

Ontological And Historical Issues Of The Development Paradigm: Reflections On The Causes Of Africa's Underdevelopment

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Abstract

The question of Africa's development has been at the heart of the concerns of politicians, intellectuals and researchers, including philosophers, from independence to the present day. The aim of this article is to shed light on the ontological and historical dimensions of the development paradigm, and to identify and analyze the philosophical and historical factors associated with the absence of visible signs of development in African countries. To this end, a hermeneutical approach has been adopted to see how the Western metaphysical tradition has thought of the analogy between act and power, in short, the effectuation of the virtual in its relation to the concept of development, despite the ideological charge attached to the latter. Highlighting this dialectical link lies at the heart of the question that underpins our thinking. It shows that Africa's historical dimension is the most decisive factor in understanding its poor development. Indeed, beyond the historical context that sealed the Europe/Africa encounter, Africa's development seems to have been weighed down by the weight of history. However, even if the prevailing discourse attempts to place the blame for Africa's poor development on the countries of the North, the fact remains that the African "elite" in its ontology undeniably bears its share of responsibility.

Key words: *Consciousness of Negroidism, Culture, Development, Ontology, Paradigm, Philosophy.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

More than 46 years have passed since the French philosopher of Greek origin, Cornelius Castoriadis, published in the *Revue Esprit*, at a time when the question of development was in the headlines, a rather accomplished and amply enlightening reflection: "Reflections on development and rationality" [1976]¹. In his article, the author writes:

"It is already some time since "development" became both a slogan and a theme of official and "professional" ideology - as well as of government policies". (C. Castoriadis, 1976, p. 896).

Clearly, Castoriadis' observation is quite clear: the question of development has been in the news for several decades, particularly on the African continent. Indeed, since their independence, African countries have aspired to development. Many African Heads of State, in the speeches they usually give at the end of the year to wish their compatriots a happy new year, do not fail to stress the need to develop their countries. Talking about development has become for them a leitmotiv that is repeated like a refrain. In fact, everyone talks about it without knowing the different semantic registers it contains. It is therefore to the clarification of the different registers of meaning of the concept of development that this reflection is addressed.

The basic question that structures our reflection comes down to the ontological question of development. In other words, what is development in its being? Around this main question, a secondary question is very important: Why, after more than 62 years of independence, are African countries struggling to develop? Some have claimed that "Black Africa is off to a bad start", this is in any case the thesis supported by René Dumond, 1962. Others ask themselves: "Can Africa leave?", this is the question posed by Albert Meister, 1966. The most astute try to make us understand that the lack of "Development Philosophy" of African political actors is the cause of Africa's backwardness. If the rather boring term "development philosophy" has a meaning, can we believe that there is a philosophy that marks the dynamics of development?

¹ L'article a été repris dans l'ouvrage collectif publié sous la direction de Candido Mendes, 1977, *Le Mythe du développement*, Paris, Seuil.

To be carried out, our reflection requires the hermeneutic method insofar as it is exclusive of meaning, interpretation and understanding. Our reflection pursues a double objective: first, to clarify the concept of development in its double ontological and semantic dimension, and second, to determine the factors that slow down the development of Africa. Thus, to achieve this double objective, this work is articulated on two axes. The first explores the issues at stake in the concept of development. The second axis attempts to identify the causes of Africa's poor development and the means to overcome it.

II. The ontological question of development.

The genealogical approach of the concept of development

It is customary, when we want to reflect on a concept, to go back to the Greeks to find out what they thought about it. In the case of the concept that is at the center of our concern, it should be emphasized that Aristotle is the Greek philosopher who interests us here, insofar as he did not create the concept of development but circumscribed its space. It is in the book *Theta* of the *Metaphysics* that Aristotle elaborates what, from his point of view, is similar to what modernity calls development, since in their time this concept was not known.

Thus, after having treated in chapter I of the "power proper", Aristotle proceeds to the delimitation of the field of his interrogation:

"And since Being is said, on the one hand, of substance, quality or quantity, and also, on the other hand, of Being according to power and according to entelechy or according to the work, let us discuss for the moment power and entelechy" (Aristotle, Book IX, (1045b-1046a, p. 185).

