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Decolonizing African Names in Seydou Badian's *Sous l'Orage*

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Abstract

This text intends to decolonize African names in *Sous L'Orage* by Badian. In so doing, it deconstructs the web of Eurocentric myths on terms like traditional Africa and modern Africa or tradition and modernity. Through a socio-historical and postcolonial approach, the findings revealed the double colonization of the younger generation of characters that attend the colonial school. Their double colonization is imprinted in the Arab names that they bear and the white man's culture that they blindly imitate. They also show that the non-African names that colonial and postcolonial Africa associates with Islam are done by ignorance. The truth is that one can bear any African name such as Zié or Sabali and still be a good believer. This allowed not only to underline the harmful influence of Arab and Western cultures on African cultural consciousness, but also to question what the word modernity really means in *Sous l'Orage* through certain characters.

Key words: Africans, Arabs, Decolonization and African literature, Names, Westerners.

Résumé

Ce texte s'inscrit dans une dynamique de décolonisation des mythes sur les prénoms africains dans *Sous L'Orage* de Badian. Dans ce cadre, il s'est évertué à déconstruire les mythes eurocentriques sur les termes tels que l'Afrique traditionnelle et l'Afrique moderne ou tradition et modernité. A travers une démarche qui se veut à la fois socio-historique et postcoloniale, les données ont révélé la double colonisation de la jeune génération des personnages qui fréquentent l'école coloniale. Cette double colonisation s'explique par les prénoms arabes qu'ils portent et leur imitation aveugle de la culture de l'homme blanc. Elles indiquent également que les prénoms non-africains que l'Afrique coloniale et postcoloniale associe à l'Islam sont faits par ignorance. La vérité est qu'on peut porter un prénom africain tel qu'être Zié ou Sabali et être un bon croyant. Cela a permis non-seulement d'étayer l'influence néfaste des cultures arabes et occidentales sur la conscience culturelle et psychologique de l'Africain, mais aussi d'interroger ce que signifie réellement le mot modernité dans *Sous l'Orage* aux travers de certains personnages.

Mots clés : Africains, Arabes, décolonisation et littérature africaine, Occidentaux, prénoms

Introduction

Sous l'Orage by Seydou Badian is a classic work of Malian literature. It allows the Africans of our time to better understand the contours and the challenges of our mental, social and cultural alienation. This author is one of the major pioneers of Malian literature. He was indeed one of the first Malian writers, like Amadou Hampâté Bah, who thought of literature as an efficient weapon for mental, cultural, economic and political liberation. In addition, Badian, like Chinua Achebe, succeeds in adapting and readapting African literature to the discovery, the promotion and the teaching of the traditional African world alongside its diverse values. This adaptation or re-adaptation of African literature was devised to teach African ancestral values to the young Europeanized and Arabized Postcolonial African generations. This was done because it could enable everyone to highly understand the importance of the wealth and the value of sticking to one's culture and identity.

However, we can sadly observe the mental and social alienation of the contemporary African or the black man of our time everywhere. He/she has unconsciously rejected all that is African on alleged Eurocentric grounds. Although his/her culture or civilization is sometimes better than those imported (Western or Arab ones), the African still has the complex of preferring and praising the splendor of Western and Arab cultures over their own ones. For example, almost Africans or Blacks prefer Western and Arab names to their own local ones which often have more positive meanings. In addition, they reflect and reveal certain African realities that characterize and shape the personality and social behavior of the African individual who bear them.

The objective of this paper is therefore to demonstrate, through various myths on Western and Arab names, the double colonization of the postcolonial African in *Sous l'Orage*. It also strives to deconstruct all the unfounded myths on Western and Arab names in opposition to African ones. At the same time, it shows all the splendor of African culture and all the evils that arise from the abandonment of the African authentic way of life, wrongly referred to as traditional African way of life. In addition, we have endeavored to clarify the true meanings of terms like traditional Africa and modern Africa. It is in this context that concepts as modernity and development are elucidated along with their ideological and propagandist ramifications.

