Naana, Juana, Ocran, Baako... But we can assert that the leaders are in the image of the intellectuals that is to say they are obsessed by the lust for power and money. And this is the main evil which is undermining the Ghanaian society and that is where lies the real struggle of Baako. But as usual, Baako becomes more famous through his inertia rather than through his dynamism. He cannot pretend that he does not know about what is going on in his country for he never stopped and never stops to witness or to be a victim of the injustice that is rampant. When he was taking at the hospital his sister who was on the verge of having a baby, Baako did have the opportunity to realize that Ghana is a bipolarized society, a society of classes, the class of those who have and the class of those who do not have and those who have not have not the right to mingle with those who have. Baako and Araba know something about that for they were refused

admittance at the hospital simply on the grounds that they were not among the big shots of the country : ‘*This new wing is for VIP’s and Senior Officers. The rest, to the old wards.*’¹⁰¹ said the nurse to them. In the face of such a blatant discrimination Baako did not have any reaction. Yet he could have fought or at least denounced publicly. We can also reproach Baako the fact of working at Ganavision since he was informed right from the beginning about the ins and outs of what is going on there by The Principal Secretary himself :

‘We don’t have modern systems here. This country doesn’t work in any smooth, efficient way, you’ll just get a complete waste of your time. It’s not worth bothering about (...). Unfortunately the young man will also be finding out that making a go of life means forgetting all the beautiful stuff they teach in the classroom. It’s very different, the way things really work.’¹⁰²

And as said Paul N’Da, the taking part in the power means necessarily the defence and the recognition of that power : ‘*la participation au pouvoir implique la défense et la légitimation du pouvoir.*’¹⁰³

Notwithstanding this warning, Baako knowingly has accepted to work in this firm where the cult of the personality is a law that no one can circumvent : ‘*We have to follow the head of State and try to get pretty pictures of him and those around him (...). A nation is built through glorifying its big shots.*’¹⁰⁴ and where corruption is a common occurrence : ‘*you can come and see me when you decide you want me to help you. And don’t come here just to waste my time.*’¹⁰⁵

In such a context, if those who have the ways and means to bring changes in their society namely the intellectuals start singing the praises of the very

¹⁰¹ *Fragments*, op. cit., p. 75.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 83.

¹⁰³ Paul N’Da, *Les intellectuels et le pouvoir en Afrique noire*. Paris : L’Harmattan, 1987, p. 73.

¹⁰⁴ *Fragments*, op. cit., p. 133.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

destroyers of their society just to preserve their interest then there is no longer a glimmer of hope. Asante-Smith is among those intellectuals as said Brempong :

'he knows people. Besides, he is clever. One of his own drinking friends says he has the sweetest tongue in all of Ghana for singing his master's praises. It's the truth. And it doesn't matter to him even when the masters change. He can sing sweetly for anybody who dey for top.'¹⁰⁶

These 'Asante-Smith' are present almost everywhere in Africa. In *Anthills of the Savannah* we have the case of Pr Okong who, despite his great knowledge, does not hesitate to prostitute his physical, intellectual and moral personality to gain the sympathy of His Excellency Sam :

'As for those like me, your Excellency, poor dullards who went to bush grammar schools, we know our place, we know those better than ourselves when we see them. We have no problem worshipping a man like you. Honestly I don't.'¹⁰⁷

In *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, Armah tells us that :

'Men who know nothing about politics have grown hot with ideology, thinking of the money that will come. The civil servant who hates socialism is there, singing hosanna. The poet is there serving power and waiting to fill his coming paunch with crumbs.'¹⁰⁸

Given that situation, we understand and share naturally the bitterness and disillusionment of Juana. Here she was looking for something that she could not find in her country and which was an innermost part of herself that is to say the craving for struggle. But unfortunately here too the fire of deviance has died

¹⁰⁶ *Fragments*, op. cit., p. 46.

¹⁰⁷ *Anthills of the Savannah*, op. cit., p. 24.

¹⁰⁸ Ai Kwei Armah, *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. London : Heinemann, African Writers Series, 1988, p. 89.

among the people and even may be it was never aroused. So Juana cannot help wondering :

‘When would she make the decision about leaving or staying ? What sense would there be in a final decision to stay now that she knew there were people here who knew of the awfulness of the life around them, who had the power given them to do something to change all this, but who were, like people she had known at home and in all her travels, only concerned with digging themselves a comfortable resting place within a bad system ?’¹⁰⁹

Nevertheless, even if Baako lacks of dynamism we cannot say that he belongs to that category of corrupt intellectuals. He has always nourished good ideas and noble intentions for his country. If we remember when he come back home, he did not bring with him ships full of goods :

‘When the press had eased he rose and picked up his luggage - suitcase, portable typewriter and guitar - and went down the bus steps, turning slightly sideways to get through the door.’¹¹⁰

His only wealth was head full of new and progressive ideas. And his main concern was to take part in a very positive way in the awakening of his people for a people who do not know who they are, who ignore their history and culture cannot erect a respectable and strong nation : ‘*A nation that has cast away its literature is a nation that has sold its soul and has been left a mere shell.*’¹¹¹

But this is not an easy task for the authorities who are not at all interested in Arts will do all their uttermost to put a spoke in Baako’s wheel :

¹⁰⁹ *Fragments*, op., cit., p. 147.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.38.

¹¹¹ Ngûgi Wa Thiong’o, *Devil on the Cross*, London : Heinemann, African Writers. Series. 1983, p. 62.

'I know what the trouble is with you. You're too abstract in our approach to our work. For instance, what you've just said has nothing to do with our people's culture - all this slavery, survival, the brand.'¹¹²

Ocran was right when he put Baako on his guard. In this country nobody is interested in serious matters, nobody is concerned with the destiny of this country :

I'm antiquated, may be. But I know definitely that you can't do anything serious here if you need other people's help, because nobody is interested in being serious.'¹¹³

It is all these factors put together which may explain Baako's lack of conviction. He knows he has the grey matter, he knows he has the ability to do something but he is not given the opportunity or the means to do it. Every one of his endeavours is nipped in the bud without coming into being.