Aristotle's invitation to discuss power and entelechy leads the Stagirite to apprehend power as a principle at work in all beings: "Power is called the principle of motion or change, which is in another being, or in the same being as another." (Aristotle, Book *Theta* 1, 1019 a-1020 a). It is easy to understand that for Aristotle, power is to be understood as the becoming of being. But "a becoming whose cause is either intrinsic to the being, or extrinsic" (C. Kounkou, 1992, p. 25). Once the place of origin of becoming has been established, Aristotle sets out to thematize, in the same work, notably in chapter 6, the distinction between power and act.

"Act, then, is the fact of a thing existing in reality and not in the way we say it exists in potential, when we say, for example, that Hermes is in potential in the wood, or the half-line in the whole line because it could be drawn from it; or when we call a scholar in potential the one who even does not speculate, if he has the faculty to speculate: well! The other way of existing is existence in act". (Aristote, book, *Théta*, 6, 1048a-1048b).

In this book, Aristotle tries to elucidate the dialectical link between act and power, and asks us to observe the analogy (similitude, relation, correspondence, etc.) that is linked to them if we want to penetrate the intelligibility of these concepts.

"The act will then be like the being who builds to the being who has the faculty to build, the being awake to the being who sleeps, the being who sees to the one who has closed eyes but possesses the sight, what has been separated from the matter to the matter, what is elaborated to what is not. Let us give the name of act to the first member of these various relations, the other member, it is the power" (Aristote, book, *Théta*, 6, 1048b, p. 191).

With regard to what has just been analyzed, it is necessary to retain that if the power is not pure immobility, but becoming, this becoming continuously exposes itself to actualization. What does this mean? It means that in the actualization of power, we must recognize, underlines C. Kounkou, the space of development, which development can be understood as the realization of the virtual, that is, the realization of the possible. Does the idea that we have of development overlap, does it signal towards the Aristotelian conception of development thought here as the effectuation of the virtual? Obviously, yes!

Indeed, in his article quoted above, Cornelius Castoriadis (1976, p. 904), thematizes the concept of development in these terms: "An organism develops when it progresses towards its biological maturity. We develop an idea when we make explicit what it implicitly contains". Castoriadis' statement contains two levels of interpretation. The first refers to the Darwinian model of the evolution of a biological organism and contains the idea of progress. The second one means that there is development of an idea when one proceeds from the explicitation of its implicit, that is in what it puts us in straight line towards what Aristotle calls the actualization of the power. Indeed, if we look at it more closely, we understand that the Aristotelian thesis of the effectuation of the virtual and the thesis of Castoriadis on the explicitation of the implicit are in a perfect osmosis in that they give to see the development as the passage from the latent to the patent.

The historical approach of the concept of development

Approaching in the first point the genealogical approach of the concept of development, we have underlined that, as regards a body or the living, this one develops when it progresses from a previous frustrated state to a superior state other quite better. But in an abstract framework, that is to say, one that is not material or concrete, in other words, one that is not susceptible of being represented materially, the concept of development has been deciphered as the moment when an idea passes from an implicit tectonic layer to a higher tectonic layer where it is made explicit, elucidated, clarified, unraveled, explained. In fact, the idea goes from the obscure stage

where it was to the light. It's a bit like saying in a case "to clear up, to make light of". These expressions simply mean that the idea must be elucidated, that is to say, to say what it does not mean by saying.

In order to try to find an approach to development thought of in its historicity, it is therefore necessary to study how, from the point of view of history, the concept of development, which is not enough to say that it is based on an exogenous logic, has evolved.

Let us say at the outset, as a space not geographical and/or political, but apprehended as a metaphysical space, the West is the place where, it is necessary to underline it, the technique is deployed without hindrance. We group under this name the countries of Europe, those of North America and Japan.

If it is true that the question of development has become a concern for all the countries of the world, classified by the West into developed and underdeveloped countries, this question remains for the countries of the South, qualified as "third world countries", "underdeveloped countries", "developing countries", etc., because of the absence of visible signs of development, the whole question is to ask: What has allowed the developed countries to develop? Was the dynamic of development in the so-called developed countries triggered by a philosophy? How did the development process take place in the West? The question is important, and calls for

"to discover the metaphysical foundation that made the development of Western humanity possible. In other words, to try to solve the enigma of the development of the Western humanity comes back to explain the passage in the course of this humanity from the Antiquity and the Middle Ages to the classical and modern age. So that the questioning on the development of the Western humanity changes in questioning on the essence of the modern Times" (C. Kounkou, 1992, p. 26).