It is in the above dynamic that the problematic of this paper revolves around three major interrogations raised in *Sous l'Orage* as well as the path implicitly recommended by Badian to ensure the cultural, economic and political independence of Africa in general. Among the

foregoing interrogations, the following research questions are accordingly formulated: What do we mean by traditional and modern Africa? How was given first names in traditional Africa? What is the cultural significance and the meaning of certain first names in *Sous l'Orage*? What are the factors contributing to the mental alienation of Africans?

The answers to these research questions would enable us to understand the root causes of the rejection of authentic African names by Europeanized and Arabized Blacks. Methodologically, the work begins with the explanations of concepts such as traditional Africa, modern Africa in the context of modernity and tradition. Then after, it explains and shows the positive values behind the choice of each African given first name during the pre-colonial period through the example of the Mianka people. Moreover, it analyzes and interprets the meanings and the cultural significance of certain characters' first names in Badian's novel in conformity with the main objective of the study on the one hand. On the other hand, it attempts to explain how the imitation of Arab or Western civilization, which is seen, as the path towards modernity, is rather that of African social regression as advocated in *Sous l'Orage*. In short, this is concretized in the theoretical contexts of the postcolonial and historical approaches.

1- Decolonization the Meaning of Traditional Africa

Africa, for centuries, has been the subject of several qualifying terms that define her. These qualifications have permitted the emergence of a peculiar literature on the various ways of defining, categorizing and representing Africa. Among the qualifying terms, we can cite terms like traditional Africa and modern Africa. Concerning the former qualifying term, it is used to refer to ancient or pre-colonial Africa with negative implications. Consequently, traditional Africa is understood as a period of darkness and barbarism. A period during which everything in Africa is either perceived or described under the sign of backwardness and total savagery. Thus, culture, language and history are all denied to traditional Africa for the sole purpose of building and maintaining the hegemony of Western civilization.

In the literatures of the world as on television and in the media in general, the so-called traditional Africa is always painted under the seal of derogatory denigrations. These denigrations have been sown since the times of slavery and colonization to systematically erase the glorious history, culture and moral values of Africa before the arrival of the Whites. This state of affairs is confirmed by the British Parliamentarian Lord Macaulay in his speech of February 2, 1835 to the British parliament:

« I have traveled across Africa. I have not seen beggars or thieves. I have seen people with high moral values and I think that we cannot conquer this country, unless we break the backbone of this nation, which is its spirituality and its cultural heritage. Therefore, I propose that we replace its old educational and cultural system. So when it is replaced, Africans will think that what comes from abroad and in particular from England is better than what they believed, they will lose esteem of themselves, their culture and they will become what we want them to be, namely a truly dominated nation¹. »

This extract from the speech of this British parliamentarian reveals how the so-called traditional Africa was more virtuous, honest, hardworking and with an invaluable and richer cultural heritage than the modern West. He specified that traditional Africa also had its own educational institutions, which made it possible to train worthy, honest, united and humanist men and women. The foregoing excerpt highlights that traditional Africa was civilized with all its forms of social, economic and political organizations long before she met the West.

On the other hand, the extract further reveals the strategy adopted by the West to colonize, alienate and uproot the African. This strategy consisted in obliterating the African cultural and educational systems that are indeed the shields to any domination. It ultimately contributed to the mental conditioning of the African to abandon his culture pacifically. The white man conditioned the African to the extent that he has rejected and disliked all that is African or conceived by an African as illustrated through characters such as Samou, Kany, Birama, Sidi and Aliou in *Sous l'Orange*. The foregoing strategy was mainly implemented through the white man's school as highlighted by Samou in *Sous L'Orange*:

¹ Taken from : <https://www.facebook.com/DjibLive/posts/2053432071587179/> le 07-06-2019. The original version of the translation is as follows : « J'ai voyagé à travers l'Afrique, Je n'ai pas vu de mendiants ni de voleurs ; j'ai vu des personnes avec des hautes valeurs morales et je pense que nous ne pouvons pas conquérir ce pays, à moins que nous ne brisions la colonne vertébrale de cette nation qui est sa spiritualité et son héritage culturel. Par conséquent je propose que l'on remplace son ancien système éducatif et culturel, ainsi quand les Africains penseront que ce qui vient de l'étranger et en particulier de l'Angleterre est meilleur que ce en quoi ils croyaient, ils perdront l'estime de soi, leur culture et ils deviendront ce que nous voulons qu'ils soient, à savoir une véritable nation dominée. »

No, no, Samou replied; I was referred by one of our elders who was in Europe and saw a lot there. You see, whatever the outcome of this case, I will never blame Kany's parents. They are not the only ones responsible. Our tragedy is to have been at stake in a battle, to have followed the easiest path. We were not brought up in the values of our country. We were dazzled and we could not resist. The Europeans have broken everything in us; yes all the values that could have made us the continuers of our fathers and the pioneers of an Africa which, without denying herself, would assimilate European education. The school, let's face it, has oriented us towards the European world. The result was that we wanted to transplant Europe into our villages, into our families. We were told nothing about our world except that it was backward². (Badian, 1972, p.156).

In the same dynamics, it is axiomatic to specify that the question of modernity in the African context is unfortunately linked to the imitation and the replica of the way of living of the white man and his civilization. This signifies that the term modern Africa would be synonymous with the total rejection of African cardinal values, identity and collective consciousness at the profit of Western ones. Badian confirms this reality in *Sous l'Orage* through the voice of the character Sibiri when he says, in speaking to Birama another character representing the new generation of Westernized Africans: « I think that you have lost your mind. Besides, all that you have just said is conformed with your attitude, to you all who are ashamed of your culture, to you all who are ashamed of your origin, to you all who are only imitating your masters, the white men. » (p.54)³. Sibiri reacts in the foregoing manner because Birama finds it unmodern to decide the marriage of Kany, the heroine, without her consent. Indeed, Kany does not love Famagan, the trader and the choice of her parents. The parents of the heroine accepted the kola-nuts of Famagan as required by the customs and traditions of the land. Among the Mandingo people, the acceptance of the kola-nuts seals the union not of only a man and a woman but the union between families and communities. At the same time, both Birama and Kany have found this

² The original version of the translation is as follows : « Non, non, avait répondu Samou ; j'ai été aiguillé par un de nos aînés qui a été en Europe et y a vu beaucoup de choses. Voyez-vous, quelle que soit l'issue de cette affaire, je n'en voudrai jamais aux parents de Kany. Ils ne sont pas seuls responsables. Notre drame, c'est d'avoir été l'enjeu d'une bataille, d'avoir suivi le chemin le plus facile. Nous n'avons pas été élevés dans les valeurs de notre pays. On nous a éblouis et nous n'avons pas pu résister. Les européens ont tout brisé en nous ; oui toutes les valeurs qui auraient pu faire de nous les continuateurs de nos pères et les pionniers d'une Afrique qui, sans se renier, s'assimilerait l'enseignement européen. L'école, avouons-le, nous a orientés vers le monde européen. Le résultat a été que nous avons voulu transplanter l'Europe dans nos villages, dans nos familles. On ne nous a rien dit sur notre monde, sinon qu'il était arriéré. » (Badian, 1972, p.156).

³ The original version of the translation is as follows « Je crois que tu as perdu la tête. D'ailleurs, tout ce que tu viens de dire cadre bien avec votre conduite, à vous qui reniez votre milieu, à vous qui avez honte de votre origine, à vous qui rêvez que d'imiter vos maîtres, les Blancs. » (p5)

backward and uncivilized because they attend the colonial school. This new generation of Kany and Birama symbolize modernity. They also represent the Europeanized and alienated Africans who have developed autophobia, thus representing the modern African.