This raises the great issue of the intellectual in his society. With the case of Baako, it is obvious that one single individual cannot change the way things go in his society or in his country. The struggle instead of being individual has to be communal in order to attain the expected aims. What Baako fundamentally fails to have is this support of the people, the identification of the people with his struggle. Finally he decided to burn his work to put an end to his ambitions :

'Why then are you burning it ?'
 'To forget.'
 'It wasn't good work ?'
 'I don't know. It never used.'¹¹⁴

¹¹² *Fragments*, op. cit., p. 147

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

We can find this same despondency in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* where the man stood aloof from his society vanquished by despair. As he says himself, he no longer exists :

‘I don’t feel any hope in me any more. I can see things, but I don’t feel much. When you can see the end of things even in their beginnings, there’s no more hope, unless you want to pretend, or forget, or get drunk or something. No I also one of the dead people, the walking dead. A ghost. I died long ago. So long ago that not even the old libations of living blood will make me live again.’¹¹⁵

And like the master who was saying : ‘*The things people want, I do not have to give. And no one wants what I happen to have. It’s only words, after all,*’¹¹⁶ Baako wonders what is the usefulness of the knowledge if it cannot be used : ‘*who needs what is in the head.*’¹¹⁷

It is beyond doubt that Baako had very noble intentions for his country and he did try something. But where the shoe pinches is that he did not go till the end of his thoughts and actions. He stopped dead right at the time when commitment was an imperative for as said Armah, the true healers in the community are those who : ‘*set great value on seeing truly, hearing truly, understanding truly, and acting truly.*’¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, op. cit. p. 61

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 79

¹¹⁷ *Fragments*, op. cit., p. 190

¹¹⁸ Ayi Kwei Armah, *The Healers*, Nairobi : EAPH, 1978, p. 81

Chapter B - The fate of the African intellectuals who failed to adapt themselves

In this chapter, we will endeavour to go into the fate reserved for the African intellectuals and more particularly that of those who did not succeed in making their voice heard or finding their way around in their society.

One should acknowledge that the fate of these intellectuals is far from being brilliant or enviable. If in *Fragments* Baako sinks into madness, under the pressures of a society too blind to see the ways of salvation which he was striving to show them, in *Ambiguous Adventure*, Samba Diallo will be less fortunate. Unable to synthesize the quintessence of the African and European cultures of which he is deeply imbued, he will opt for death to put an end to his painful inner friction.

1/ Madness as the result a social misunderstanding

To be an intellectual in the world in general and in Africa in particular is admittedly never an easy task. But understood and accepted by the society in their role as organizers of the masses and the systems which govern them and as forerunners of new positive ideas, the intellectuals may constitute an outstanding asset to the protection of justice and the reinforcement of democracy, necessary condition for setting up any respectable and respected nation. In fact their status imposes upon them as vocation a total and unconditional commitment to their people and their country. They have the right and the duty to be the railings against any abuse which may come either from the governing or from the governed. Fitting into this same dynamic, Paul N'Da in his book *Les intellectuels et le pouvoir en Afrique noire* tries to give us a more or less overall definition of the role of the intellectual. He said that the intellectual has to be the mouth of those who do not have the possibility to voice their mind muzzled by

hunger or misery, by fear or the withdraw into oneself. He has to be the ringing voice of those who are rotting in the dungeons or who are constrained to be yesmen against their will. He has to stay firm in the way of an sort of domination.

‘Il est l’homme qui parle au nom de ceux qui ne peuvent pas prendre la parole, muselés par la misère ou par la peur, le repli sur soi ou par un apprentissage forcé de l’applaudissement. Il est celui qui s’élève contre l’ordre autoocratique ou la domination étrangère.’¹¹⁹

As élite too, it is up to them to arouse the intellectual discussion, the confrontation of ideas for it is from these fertile and constructive debates that springs the light. That mystic light which has spared certain nations the torments of ignorance and shapes their power. Jacques Baguenard in his book *L’Univers politique* asserts that these exchanges of ideas are so vital that any country which skirks them runs the risk to lose all its creativeness and to sink into a perpetual trial and error .

‘Il appartient aux intellectuels de contribuer à approfondir les débats d’idées sans lesquels une société perdant toute créativité sombre dans un bégaiement redoutable.’¹²⁰

This in a large extent confirms what Ikem was talking about contradictions. He tells us : ‘*contradictions if well understood and managed can spark off the fires of inventions. Orthodoxy whether of the right or of the left is the graveyard of creativity.*’¹²¹

But unfortunately what we have observed today is that history has often taught us that few are the cases where the intellectuals in Africa have succeeded in carrying out perfectly their task without being in no way troubled in their

¹¹⁹ Paul N’Da, *Les intellectuels et le pouvoir en Afrique noire*, Paris : L’Harmattan, 1987, p. 8.

¹²⁰ Jacques Baguenard, *L’Univers politique*, Presses Universitaires de France, Vendôme, 1978, p. 93.

¹²¹ *Anthills of the Savannah*, op. cit., p. 100.

occupational or physical integrity. Sometimes it is enlightened wits that nothing fundamentally predisposes to demagogy, to vice who set themselves up as fervent minstrels of dictatorial regimes where the only laws which are true laws are the laws of corruption and brutality. Now they have become a new breed of men, those who never hesitate to belittle themselves, to corrupt, to despoil, to soil, to torture, to put in jail, to kill . . . to consolidate or to appease their craving for money or power. This notwithstanding the rungs climbed and the lots of certificates obtained. It is the case of Chief Abadi in *The Voice* who attended the best universities : ‘ I have been to England, America and Germany and attended the best universities in these places and have my M.A., Ph.D...’¹²² and Mwirei wa Mukiraai in *Devil On the Cross* :

I was educated in Siriana Secondary School and at Makerere when it really was Makerere. I read economics - that is the science or the study of how to create wealth in a country. In Uganda I graduated with a B. Sc (Econ.). I didn't stop there. I enrolled at our university here. I was successful and emerged with a degree in commerce, that is a B. Comm. Then, forward march. In America I went to the great university called Harvard. There I studied everything to do with business administration. I got another degree, a M. Sc (Bus. Admin).¹²³

And most of the time, those among the intellectuals who have decided to go against the current that is to say to resist or to rebel are those who lay themselves open to all sort of dangers. Often marginalization and at the very worst assassination are their daily lot. A great deal among them have dearly paid for their lives their persistence in their believes, their determination in their actions, their attachment to cardinal virtues that nothing can alter neither the power of money nor the use of force. To illustrate the truth of this, one has only to mention the ignoble murders of Ikem and Chris in *Anthills of the Savannah* or Okolo in *The Voice*.