Charles Kounkou's point is quite clear: from the moment Africa is running after development, and knowing that countries have preceded us on this path, so-called developed countries, it is necessary to try to understand how these nations have done to develop.

If the developed nations are part of what Sophie Bessis (2003), calls the mega-identity, the West, this mega-identity has been crossed, as we know, by several periods that go from Antiquity to the Middle Ages, and from the Middle Ages to the Modern Times (from the Renaissance to the Contemporary Times, passing through the Classical Age). However, the term "modern times" or "the modern era" refers to a period when the values of modernity triumph, that is to say, experience an exponential growth, through progress, communication, the triumph of reason with the Enlightenment, the industrial revolution that begins in Great Britain at the end of the eighteenth century.

And Martin Heidegger is the philosopher who set out to reveal the essence of Modern Times. Indeed, in his book *Chemin qui ne mène nulle part*, and particularly in the chapter entitled "The epoch of worldviews", Heidegger states that the essence of modern times lies in the fact that man frees himself from the bonds of the Middle Ages to find his own freedom.

However, the true characterization of the Modern Age is not only in the distance man has taken from the Middle Ages. In fact, according to Heidegger, "the decisive thing is not that man has emancipated himself from the old ties in order to arrive at himself, but that the very essence of man changes, insofar as man becomes a subject" (M. Heidegger, 1962, pp. 79-80).

In fact, what can be heard through Heidegger's words is the advent of the most important metaphysical event since Greek antiquity, namely the birth of the Subjectum or, put differently, the discovery by man himself of man's subjectivity. The accession of the man to the subjectivity consecrates another dimension of his being in this precisely that the man becomes, underlines M. Heidegger (1962, p. 80), "the center of reference of the being as such". This means that man discovers that he is the only being capable of deciding his fate here below. No other instance, even if it is transcendental, can dictate or give him the orientation to his action, even less has power over him. In other words, from now on, with the discovery of subjectivity, man becomes the only source of decision and the only pole of knowledge.

Let us recall, however, that if for Heidegger the Modern Age can be deciphered as the moment when man reaches a new mental age thanks to the discovery of man's subjectivity, the merit of this discovery does not belong to Heidegger, but to René Descartes. Indeed, in his most famous work, the Discourse of Method, there is a rather exalting proposition that installs man in another existential regime: "I think, therefore I am". This proposition, as exalting as it is, is understood by R. Descartes (1963, p. 32), as the "first principle of philosophy". In fact, the highlighting of the subjectivity of man, notably of the verbal person, institutes the birth of philosophical discourse.

Thus, the discovery of the cogito by Descartes puts man at the center of all beings, including the supreme being: God. The latter no longer has any ascendancy over man, and the latter is no longer under God's sway. In any case, God is sent back to the Greek calendars, nobody refers to him anymore since, with the experience of the cogito, man/subject has recovered his freedom, long covered by the heaviness of transcendence. This discovery of the cogito is all the more important since Hegel is not slow to praise Descartes:

"René Descartes is in fact the true initiator of modern philosophy, insofar as he took thinking as a principle [...]. The influence that this man has had on his time and on modern times cannot be imagined in all its extent. He is thus a hero who took things entirely from the beginning" (G. W. F. Hegel, 1985, p. 1384).

If Hegel praises Descartes, it is not so much because he gave modern philosophy its letters of nobility, but because he took "thinking", the activity of thinking, as the principle of man's essence. This is the reason why in his *Lessons on the History of Philosophy*, Hegel underlines that with Descartes "we can say that we are at home, and can, at last, like a sailor after a long voyage on a stormy sea, cry out: land" (G. W. F. Hegel, p. 1379).

One will object to us that the activity of thinking highlighted by Descartes in the principle of the essence of the man could not be a characteristic of the modern Times, since since the antiquity the Greeks did not have of cease to be devoted to this one. Besides, haven't men always thought?