Historically, the alleged modern Africa is said to have begun with the arrival of the white man with his colonial system. It means that modernity in Africa is tantamount to the consequences of colonization on the way of living and the mindset of African people. Hence, modernity and colonization refer to the same thing. We want to indicate through the preceding thought that the so-called modern Africa is nothing else than a colonized, assimilated, exploited, alienated, underdeveloped and disoriented Africa towards the mechanical reproduction of the western world. This mechanical reproduction is, consequently, regarded as the only possible path towards development and modernity in the African context. It is thus for such a reason that the quasi-totality of contemporary Africans as in the novel by Badian prefer to bear European and Arab names to their own indigenous names. This aspect is more developed in the third section of the paper.

Moreover, Badian defines the modern African as individualistic, materialistic, selfish, corrupted and mentally enslaved to Eurocentrists' thoughts. As a result, he is characterized by his sense of laziness, egocentrism, vanity and his neurotic taste for Westerners' things. He also develops the autophobia for all that is African or Black. For the novelist, the younger generation represents the modern African man because of his metamorphosis. In this perspective, he writes:

The younger generation is marked by a taste for luxury, selfishness, and vanity. Look, when they get together, it's for the fair. The heads of the family leave their wives at home and run the streets. In the offices, it is a death struggle to win ranks or win the favor of the masters. The old men block the way for the young. Young people eat each other. We hardly take care of children, we leave them in the dust of the streets. With that, what do you want to do? What can these people blame the elders for? One of our teachers said that we have transplanted the jungle into the city⁴. (Badian, 1972, p.63).

⁴ The original version of the translation is as follows : « La jeune génération est marquée par le goût du luxe, l'égoïsme, et la vanité. Regarde, quand ils se réunissent, c'est pour faire la foire. Les chefs de famille laissent leur femme chez eux et courent les rues. Dans les bureaux, c'est une lutte à mort pour conquérir des grades ou gagner la faveur des maîtres. Les vieux barrent le chemin aux jeunes. Les jeunes se mangent entre eux. On ne s'occupe guère des enfants, on les laisse dans la poussière des rues. Avec ça, que veux-tu faire ? Qu'est-ce que ces gens peuvent reprocher aux

The above passage highlights the collapse of African humanistic world at the benefit of a destructive and capitalistic new world referred to as the modern world. For example, the word jungle in the extract is a metaphor that refers to the inhuman, barbaric, individualistic, and materialistic civilization of the West. It is this kind of lifestyle, called modernity, which is destroying the authentic traditional Africa symbolized in the extract by the word city. The word city in the passage stands for traditional Africa and the truly authentic African civilization before the arrival of the colonizer.

In the same frame of mind, Seydou Badian through the voice of the character Kerfa in *Sous l'Orage* defines the so-called modern Africans metaphorically as: «a legion of termites attacking the sacred tree.⁵» (p.160). The legion of termites is a metaphor used by Badian to refer to the Europeanized and so-called modern Africans. At the same time, the metaphor reveals the real problem of postcolonial and neo-colonized Africa. This problem is nothing more than this internal legion of termites destroying Africa from within. This denunciation in the form of a warning from the Malian novelist is unfortunately still valid today. The truth is that most African countries are today corrupted because of Western modernity rooted in individualism and personal gain. Besides, the pseudo-intellectuals of the Sorbonne or Harvard are incapable of thinking and implementing endogenous educational and development policies based on African values, realities and history for the actual happiness and rebirth of postcolonial Africa. Alas! They represent rather this legion of termites attacking the sacred tree than being true African intellectuals. The sacred tree stands for Africa with her great and rich culture. The legion of termites all over Africa reproduces and creates Europe in all the areas by wiping out everything that is African. As a result, the postcolonial African has become a bat not to use the Fanonian term white masks, black skins. It entails that they are black in skin but white in the mind and behavior. In clear terms, the legion of termites means the enemies within.

However, in our analysis and understanding of the novel *Sous l'Orage*, the real meaning of the term traditional Africa, devoid of any ideological connotation, refers to authentic Africa with great values of morality, ethics, solidarity, expertise, invention and highly sophisticated

anciens ? Un de nos professeurs disait que nous avons transplanté la jungle dans la ville. » (Badian, 1972, p.63).