¹²² *The Voice*, op. cit., pp 43-44

¹²³ *Devil On the Cross*, op. cit., p 77

This nevertheless comforts us more in our hope, in our opinion according to which somewhere in Africa there are still some intellectuals on whom one can rely and who are aware of what they are, what they should do and that nothing can divert from their duties. As regards those who have the luck to escape from the incredible brutality of bloodthirsty rulers, to have one's life safe and sound is not for all that synonymous with peace of mind and security. Some of them are outlawed and harassed while others are purely and simply placed on the verge of the society and they no longer have their word to say in any matter concerning their country. This marginalization more often than not leads inevitably either to suicide or to madness.

In *Fragments* Baako is the perfect victim of this marginalization which naturally has driven him to a second nervous breakdown. This lunacy is nothing else but the direct outcome of the combination of several factors among which the more determining are the society, the family, the concerned subject himself. In view of that fact we contemplate focusing our analysis on these three points.

1) Baako as a victim of his society

When Baako left his native land for abroad, he had only one concern in mind to acquire the requisite expertise so as to rescue his people from the unfathomable gloom of ignorance and vice to the light of knowledge and virtue and to lift his country from the quicksands of injustice and obscurantism to the right track of social justice and progress. But once back home, all these dreams instead of coming true, turned into obsessive nightmares.

To trace back Baako's disillusionment, we can say that it started first when he was looking for a job. One of the main characteristics of Ghana is that

it is a country where competence, what people commonly call the right man in the right place is no longer a necessary condition to lay claim to a job : one has to know people as Brempong said or to be willing to bribe. Several times Baako's application was turned down just because he refused submit to the common practice. Eventually if he obtained the job, it was thanks the intercession of Ocran on his behalf but in return he was asked to be cooperative :

'Now he feels he's done us a great favor, and that's the way he wants it. You're expected to be grateful. The machinery doesn't work, except as a special favor for special cases.'¹²⁴

Far from fading away, this stands for the clouds which herald the tempest. Indeed Baako in his work comes up against a lot of hindrances which everyday increases his disappointments. In Ghanavision he is in no uncertain terms enjoined to erase from his mind all the marvellous things he has been striving for several years to obtain. He is asked to forget so many years of suffering and privations he consented to bear to serve his people and his country just because here things work differently. Differently because the whole machinery of government is at a standstill and people no longer live, they only undergo as Baako later will remark it :

'But later he had gone up and down, across the land with Juana, and he'd seen the same sterility riding on top of everything, destroying hope in all who lived under it.'¹²⁵

One may say that time has stopped to go in this country and that is the policy intentionally opted by the authorities, the refusal of the progress. This reminds us

¹²⁴ *Fragments*, op. cit., p. 84

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 132

what Sam was talking about in *Anthills of the Savannah* when one of his ministers wanted to resign :

‘Where do you think you are ? Westminster or Washington D.C. ? Come on ? This is a military government in a backward West African State called Kangan.’¹²⁶

This shows us that some African leaders are not very preoccupied with the fate of their people, on the contrary they prefer to subjugate them in order to tame them and to make use of them without being bothered under no circumstances.

In this connection, Ocran is right when he warns Baako against what is awaiting him. He says that in a country where nobody has a sharp sense of responsibility and duty, where those who should be the examples are the very ones who trample underfoot the institutions, Baako will have a huge task to get through for there is here nobody on whom he can rely to do something serious :

‘You know Baako, what you’re getting there is not a chance to do any useful work. They sit on their bottoms doing nothing. So it’s a sinecure. Things make sense. What a twisted life ! But think about it. You’ll have to find out what you can do alone and go ahead and do it...’¹²⁷

This warning does not take a long time being borne out. As we remarked it, Baako in Ghanavision devotes all his time to write scenarios related to culture and history. But unfortunately they are never produced for the films are earmarked for other purposes. Instead of being used for educating the people, they are exclusively devoted to praise the political leaders of the country. One day Baako was overtly told by the Principal Secretary that : ‘*A nation is built through glorifying its big shots.*’¹²⁸

¹²⁶ *Anthills of the Savannah*, op. cit., p. 144.

¹²⁷ *Fragments*, op. cit., p. 84

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

What does this mean ? This assertion is grave on more than one account. It signifies that these people have resolutely opted for a total divorce from the past. And as said the hispano-american philosopher George Santayana, those who do not remember the past are doomed to repeat it : *‘Ceux qui ne se souviennent pas du passé sont condamnés à le répéter.’*¹²⁹ In other terms, they are bound to remake again and again the same mistakes for the future is built from the past. But this does not seem to worry them in no way and on several occasions they have rejected his scenarios.

Moreover, wherever he goes in his job and in every day life, Baako always meets with corruption. Finally it becomes unbearable and he realizes that he is only a part of a gigantic system set up to make the élite richer and the masses poorer : *‘The educated really thinking of the people here as some kind of devils in a burning hell, and themselves the happy plucked one, saved.’*¹³⁰

In such a context, the artist has not his place and in the end he is compelled to resign and to burn his manuscripts.

In chapter 6 entitled ‘Gyefò’ we can see that Baako is deeply fascinated by the scene of a little boy who is manhandled by some fishermen on the beach. Rejected first, that boy is giving now to these men something they do not have that is to say the rhythm and the sounds they need to recover their energy :

One irritated strong man kicked the sand at the boy and shouted at him, perhaps to shut him up ; he stopped his singing only briefly, recovered and continued. On the next return another big bodied man, this one with a slow, pensive step, one of those who had reached the bay in the canoe, took up the song, his voice deeper but his rhythm the same. Where the two singers paused the only refrain was the sound of the sea, till one after the other the remaining men and a few of the waiting women began also to hum endings to the song. Now the pulling took a

¹²⁹ George Santayana, *Un siècle d'atrocités. Faut-il oublier ?* in *REVELEZ-VOUS!* (8 Août 1998). Editeur pour la France : Association « Les Témoins de Jehova », pp. 6-7.