Such abjection cannot invalidate Descartes' discovery because of its novel character in the history of thought. Indeed, the Greeks did not know the concept of subject, even though they thought and/or philosophized before Descartes. The Greek world can be understood by its strangeness, strangeness due to the absence of the subject. In other words, the form of political organization that was theirs, namely democracy, could not allow Greece to arrive at this wonderful Cartesian discovery of the "Subjectum". In spite of the multiple constitutions they first experienced, Solon, one of the seven wise men of Greece, "gave the Athenians a political constitution under which all obtained equal rights, though democracy did not become entirely abstract" (G. W. F. Hegel, 1963, p. 194). And if there is a fact that gives democracy all its solidity, it is its conformity to the rules of conduct and good morals. This is obviously what G. W. F. Hegel (1963, p. 194) emphasizes when he writes: "The most important factor of democracy is its moral character. Virtue, says Montesquieu, is the foundation of democracy". What does this mean? Democracy, Hegel explains, has no meaning unless it is backed by a moral order of which virtue is its foundation. In Greek democracy, what counts is not so much the thinking of the individual, but rather the conformity of this thinking to the objective will. For the singularity of individual thinking is subordinated to the collective wisdom, which governs the action of all citizens.

"For the individual, the essential is then the substantial of the right, the policy, the general interest; but it is, as usual, in the way of the objective will, so that morality in the proper sense, the interiority of the conviction and the intention, does not exist yet" (G. W. F. Hegel, 1963, p. 194).

In other words, in the Greece of Solon and Pericles, the individual does not exist as an autonomous subject, his subjectivity is still embedded in the collective "we". This is why he cannot make decisions out of conviction. For the Greek, what counts is that which strengthens the cohesion of the fatherland without which there is no possibility of life.

"The Greeks remain in the milieu of beauty and do not yet reach the higher point of view of truth. Custom and habit being the form in which the right is willed and done, it is the solid element and does not yet contain in itself the enemy of immediacy, reflection and the subjectivity of the will" (G. W. F. Hegel, 1963, p. 194).

The Greek man bends to the norm shared by the common, the society. His action conforms to tradition, which obviously puts him light years away from the truth. In fact, the conscience of the Greek is still riveted on the immediacy. The Greek, whatever his status, when he is confronted with a problem whose solution does not seem easy to find; for example for a general to fight a battle, he does not embarrass himself to consult the oracles (G. W. F. Hegel, 1963, p. 195). The inclination that the Greeks had to question the oracles means, basically, that they did not perceive themselves as subjects. Why? Simply because

"To take resolutions by oneself, requires a firm subjectivity of the will that the dominant motives determine; but the Greeks did not have yet this energy and this force of the will. [...]. Similarly, in their private affairs the Greeks were less self-determined than they were in their decisions elsewhere" (G. W. F. Hegel, 1963, p. 195).

In short, the Greek world did not discover the subject, this so capital concept which founds the modern Times. The absence of this discovery of the subject is similar to a limit of the Greek thought, and, it is necessary to underline it, has prevented the Greek from representing the effective freedom that is to the very principle of the subjectivity.

In this sense, the new position that the man occupies within the modernity, as he is carrier of the "Subjectum", enjoins this one to be able to dominate the nature. Indeed, after centuries of obscurantism and foggy speculation leaning on a wobbly rationality undergoing the leaden screed of the clergy in the medieval period, modernity changes the regime of the reason: from speculative, the reason becomes much more practical by making reason of the reason of the things, in short of the real. "As soon as the identity of the real and the rational is posited, the real is stripped of all mystery and offers itself to the light of knowledge. (C. Kounkou, 1992, p. 28). One knows the criticism that Descartes addressed to the speculative philosophy that was current at the time. In the "Sixth Part" of the *Discourse on Method*, Descartes, after having analyzed the most general notions and understood their meaning and their practical implications, explains that :

"It is possible to arrive at knowledge that is very useful for life; and that instead of this speculative philosophy that is taught in schools, we can find a practical one, by which, knowing the force and actions of fire,

water, air, the stars, the heavens, and all the other bodies that surround us, as distinctly as we know the various trades of our craftsmen, we could employ them in the same way for all the uses to which they are suited, and thus make ourselves as masters and possessors of nature". (R. Descartes, 1951, p. 74).