⁵ The original version of the translation is as follows : « une légion de termites à l'assaut de l'arbre sacré. » (p.1601)

social organizations in all areas of African life. *Sous L'Orage* substantiates this by describing a more cohesive and humanistic traditional African society where “the human being is nothing without the others. He is born in their hands, grow and die in their hands too⁶.”(p.27). The arrival of the white man has imprinted a drastic change by giving more importance to individualism and materialism.

Historically, it can be found out that the same so-called traditional Africa civilized the West through Ancient Greece owing to Black Egypt. She has enabled the West to become what it is today. In other words, traditional Africa is the cradle of civilization, science, social cohesion, mutual aid, work, the protection of human, animal and plant lives, etc. The charter of Kurukan Fuga in the Mali Empire and the 41 principles of Maat (the goddess of justice) in pre-colonial Black Egypt are perfect illustrations that confirm the actual meaning of the term traditional Africa. In traditional Africa based on the preceding historical elements, it was honesty, respect for human dignity, and love for oneself and for one's neighbor that prevailed. This would mean that traditional Africa loved and trusted her children because of traditional Africans' high sense of patriotism, honor and the death preference over humiliation and betrayal as advocated by Father Benfa. For instance in *Sous l'Orage*, characters like Djigui, Father Benfa, Aladji and Sibiri symbolize this traditional Africa (the real Africa and the very opposite of modern Africa). Thus, it is underlined in the novel that traditional Africa values work, promotes hospitality and solidarity as natural values as well as the respect for the word given and for the elderly people. Everyone is required to respect them. As a matter of fact, the novelist describes the traditional African in contrast with the modern African in a dialogue between Aladji and Father Benfa as follows:

“In our time, man had only one word; today we are in front of people who put all their genius into feeding their fellow men with false promises. In our time, in war as in life, we fought head on. Today the strongest is the one who knows how to hide the best (...) Aladji, what you just said is right. We are in a world that we do not know. Today there is nothing left. No more ties between father and son; no more loyalty between friends; no more respect between young and old. However, despite everything, (...) I am stubborn, because I had given my

⁶ The original version of the translation is as follows : « l'homme n'est rien sans les hommes. Il vient dans leur main et s'en va dans leur Main.

word to Famagan. This is the only thing that concerns me today. The word given, Aladji ... ⁷"(Badian, 1972, pp.180-181-182).

Furthermore, the term modern Africa, as described in the novel *Sous L'Orage*, is more that of savagery, selfish individualism, barbarism, betrayal, exploitation of man-by-man, division and widespread corruption. The younger generation headed by Kany and Samou in the novel have become the expression of the preceding imported Western values. The term modern Africa, as defined in *Sous L'Orage*, in reality stands for a Europeanized and uprooted Africa as also imprinted by Frantz Fanon in *Black Skins, White Masks* (1952). In regard to the foregoing reality explained in *Sous L'Orage*, modern Africa should actually be construed as that of social, economic and political regression because the Blacks who live in Africa these days are only free slaves physically but mentally chained. They are mentally chained because of their mentally conditioning through the colonial school and other means of mental domination as highlighted in the novel. That is why; characters like Kany, Samou, Birama have stood up against their culture and kinsmen thinking that their African world is uncivilized and unmodern. This belief is unfortunately true even in postcolonial Africa of today. Ultimately, the message imparted by Badian in *Sous L'Orage* indicates that the blind imitation of foreign lifestyle would and will never bring the expected development. The real development and independence is therefore a return to traditional African humanistic values.