¹³⁰ *Fragments*, op. cit., p. 148.

rhythm from the general song. The men dug their feet deep into the sand and pulled from fixed positions on the rope.¹³¹

Baako identifies himself with that little boy who symbolizes the artist. Like him, he wanted to impart to his people that vitality. That is why he pinned all his hopes on the writing of scenarios revitalizing the Ghanaian culture, recounting their history but also laying bare the limits and the hypocrisy of those who have reached the top. Unfortunately Baako is not understood by his society too blind to see the light which he is showing them. In one of his scenarios 'Slavery', he told us about his bitterness. He asserts that a new kind of slavery is strangling his people and his country the slavery of the material goods which destroys the soul and the body and which stands for the complete divorce from the spiritual world, the nutritive sap of any civilization worthy of the name.

This societal misunderstanding is perceived by Baako as the result of his own failure. He says to himself that he is not able to find out the evils which cripple his society and to bring the right remedy. Finally he infers from that his whole sojourn abroad was an utter waste of time. Consequently some days after having given up his job, Baako for the second time sinks into a second nervous breakdown. This madness of Baako is a pretext for Armah to raise another dimension of the problem of the intellectual in his society that is to say the illiteracy of the masses who have not yet managed to depart from their mistrust of the writing. This constitutes a serious hurdle to the open-mindedness of the masses and their understanding of the messages of the intellectuals. And we think that a people who is not educated is a people who is unaware of what they are and who do not know anything about what surrounds them, a people relegated to position of secondary importance and doomed to be dominated. We propose here to report the conversation that Baako was having with his mother

¹³¹ *Fragments*, op. cit., p. 128

when his sickness was gradually overcoming him and he kept on taking down notes. When his mother asked him why he was writing, he replied

‘Something that occurred to me, a thought that’s all’
 ‘For whom?’
 ‘Myself’
 ‘You wrote it to yourself. But that is a little like having a conversation with no one, talking alone to yourself.’
 ‘Well, if you want...’
 ‘Baako, is that the way it was before you came, when you were ill?’
 ‘*Did you write things to yourself?*’¹³²

2) Baako as a victim of his family

The family takes up a very determining place in the life of man. If it fulfils fully its role that is to say to be a reassuring and safe environment, it can further the blossoming out of man on every plane. But if it turns away from it, it throws the door wide open to any evil. In a nutshell, we can put forward that it is the family which makes and unmakes man.

Today if Baako has given way to a second depression, it is for the most part owing to his family for as he said it : ‘*the family is always there, with a solid presence and real demands.*’¹³³

If we take a look back, we realize that this situation was a bit easy to foresee. In fact before going abroad, a ceremony of libations was organized to ask the ancestors to keep a watchful eye on Baako. But beyond this protection what is mainly aimed at is the acquisition of material goods for according to the social belief, abroad is a land of plenty where those who have the luck to go come back with ships full of wonders

¹³² *Fragments*, op. cit., pp 158-159.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

‘Let him prosper there where he is going. And when he returns let his return, like rain bring us your blessings and fruits, your blessings, your help in this life you have left us to fight alone.’¹³⁴

This way of seeing things was at the origin of Baako’s first nervous breakdown abroad. When Juana asked him the grounds of that, he said he was afraid to be unable to meet the expectations of his family : ‘*I didn’t know if I’d be able to do anything worthwhile.*’¹³⁵ This psychological burden follows him everywhere in his dreams and moves. It keeps on haunting him even when he got back home. In his struggle to bring a new vision in his society, he does not have the support of his family, he is alone on his own. On the contrary his family instead of being a secured shelter where Baako can draw enough strength to implement his ideas, it is a mere reflection of the society and worst a circle where he cannot escape :

his family become only a closer, intenser, more intimate reflection of the society itself, a concave mirror, as he called it and before long she was left in no doubt at all that, many ways he saw more small possibilities of hope in large society than in the family around him.¹³⁶

Baako is no longer regarded as a source of pride by his mother. That pride that people can wave to say we have among us a very special kind of being able to turn poverty into wealth, misery into glory, weakness into power. For Efua Baako is the very family’s shame personified. She cannot understand why where other women’s sons come back with plenty of goods, hers comes back destitute like a beggar :

‘... Effua was right to think of the returned one as fruit of her womb. Seeing the other grow riper watching hers turn green and hard and

¹³⁴ *Fragments*, op. cit., p. 16

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 102

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 102

hurtful to the open consuming mouth, she was right. What had she done wrong that her hope should be so harshly torn?¹³⁷

From that moment the existence of Baako boils down to a series of disappointments and conflicts. He will no longer know peace, outward as well as inward. The daily reproaches of the family are so intense to such an extent that they become a weight upon his soul. And as time goes by Baako feels more and more sent to Coventry like a pariah by his own family. Those who should support him in the moments of hardships are the very persons who plunge him into misfortune. Finally Baako cannot help feeling guilty. He says to himself that really the family is right. He refuses to look at where everybody is looking at. In fact there is only one truth, that which makes the poor rich and the rich richer. Consequently why is he persisting in showing people who refuse to see. So one thought keeps on endlessly reverberating in his mind :

‘One repeated thought took his mind and sped through his head like frames carrying an unchanging accusation : right, right, they’re right, right, right. In the beginning there was a mother’s expectant, happy smile and a sweet voice telling the arrived one about a mansion fit for him. Like a newborn fool he had seen no need to go off into huge mansions and inflate himself to fill the space. Had he thought then that such refusals would be understood, or had he understood but chosen to push under the mute contemplation and the mother’s following question, asked with that good smile that still held out the hope of peace, ‘The eagle does not want to soar?’ That was truly fearsome, they were right, right, right about his willingness to look for something not so far from themselves, this nothingness they were dying to leave behind. That was perverse and they were right again, right, right. A certain haughtiness would have been salutary, something closer to the spirit of his hosts beyond the horizon would have reassured everyone and save him from provoking his own doom.’¹³⁸

¹³⁷ *Fragments*, op. cit., p. 176.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 175

With that growing guilty feeling and marginalization, Baako ends up by yielding to a madness much more serious than the first for this time it engenders lots of consequences.