We see it, at the foundation of the development of the Western humanity, there is a metaphysics. Indeed, deserting speculation, the West acquired its development on the control of the laws of nature whose dynamics was scandalized by a practical philosophy.

"The modern science in which this new metaphysics is resolved is to be understood as the actualization and the realization of the Cartesian will to "make himself as master and possessor of nature. The modern science is thus the becoming-world of the metaphysics" (C. Kounkou, 1992, p. 29).

From the foregoing, we now understand that the development of Western humanity has been structured fundamentally on three metaphysical theses. First, the advent of man as subject and pole of reference, whose central position places him at the center of all beings; second, the thesis according to which reality is inherently rational; and third, the central role that has fallen to man/subject to "make himself master and possessor of nature".

To the question of knowing if these three metaphysical theses which found the development of the West are visible in the African mental universe, C. Kounkou (1992, p. 29), answers that the situation of Africa proves to be exclusive of the three theses on which the development of the Western humanity rests. In other words, these three theses are practically absent in the deployment of African humanity. In support of his thesis, Kounkou explains the non-existence of these three theses by "the absence of autonomy and independence that the [African] individual experiences in African humanity, caught up in the rents of the family and the clan. (C. Kounkou, 1992, p. 29). What does this mean? Insofar as in Africa, according to C. Kounkou, there has never been an autonomous, free and independent subject, Africa cannot in any case develop, because the mode of generation of knowledge in Africa does not come from the principle of reason; part of African knowledge remains in the orbit of the sacred that only the initiated know the secret.

Kounkou's understanding of the unequal development of peoples is in line with the positions of Lucien Lévy-Bruhl. Indeed, to consider that the principle of reason is almost non-existent in the African way of thinking is to give theoretical support to the ethno-racialist theses of Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, a French philosopher and ethnologist who founded the Institute of Ethnology in 1925. In *The mental functions in the inferior societies*, L. Lévy-Bruhl notes a prelogical thought at work in the Black people. He takes up, in fact, a conception of humanity based on the hierarchy of the races whose top of the pyramid is occupied by the superior societies (the Whites), while at the base of the pyramid, one finds the inferior or primitive societies (the Blacks or the Africans). The difference between the two societies lies in the fact that the superior societies are characterized by an analytical and rational mentality, while the societies abusively called inferior or primitive are characterized by a "fundamentally mystical" mentality. In fact, in Chapter I of the first part of this book, where it is treated "The collective representations in the perceptions of the primitives and their mystical character", there is a passage that gives a glimpse of this mentality:

"Thus, even in the common perception, even in the banal apprehension of the simplest objects, is revealed the deep difference which exists between the mentality of the primitives and ours. That of the primitives is fundamentally mystical, because of the collective representations, mystical themselves, which are an integral part of all perception". (L. Lévy-Bruhl, 1910, p. 32).

Also the people of the inferior or primitive societies shine, according to the report made by a good number of people who observed them, "before they had been modified by a prolonged contact with the whites (...), reminds, Lévy-Bruhl, by "a decided aversion for reasoning, for what the logicians call the discursive operations of the thought". (L. Lévy-Bruhl, 1922, p. 9).

We are dealing here with a collection of arguments that are not convincing. Indeed, if the people who built Pharaonic Egypt were indeed black - which is no secret for anyone - and if they had a pre-logical mentality, i.e. refractory to rationality, it is a safe bet that ancient Egypt would never have been a model of civilization for the Greeks, who were the first European people to set foot on Egyptian soil.

That said, the question is: How can one be an African philosopher and endorse in the twenty-first century theses that are part of the colonial racist ideology? Such an approach supported by the philosopher C. Kounkou is, it seems to us, the result of an ontological disorder, a consequence of a well accomplished mental formatting.

In fact, is the question of development in contemporary Africa not linked, moreover, to its historical past? Hasn't this historical past contributed to its being a continent under siege by neo-colonial powers? One thing is true: "Understanding the present of France's African-Sub-Saharan 'ex-colonies' seems impossible in ignorance of the past" (J. Nanga, 2006, p. 3). (J. Nanga, 2006, p. 1). In other words, can one penetrate the intelligibility of the poor development of African countries in general, and of the French "ex-colonies" of Africa in particular, by ignoring the colonial past and the neo-colonial context?