2-Names and their Meanings in Traditional Africa

We cannot begin to give the meanings of certain first names in *Sous l'Orage* without explaining how African names used to be conceived and given to children at birth in traditional Africa. In this logic, we have based ourselves on the model and the mode of designation of the first names among the Mianka and Senoufo people of Mali. These two people, long before Western invasion and the triangular trade, developed a similar system of designations of first names based on their cultural and social reality. Thus, their system of designations of first names at birth is done in a vertical and ordinal manner always taking into account the sex of

⁷ The original version of the translation is as follows : « De notre temps, l'homme n'avait qu'une seule parole ; aujourd'hui, nous sommes en face de gens qui mettent tout leur génie à nourrir leurs semblables de fausses promesses. De notre temps, à la guerre comme dans la vie, on combattait de face .Aujourd'hui le plus fort est celui qui sait dissimuler le mieux(...) Aladji, ce que tu viens de dire est juste .Nous sommes dans un monde que nous ne connaissons pas. Aujourd'hui il n'y a plus rien .Plus de liens entre père et fils. Plus de loyauté entre amis. Plus d'égards entre jeunes et anciens. Cependant, malgré tout, (...) je suis entêté, parce que j'avais donné ma parole à Famagan. C'est aujourd'hui la seule chose qui me préoccupe .La parole donnée, Aladji... » (Badian, 1972, pp.180-181-182).

the child. These names are given in accordance with the traditional Mianka and Senoufo rites. For example, the Mianka children of the same mother are born in the order of seven or eight as illustrated in the following table:

Male Sex	Significations of Names	Female Sex	Significations of names
1. Zégué (Zié)	First son born	1. Gnéré	First daughter born
2. Zanga (Zan)	Second son born	2. Gnogo	Second daughter born
3. N'Golo (N'Gou)	Third son born	3. Gniré	Third daughter born
4. Bégué(M'pê)	Fourth son born	4. Béré	Fourth daughter born
5. Dogo (Nto)	Fifth son born	5. Zi	Fifth daughter born
6. Gna	Sixth son born	6. Gna	Sixth daughter born
7. Baaha	Seventh son born	7. Dogo	Seventh daughter born
8. Nogo(Lògò)	Eighth son born	8. Nogo	Eighth daughter born

Among the Mianka people, the first name can also be given depending on the day or the period of birth of the child. For instance, **Tinzanga** is the second child born on Monday. **Porzié** is the first boy born on Friday. The first name can also evoke an event. Accordingly, we have the following names which evoke events: **Zancho** : a girl born in the pouring rain, **Tiangou**: a third boy born on a village market day, **Siguizanga**: a second boy born in the bush and **Nabounjo**: a daughter of Naboun, a traditional Mianka festival⁸.

Yet, in European traditions, boys and girls are given first names based on the day and the month of their birth. Among contemporary Arabs, the child comes into the world with first names according to the day of birth and from which the parents choose. However, it is worth pointing out that the ancient Arabs, long before the prophet Mohammad BPH, had two ways of choosing the child's first name at birth and by gender. The first was similar to that of the Mianka with a well respected birth order. The second was to give children first names based on the

⁸ See DEMBELE, Seydou M. (1995). *A la découverte des Minyankas du cercle de Koutiala-Koutiala*.

values of their society or the names of plants, trees, animals and things. It is for this reason that we can come across Arabs' first names and names such as:

- Latifa: kindness,
- Jamila: beauty, Nour: light,
- Aboubacar: camel or small camel,
- Adam: darker,
- Leila: night or darkness,
- Mohammed or Muhammad: worthy of praise or filled with praise,
- Ousmane: little dragon or little snake,
- Osama: the lion,
- Khadîdja: diminished or premature,
- Fatoumata: the child who has just been weaned.

Nevertheless, all of these names were and are still given based on the Arab culture not on Islam as people wrongly think. First names such as Ali, Abdoulaye, Ousmane, Aboubacar, Khadîdja, Leila and others are all Arab names. They are not Muslim names. These names existed centuries before the advent of Islam in the world. Despite this fact, people still confuse Islam with Arab culture, especially in black French-speaking Africa. In reality, there are no Muslim names mentioned in the Koran. All the names that Africans bear and think that they are Muslim names have absolutely no connection with Islam. This confusion is highly meant to promote Arab culture through Islam instead of promoting Islam per se. So, any African can take any African name such as M'Pê (fourth son), or Moussotiêni (beautiful woman), or Sabali (forgiveness) and be a very good Muslim because taking an Arab name will never make you a good Muslim. Besides, most of the values advocated by Islam are 99.99 percent found in traditional African values as shown in the previous section. We mean values such as the values of morality, respect, tolerance, hospitality, uprightness, etc.