One afternoon after having finished her work, Juana decides to have a walk to take her mind off things. On her way she comes across with a body of men who are killing a dying dog. If this incident is particularly painful it is owing to the roarings of the dog's owner, a little boy who screams out that they are killing his best friend. The dog is beaten till it becomes a heap of dislocated bones on the road. This unfortunate spectacle foreshadows the treatment that will be inflicted on Baako by his family after his relapse.

Indeed as his fever becomes stronger and stronger, his family decides to get rid of him and to confine him to a mental hospital. Sensing that, Baako takes to his heels. His flight and capture are painfully depicted by Armah. He is tracked down in the streets like a beast of burden and one can see hostility and fear in the faces of people for according to the local belief the bite of a madman is dangerous. So he will be tie up with a piece of rope on the orders of his own sister Araba :

‘Tie him up. (...). While his wrists were being bound, a man in sandals was called to stand on his fingers so he would not scratch while the knots binding his legs and arms were made tight enough to keep him from breaking loose again. The fiber of the twine at toward the wrist bones, cutting his flesh.’¹³⁹

Only Naana protested against this ill-treatment which debases man but in vain :

‘What have you done to him ? What has Baako done to you ? Where is he ?’¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ *Fragments*, op. cit., pp 172-173.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

In *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, we can see that the man undergoes almost the same predicament in his family. The only difference is that he does not give way to madness. He lives and works in an environment where corruption is omnipresent and very commonplace. One day he was vehemently attacked by his wife just because if he refused to do what everybody is doing that is to say to take a bribe :

‘You are the chichidodo itself. Ah, you know, the chichidodo is a bird. The chichidodo hates excrement with all its soul. But the chichidodo only feeds on maggots, and you know the maggots grow best inside the lavatory. This is the chichidodo.’¹⁴¹

The hostility of his wife and his mother-in-law, the oppressive silence of his children constitute everyday a source of reproaches to such an extent that the man cannot help condemning himself for not fulfilling the expectations of his family. And like Baako too, he regards himself as the responsible for their hopeless situation :

‘Yes, I feel like a criminal. Often these days I find myself thinking of something sudden I could do to redeem myself in their eyes. Then I sit down and and myself what I have done wrong, and there is really nothing.’
‘You have not done what everybody is doing, and in this world that is one of the crimes.’¹⁴²

3) Baako as a victim of himself

Man in essence is an inestimable strength. If he exploits all his assets to the utmost of his ability, he can do very fabulous things. But if he gives himself up to the apathy which gnaws the soul and kills the will, then he does away with

¹⁴¹ *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, op. cit., pp. 44-45

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 54

himself. Man has to be strong, sufficiently strong to take up the challenges which stretch along his life.

We cannot avoid the difficulties for they are part and parcel of ourselves. They are significant in the sense that they give a meaning to our existence. Sometimes the problems assail us from everywhere and we have the impression that we are the imperfection itself and we never stop having a guilty conscience. Such seems to be too the attitude of Baako. In fact he is a man in perpetual conflict. He is in conflict with his society, in conflict with his family and finally in conflict with himself.

After *having brought a sense of panic and frustration home with him from abroad*¹⁴³, Baako spends all his life in seclusion. There is absolutely no doubt that he wants to find in solitude the solutions he did not manage to obtain in life in society. But instead of having answers, he has worsened his situation which is already very desperate. Consequently and inevitably this withdrawal from the society ends up by plunging him into insanity. In this connection Naana observes with much truth that : *'A human being alone is a thing more sad than any lost animal and nothing destroys the soul like its loneliness.'*¹⁴⁴

Before concluding this section, we would like to raise an important point which requires a careful thought. As we may notice it, in the life of people, numerous are the examples where some societies have deliberately chosen to keep some of their members aloof. Their only fault is that they dared to lay bare the flaws of these very societies. It is the case of Baako who is in fact an islet of consciousness in an ocean of lunacy for he is the only one who refuses to conform to the common practices.

¹⁴³ Abena P.A. Busia, *Parasites and Prophets : The Use of Women in Armalis novel in Ngambika : Studies of Women in African Literature*, Africa World. Press Inc. Trenton New Jersey, 1990, p. 95.

¹⁴⁴ *Fragments*, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

This sad way of seeing and doing is not only a specific characteristic of Africa. It was widespread even in Europe. According to A. Artaud, some flawed societies have invented the psychiatry just to defend themselves against the too clear-headed : *... une société tarée a inventé la psydiatrie pour se défendre des investigations de certaines lucidités supérieures dont les facultés de divination la gênaient*¹⁴⁵

He adds that Van Gogh was the victim of such societies. He was accused of mad just because through his painting he has succeeded in disturbing the conformity of the bourgeois society and laying bare its defects which boil down to debauchery. So in sending him in an asylum said Artaud, the society has 'killed' Van Gogh :

Elle s'introduisit dans son corps cette société absoute, consacrée, sanctifiée et possédée effaça en lui la conscience surnaturelle qu'il venait de prendre, et telle une inondation de corbeaux noirs dans les fibres de son arbre interne, le submergea d'un dernier ressaut, et prenant sa place, le tua.¹⁴⁶

In *King Lear* by W. Shakespeare, it is too a man regarded as a fool by the society who brings a rash and hasty king, Lear who wanted to rid himself of worries to realize the mistake he has done in dividing his kingdom among his three daughters Regan, Goneril and Cordelia :

'I have used it, nuncle, e'er since thou mad'st thy daughters thy mothers : for when thou gav'st them the rod and putt'st down thine own breeches, then they for sudden joy did weep, and I for sorrow sung, that such a king should play bo-peep, and go the fools among.'¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ A. Artaud, *Van Gogh, le suicidé de la société*, Paris : K éditeur, 1947, p. 10

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹⁴⁷ W. Shakespeare, *King Lear*, London : Macmillan, 1989, p. 73 l. 172-178.

He adds that he the fool has nothing to envy Lear for now that he has given all he got he is nothing :

‘Thou wast a pretty fellow when thou hadst no need to care for her frowning : now thou art an O with a figure. I am better than thou art now : I am a fool, thou art nothing.’¹⁴⁸

To conclude we genuinely think that Baako is really the epitome of those who are the victims of their society and their family. Nevertheless his only grievous error is that he persisted in wanting to reconcile two things which were irreconcilable that is to say the demands of his society and the wants of his family. This viewpoint was put with commendable clarity by Aberra P.A. Busia in Ngambika :

‘He must acknowledge first that the society has become essentially soul destroying, and, more vitally, that the desire both to please the family and to work for the large social good, have become oppressively unreconcilable aims.’¹⁴⁹

2/ Death as a solution to the ambiguity

After having read *Fragments*, one cannot help being taken aback by the harrowing fate reserved for Baaka by his own society. He was confined in an asylum simply because he was too clear-headed. Nevertheless, we think that his fate is nothing likened to that of Samba Diallo. We intend to dissect that fate in our analysis below.

When Samba Diallo got back home, we said to ourselves that his return could be equated with a beginning of solution to his problem that is to say a

¹⁴⁸ W. Shakespeare, *King Lear*, London : Macmillan, 1989, p. 73 l. 192-195.

¹⁴⁹ *Ngambika*, op. cit., p. 95.

return to God and unity. But as time goes, we realized that our expectation turned out to be unfulfilled. He keeps on persisting in his categorical refusal to pray : *'People are not obliged to pray. Do not tell me to pray, do not tell me any more, ever.'*¹⁵⁰

At the beginning, the fool who regards him as the successor of the teacher has perceived this refusal of the young man to go to the mosque as a passing consequence of his long sojourn in the West :

'Yes, teacher of the Diallobé, you are right. You are tired. They are so tiring, aren't they ? Rest now. When you have rested we will go to the mosque.'¹⁵¹

Questioned on the attitude of the hero, Cheikh H. Kane tells us that on the religious plane Samba Diallo has not lost his faith. His refusal to pray should not be understood as a total divorce from God but as the direct outcome of the teachings he received from abroad. In the West he has learnt to attach more value to what we call the freedom of conscience :

'Samba Diallo n'a pas perdu la foi sur le plan religieux... quand il eut revenu d'Europe... Mais il ne pouvait plus admettre qu'il y ait une espèce de censure sociale pour lui imposer de faire sa prière... Samba Diallo a appris en Occident à valoriser ce qu'on appelle la liberté de conscience.'¹⁵²

In a nutshell we can say that for Samba Diallo man is endowed with a supreme freedom that nothing can alter on no account. He is free in his choices as well as in his actions. This conception of freedom concurs perfectly with what the Chief wrote. He said that : *'the freedom to love God or to hate Him is God's ultimate gift, which no one can take from man.'*¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ *Ambiguous Adventure*, op. cit., p. 172.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

¹⁵² Cheikh Hamidou Kane répond à Maryse Condé, in *Comprendre L'Aventure ambiguë de Cheikh Hamidou Kane* by Jean Getrey, Issy Les Moulineaux, Editions Saint-Paul, 1982, p. 45.

¹⁵³ *Ambiguous Adventure*, op. cit., p. 125.

But beyond this justification of the author and this inalienable freedom of worship of man, we still notice that Samba Diallo is deeply racked by doubt and so far he did not succeed in finding again the way which leads to God as he said : *'I don't know whether one can ever find that road once he has lost it.'*¹⁵⁴

His disarray is profound and perceptible. In his soliloquy in front of the tomb of the teacher we can gauge how bewildered he is. From his deep meditation we retain the repetition of two essential words. First the verb 'to believe' :

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 'I do not believe (...) that Azrael (...) would have cleaved through the earth beneath (...). I do not believe that down there, underneath you, there is a great hole (...). I do not know what I believe. But the extent is so vast, of what I do not know, and what I ought indeed to believe...'¹⁵⁵

and then the word 'perhaps' : *'That is perhaps why so many people (...). Yes, perhaps at the bottom that is it... (...). Perhaps after all...'*¹⁵⁶

At that right moment, a sort of revelation appears to him. It said to him that God cannot be obtained unless one consents to sacrifice oneself : *'In dying (...) it is themselves whom all these fighters want to banish, so that they may be filled with Him.'*¹⁵⁷

Consequently Samba Diallo decides to make a deal with God, to whom he would like in a way to force His Hand : *'To constrain God... To give Him the choice, between his return with your heart and your death, in the name of his glory.'*¹⁵⁸

He implores Him : *'Thou wouldst not know how to forget me like that. I will not agree, alone for us two, to suffer from Thy withdrawal. I will not agree. No...'*¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁴ *Ambiguous Adventure*, op. cit., p. 160.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

and without taking care, he repeats again in a loud voice the following sentence :

*'No - I do not agree.'*¹⁶¹

But unfortunately these words are interpreted by the fool as an answer to his plea : *'Tell me that you will pray at last tomorrow (...) Promise me that you will pray tomorrow.'*¹⁶¹

This unhappy coincidence will be disastrous to Samba Diallo for in hearing this statement the fool has understood that he has definitely ceased praying and fatally he stabs him.

The early predictions of the teacher turned out to be true today :

*'So closely would he live with God, this child, and the man he would become, that he could aspire - the teacher was convinced of this - to the most exalted levels of human grandeur. Yet, conversely, the least eclipse - but God forbid !'*¹⁶²

Seemingly, everything has come to its end but in reality things really start now and for eternity. Indeed it is in that moment that begins the process of reconciliation with God : *'See how the appearance cracks and yields (...). See what brings about the great reconciliation. The light stirs the darkness, love desolves hate...'*¹⁶³ while is fading away : *'the great clamor of my life which hid Thee from me, Oh, may Creator.'*¹⁶⁴ Samba Diallo is now far from the deceiving appearances, far from the exile to enter *'the place where there is no ambiguity.'*¹⁶⁵ and the last words he pronounces are : *'I wish for you, through all eternity.'*¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁰ *Ambiguous Adventure*, op. cit., p. 174

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 174

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 5

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 176

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 167

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 177

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

Now he belongs to eternity, that eternity of which Birago Diop was singing in his beautiful poem *Souffles*.¹⁶⁷ He said that those who are dead are never gone. They are e rywhere. They are in the darkness which melts away and in the shadow which deepens. The dead are not underground. They are in the tree which quivers. They are in the wood which moans. They are in the water which flows. They are in the water which is still. They are in the hut. They are in the crowd. The dead have not died...