3-Cultural Significance of some First Names in *Sous l'Orage*

Just as the title of the novel indicates, *Sous l'Orage* is a metaphor signifying the loss, the disintegration and the gradual destruction of African culture and identity under the influence and assault of Arab and European cultures. Literally, *Sous L'Orage* means caught in storm and under tornado. This situation of Africa being assaulted is imprinted in the non-African first

names that certain characters' bear and their behavior at odds with those of the so-called traditional Africa.

In clear terms, African names are threatened and endangered due to the blind adoption of Arab and Western names by Africans, especially by postcolonial Africans. This is due to the cultural alienation of some Africans who believe that their first names are neither modern nor Muslim. For instance, most postcolonial Africans believe so. The alienation of postcolonial Africans is one of the major issues that the Malian author, Seydou Badian, addresses in his novel *Sous L'Orage*. He wrote this novel to raise awareness and alert the postcolonial African of the dangers that await him permanently as a destructive and permanent storm over his head.

In light of the above, the characters in *Sous l'Orage* can be classified into two categories according to their first names. The first category refers to those characters with African names who remain attached to their ancestral world and the second one refers to those with Africanized Arab names. This second category is doubly colonized because of their Arab names, and their behaviors and ways of thinking influenced by Western civilization. The characters that bear the names of the soil are the ones who remain attached to their values and African identity because names constitute the second key element in the identity formation of any individual after his/her way of clothing. This reality is implicitly addressed by Badian through the first names of some his characters. It is actually a way for him to invite postcolonial Africans to a return to good African ancestral values, starting with African first names.

Regarding the first category, we can cite Djigui, Father Benfa, Sibiri, Kerfa. There is a correlation, a symbiosis and an explanation between their first names, their behaviors, their ways of thinking or acting and their African national identity. First, we have Djigui who is the eldest of the Father Benfa's family. Djigui is a first name from the Bamanan culture and means hope. This first name fits well with the function and role this character plays in his family as explained in the novel. He is the hope and the last resort of the Father Benfa's family. For example, in *Sous L'Orage* whenever his young brothers such as Father Benfa and his two other brothers fail to manage certain situations or make some delicate and complex decisions concerning the family, they always resort to Djigui to decide and propose a solution to the problems. He decided the case of letting Kany continue school when everyone had failed to allow her attend school. Besides, the first name Djigui symbolizes the African identity because neither an Arab nor a Westerner could be called Djigui sociologically. In short, Djigui means

hope and he is the hope of his family. This name was given to him so that he could fully assume his family responsibilities as the eldest of the Father Benfa's family.

Then, we have Father Benfa that means in Bamanankan the father of everyone. He is probably the namesake of the father of all of them (Djigui, Father Benfa and their two other brothers). He lives in town with his two younger brothers. In town and in the absence of Djigui, the eldest who lives in the village, Father Benfa assumes the functions of the latter. He is considered and treated by his two brothers in town as the father of everyone in the family. This first name was given to him so that he could also assume his responsibilities correctly as required by traditions and customs of the Mandingo society. No first name was given at random to children at birth, each first name was given based on the role and the social function of the individual. They did so because the Mandingo elders knew that the first name could determine and shape the behavior (personality) and thinking of the individual. Father Benfa remains attached to his African ancestral values because of his African identity reflected through the first name that he bears. Like Father Benfa, we also have Sibiri, another key character in *Sous l'Orage*. He is a defender of African identity and culture. Sibiri means in Bamanankan an inch or a centimeter. His first name significance perfectly fits with his behavior in the novel. He firmly remains attached to his African values and his cultural identity without losing an inch as his first name indicates. These three characters plus Kerfa (the father of the man), because of the African names that they bear, resisted modernity.

However, the second category refers to Birama and Sidi mainly. They are the characters who are doubly colonized because of their Arab first names and the influence of Western civilization. Birama is the deformation of the Arab first name Behram or Beïram meaning planet or Mars in Arabic. Sidi is also an Arab given name. It means gentleman or mister in Arabic. Culturally and sociologically, Birama and Sidi mean nothing in African and Mandingo culture. The wrong explanation of these Arab names without knowing their true cultural meanings or implications is that they are Muslim names. This way of explaining the adoption of Arab names at the expense of those of traditional Africa is only a reflection and confirmation of Arab colonization alongside that of the West, hence showing their double colonization.

Considering these two characters (Birama and Sidi), we can find their double colonization through their behavior and way of thinking. They are anti Africa and against everything that is African. Above all, they prefer the new Western way of life. This new way of life was instilled in them by the colonial school and they are part of a «legion of termites attacking the sacred

tree. » They are fiercely opposed to the traditions and customs of pre-colonial Africa. This opposition becomes assertive because these characters have been mentally conditioned to accept the inferiority of their culture and African identity just like most of the postcolonial Africans of our era. For example, Birama became an individualist and « refused to drink from the common calabash ... one day, Birama was blown away for saying that it was not safe to eat with others in the same dish plate.⁹ » (p.26). The same Birama confirms his state of alienation when he describes his African civilization to be that of ignorance in the following way:

Everything in our world is outmoded, said Birama around him, civilization demands something else. We are not made for this life of which Sibiri speaks; it is good for the ignorant. Today you have to be educated if you want to be respected. See, white people only respect those who speak their language and dress like them; for they are the only ones who are civilized¹⁰. (Badian: 1972, p.30)

In view of the extract and according to our understanding of Badian's novel, the colonial school instead of helping Africans to consolidate and promote their civilization, it rather contributed to the systematic obliteration of African civilization. As a result, African socio-cultural realities are distorted, defamed and misinterpreted as illustrated in *Sous l'Orage* through the voices of characters like Birama, Sidi, Aliou, Kany, Karamoko and others.

Conclusion

To conclude, we note that *Sous l'Orage* by Badian is a didactic novel par excellence. It deconstructs the Eurocentric views on traditional Africa and her naming systems. In so doing; the paper reveals African social realities. Traditional Africa or precolonial Africa is represented with great moral values, honesty and hard work as underlined in *Sous L'Orage*. In addition, the analysis of the novel reveals a dual alienation of certain characters through the adoption of pure Arab names wrongly associated with Islam and their neurotic taste for the Western way of life. Thus, it clearly indicates that there are no Muslim names but rather Arab names, which have

⁹The original version of the translation is as follows : « Birama refusait de boire dans la calebasse commune parce...Un jour Birama reçut un soufflet pour avoir dit qu'il n'était pas prudent de manger à plusieurs dans le même plat. »

¹⁰ The original version of the translation is as follows : « Tout est dépassé, disait Birama autour de lui, la civilisation demande autre chose. Nous ne sommes pas faits pour cette vie dont parle Sibiri ; elle est bonne pour les ignorants. Aujourd'hui il faut être instruit si l'on veut être respecté. Voyez, les Blancs ne respectent que ceux qui parlent leur langue et s'habillent comme eux ; car ceux-là seuls sont civilisés. (Badian : 1972, p.30)

been out of ignorance or deliberately transplanted to Islam to impose a key Arab culture. Indeed, *Sous L'Orage* questions the Western sense of modernity and reveals the real dangers that await and destroy Africa. These evils are nothing else than the “legion of termites attacking the sacred tree.” A metaphor used by the author to describe and criticize the Westernized, Arabized and uprooted African elite, that is to say the comprador. The sum total of the foregoing reality is, even today, favored by the colonial school and the mixture of Arab culture with Islam, notably the rejection and denigration of African ancestral values and names. In short, by comparing traditional Africa with modern Africa in *Sous L'Orage*, the author is suggesting that the actual development does not come from the replica of foreign models but rather from endogenous social and cultural models.

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