Like in *Ambiguous Adventure*, in *Invisible man* by R.W. Ellison, it is a fool, a former soldier, traumatized by the civilization of the whitemen who holds the key of the solution. In stabbing Samba Diallo with a knife the fool permits the hero to enter the eternal life where man endlessly creates himself. In *Invisible man* too the fool allows the hero to create himself not by an act of violence but in giving him an enlightened piece of advice at the beginning of the story : '*Be your own father, young man, and remember, the world is possibility if only you'll discover it.*'¹⁶⁸

We have to point out that this tragic end of Samba Diallo has given rise to several interpretations, positive or negative. According to some critics, Cheikh Hamidou Kane in ending his novel in this tragic way has opted undoubtedly for a solution of facility. For them, the death of Samba Diallo does not shed light on any particular problems of the hero. It resembles more a suicide. Indeed in seeing no way out to his inner drama, he would have deliberately provoked the fool to put an end to his problem. This interpretation is backed up by the fact that the theme of suicide is underlying in the novel. The collective suicide is evoked : '*we should have chosen to be wiped out rather than to yield.*'¹⁶⁹ as well as the individual one when the Chief writes : '*The hour strikes when, if I had this choice at my disposal, I should choose to die.*'¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷ Birago Diop, *Leurres et Lieurs*, Paris - Presence Africaine, 1960

¹⁶⁸ Ralph W. Ellison, *Invisible Man*, New York, The New American Library, 1952, p. 139.

¹⁶⁹ *Ambiguous Adventure*, op., cit., p. 10

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

This theory of suicide is nevertheless brushed aside by other critics. The main reason put forward is that the words that have provoked the murderous reaction of the fool are unwittingly uttered by Samba Diallo : ‘*Without noticing he had spoken these words aloud.*’¹⁷¹

As regards Thomas Melone, in an article entitled *Analyse et Pluralité Cheikh Hamidou Kane et la folie*, he considers without beating the bush the death of Samba Diallo as a collective crime : ‘*Sa mort au demeurant relève de toute évidence du crime collectif.*’¹⁷² The Diallobé in sending Samba Diallo in the West have placed him in a very tricky situation. He wanted at the same time to save his people from the darkness of ignorance and to modernize the tradition while preserving the original and primeval soul of that people and the liberty of man. But this quest turned out to be unworkable for him. Finally he died isolated from Africa and Europe.

This viewpoint to a certain extent confirms what Cheikh H. Kane was saying in an interview with Maryse Condé. He said that if he has killed Samba Diallo in his novel it is because he wanted to underline the dramatic and tragic aspect of the intellectual and spiritual adventure which is ours we the Africans who have left our societies for other civilizations and systems of value different from ours. The death of Samba Diallo is then nothing else but the result of an impossible accomplishment .

‘Si j’ai fait mettre Samba Diallo à mort, c’était un peu pour souligner l’aspect dramatique et tragique de cette aventure intellectuelle et spirituelle qui est la nôtre, à nous tous Africains, partant de notre société et allant vers la modernité et vers des civilisations et des systèmes de valeurs différents des nôtres.’¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ *Ambiguous Adventure*, op., p. 174

¹⁷² Thomas Melone, *Analyse et Pluralité C.H.K. et la folie in Mélanges Africains*, Yaoundé Editions Pédagogiques Afrique, 1973, p. 142.

¹⁷³ *Cheikh Hamidou Kane répond à Maryse Condé*, op. cit., p. 88

This equation Europe - Africa remains for lots of African intellectuals a real headache virtually impossible to solve. Faced with such a dire straits, some of them have nevertheless opted for the solution which seems for the time being the most convincing that is to say the symbiosis of the African and European cultures in what they have as the most fundamental. This stand was put with commendable clarity by J. Jahn in his book *Muntu, l'homme africain et la culture néo-coloniale*. He puts forward that the main and legitimate concern of the African intellectual is to safeguard what is essential in his own past and to use it in the erection of the present of Africa. It is not a matter of preserving the traditional African or turning him into a black European but to create the modern African. For that, it is necessary to integrate all the European elements which fit the requirements of contemporary life into the African tradition classified beforehand into priorities rationally specified. Once integrated and reorganized, these European elements will stop being alien bodies. They will be then organic components of a modern African culture able to live its own life :

Ce que veut l'intellectuel Africain, c'est conserver de son propre passé ce qui paraît encore valable pour l'Africain d'aujourd'hui et de le faire servir à la construction du présent de l'Afrique. Le but n'est pas de préserver l'Africain traditionnel ni d'en faire un « Européen noir », il s'agit de créer l'Africain moderne. C'est à dire : intégrer tous les éléments eu européens, qui répondent aux exigences de la vie contemporaine, dans la tradition autochtone rationnellement thématiques, dont les valeurs auront été l'objet d'une prise de conscience systématique et d'un renouvellement dynamique ; intégrés et remodelés, ces éléments européens cesseront d'être comme des corps étrangers, ils ne seront plus que des composantes organiques d'une culture africaine moderne capable de vivre sa vie propre.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁴ J. Jahn, *Muntu, l'homme africain et la culture néo-coloniale*, Paris : Le Seuil, 1961, pp. 13-14

Being in thorough agreement with what J. Jahn was saying, Cheikh Hamidou Kane is persuaded that the synthesis of the African and Western civilizations remains a pressing necessity. For him, it is out of question nowadays to stick to one single culture :

‘Nous étions trop tentés de nous assimiler totalement à l’Occident ou alors de lui tourner délibérément le dos. L’une et l’autre de ces attitudes m’ont toujours paru les pires qu’un Africain puisse choisir.’¹⁷⁵

These two standpoints corroborate the prophecy voiced by The Knight during a conversation with Paul Lacroix :

‘Every hour that passes brings a supplement of ignition to the crucible in which the world is being fused. We have not the same past, you and ourselves, but we shall have, strictly, the same future. The era of separate destinies has run its course. In that sense, the end of the world has indeed come for every of us, because no one can any longer live by the simple carrying out of what he himself is. But from our long and varied ripenings a son will be born to the world : the first son of the earth : the only one, also.’¹⁷⁶

But the other side of the coin is, however, if some Africans have found their reason to be in what the former President Senghor calls the universal civilization, others on the other hand have purely and simply opted for the renunciation of their origin. For them the cultural conflict is not basically a real problem as Captain Hubert says : ‘*it is only the intellectuals who suffer from that (...). All this seems to me - how shall I say it ? - too much divorced from reality.*’¹⁷⁷ and they claim to be more European than African. It is the case of Koukoto in *Kocumbo l’étudiant noir* who prefers to be called by an European name

¹⁷⁵ Cheikh Hamidou Kane, interview a *Jeune Afrique* n° 134 quoted by J. Gotrey in *Comprendre l’Aventure ambiguë de C.H.K.*, op. cit., p. 99

¹⁷⁶ *Ambiguous Adventure*, op. cit., pp. 79-80.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 150-153

Durandea rather than by his African one : *'Durandea n'étais pas un primitif (...). Il préférait, cela va s'en dire, un nom doux, harmonieux, qui vous laissait dans l'oreille une certaine musicalité. Il sortait d'une 'grande école', et par conséquent se disait plus Européen qu'Africain.'*¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁸ *Kocoumbo l'étudiant noir*, op. cit., p. 60.

CONCLUSION

At the end of this study, we cannot pretend that the topic is covered to and fro, we cannot pretend too that this work is devoided of errors for as it is generally said no human work is perfect. But nevertheless, we hope very sincerely that this study reflects our deep intention that is to say to show the dilemma of the African intellectuals as it is lived by the different protagonists in *Ambiguous Adventure* and in *Fragments*.

As we may notice it, the yearning to acquire new values by the African societies was at the basis of the trials of the young African intellectuals to-be. Some of them will be dragged away from their motherland, their roots and sometimes they are not sufficiently well prepared and sent to other horizons never known before apparently for the same reason : to acquire the secrets of the whitemen's power.

Concerning Baako, we do not know anything about his childhood. But once in the West he did not suffer very much from the problem of the difference of cultures, on the contrary his integration in the Western society was gentle. But where the shoe pinches is that conscious of the expectations and demands of his society and his family and conscious too of the real needs of his society and his duties toward that society, then started to take root in him a feeling of conflict. That feeling of inner conflict has become a psychological burden so heavy to be carried. Eventually it ended by plunging Baako in a nervous breakdown in America.

As regards Samba Diallo, if we remember, he was born in a milieu where the traditional and Islamic values are deeply rooted. Very early he was imbued with those values and very early too he was taken from his natural environment.

Placed in the Western school first, he learnt there how to decipher the language of the whites and started now to ponder over life. Later he was sent in the West where he lived a terrible conflict. But contrary to Baako, this conflict was not due to social pressures, it is the result of an impossible conciliation between the African and European cultures. After a sojourn of few years abroad, our heroes come back home in their respective country. This return which we expected so to be saving, to be the source of reconciliation of Baako and Samba Diallo with themselves, their societies and their countries turned out to be the last straw that breaks the camel's back. In fact it has seriously worsened the martyrdom of the two young men.

Under the social and family pressures which were growing stronger and stronger, Baako saw his prospects of salvation getting narrower every day. Eventually he gave way to a second nervous breakdown much more serious than the first and he was constrained to spend the rest of his life in a lunatic asylum. Certainly it is a distressing case but as we have already said it is nothing compared to that of Samba Diallo. His return to his roots did not manage to sort things out. His divorce from God and everything sacred that the teacher has taught him is now complete. And persisting in his refusal to believe and to pray, the fool decided to put an end to his inner friction by putting an end to his life.

The main lesson we can draw from this study is that the African intellectuals, with all the knowledge and experiences acquired in the course of their lives and which should place them above everybody and everything are not always shielded. Paradoxically they have become more vulnerable.

On the political plane, what we have fundamentally remarked is that two possibilities are given to them, either they are on the side of those who suffer, those who are downtrodden, the people or on the side of those who corrupt, repress, suppress, the power. To become allied with the power means to give one's backing and blessing to whatever is said or done by the authorities. It

means to subjugate the people, to make use of them without serving them. It means too to be devoid of any sense of dignity and morality, to know how to belittle oneself in order to obtain what you want. For those who have decided to take a stand for the people, their choice is regarded as a challenge to the power. Their lives come down to perpetual clashes and they lay themselves open to any sort of ordeals. Their works are never recognized or judged at their true worth and worse spokes are put in their wheel. If they persist in their determination to make their voices heard then they are plagued, hunted down and sometimes killed.

An important fact to be underlined nevertheless is that if these intellectuals have devoted all their lives to the cause of their people, it may happen sometimes that the people do not measure that sacrifice or simply do not be aware of that. And instead of helping them in their long and breatheless struggle, they turn against them, persecute them and even proscribe them. This brings us to two conclusions.

The first is that an ignorant and greedy people is as worse as a bloodthirsty regime for they will stick at nothing and they will not skimp on any means to give concrete expression to their desires. The second is that one single individual have never changed, never changes and will never change the way things go in a society. The downfall of Baako is a vivid example. To be effective and to reach its expected aims, the struggle needs the joining of one another. So instead of being individual it will be communal.

On the cultural plane too, we have noticed that certain intellectuals are not spared, they are harshly effected. Born and grown up in a milieu they have never left previously and imbued with the very values of that milieu, they are all of a sudden cut off from their roots and taken to other skies. This travel abroad marks a serious rupture in their lives. If some of them have succeeded in withstanding the cultural shock, other on the other hand do not. The luckiest will go out of

their mind as it is the case of the fool in *Ambiguous Adventure* while the less fortunate will lose their lives like Samba Diallo.

But nowadays in Africa starts to sparkle a glimmer of hope. At the dawn of the 21st C, we cannot say that things have radically changed, but we can assert without being contradicted that things have considerably changed. If in by gone days the intellectuals were regarded as sorcerers and tracked down, such is no longer the case these days. Now they are more understood and accepted in their societies and they can carry out their role as well as can be expected. They are in the highest realms of decisions, they define and implement policies, regulate and humanize the relations between the governed and the governing. The word « deontology » has now found again its real meaning. We cannot any longer too talk about of cultural shock or egotism which go hand in hand with cultural nationalism for with the lightning development of the means of communication, the world is getting smaller and smaller. The universal civilization of which was talking about Senghor is no longer a project or a necessity, it has become now a palpable reality. From the junction of the people in what they have as positive in their cultures is born a new civilization where everybody finds his way around. The African no longer feels alien in Europe, so does the European in America, the American in Asia etc..

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