The question that arises is how do Africans today perceive themselves, the world and otherness? Do they see themselves as autonomous, free subjects, capable of promoting a culture of winning, that is, a culture that engages man in a dynamic of overcoming his natural brutality and that can, if necessary, lead to his own

fulfillment, his freedom? If Africa's development is floundering, as they say, is this not the consequence of the burdens of history? Beyond the burdens of history, is the being of the African inclined to go beyond immediacy to open up to a much more humanistic and universal vision? If not, is it not the absence of this humanistic and universal vision and the inability to go beyond immediacy that constitute the stakes of Africa's poor development?

III. The causes of Africa's poor development

Africa and the importance of past

People often ask why African countries are not developing or, at least, do not show visible signs of development? The abundant literature on the reasons why Africa is lagging behind in its development process often tries to incriminate the Africans themselves. In this perspective, two works, among many others, have been distinguished. The first, *L'Afrique Noire est mal partie*, is a cry of distress addressed by René Dumont to the African political leaders he wanted to help, as a seasoned agronomist, after the accession of their countries to independence. The title of the book he published was meant to imply that the path taken by African political leaders was leading them straight to the wall, because they had forgotten, according to R. The title of the book he published was intended to indicate that the path taken by African political leaders was leading them to the wall, because they had forgotten, according to R. Dumont, the decisive factor that could allow them to develop, namely the development of local food-producing agriculture. Indeed, in agriculture,

"He [René Dumont] saw in it the hope that a human community would one day share a wealth that belongs to all, creating jobs, promoting at the same time food security and sustainable development" (Ch. Paquet-Dumont, 2012, p. 7).

The second, *L'Afrique peut-elle partir ? Changement social et développement économique en Afrique Orientale*, by Albert Meister, expresses the failure of the timid progress made by African leaders in changing the physical geography of African cities with the construction of brand new buildings that litter the main arteries. But despite these architectural advances, voices are being raised to express disappointment at the waste of international aid and the guilty conscience of the new leaders.

"Rather than real developments - resulting in an increase in the possibilities of production and consumption - the developments that have taken place, and are currently taking place, represent in fact the disbursements necessary for the installation of the elites born of national independence" (A. Meister, 1966, p. 8).

Responding to R. Dumont, who in the aforementioned work drew up an indictment against the practices of the new Black masters, the author of *L'Afrique peut-elle partir ?* concluded: "Africa has not gone away at all. It may even be in regression" (A. Meister, 1966, p. 8).

That the first African leaders who succeeded the white settlers behaved badly at the head of their newly "independent" countries is, all things considered, common knowledge. But the fact that they are the object of sharp criticism from yesterday's masters seems implausible. It is all the more implausible because it seems to exonerate the white settlers from all kinds of inhuman treatment or vile behavior perpetrated against the Blacks, on the one hand, and especially from their responsibility for handing over the baton to the new rulers, on the other. Only those who have problems with history would present whites as snow. The whole question is to ask, were the Blacks who replaced the white settlers at the head of the French "ex-colonies" prepared for the succession?

The way in which the French metropolis conceded "independence" to its "ex-colonies" is well known. Indeed, at a time when the wind of freedom had begun to blow in the United States with the commitment of Afro-American intellectuals who had become the focus of all the eyes of thinking America, among whom we can cite: W.E.B. Du Bois who founded the "Niagara Movement"; Marcus Garvey, who, following in the footsteps of Du Bois, also launched, in his turn, the so-called "Come-back Africa" Movement (return to Africa of Black Americans). Unlike Garvey, who advocated the return of African Americans to African soil to avoid the humiliations of white America, Du Bois, as L. Kesteloot (1987:15) points out, "defended the rights of black Americans as Americans and urged Africans to liberate themselves on their own soil.

Taking advantage of the international situation in which the struggles within the colonial empire continued to unfold, African intellectuals sought to make the voice of the one who was bullied, lynched and disinherited heard, namely the Black man. Thus, around the 1930s, Léopold Sédar Senghor, Aimé Césaire and Léon Gontran Damas were at the head of the Négritude movement, which was defined as "the simple recognition of the fact of being black, and the acceptance of this fact, of our destiny as blacks, of our history and of our culture" (A. Césaire, 1939). It should be remembered that at that time, the life of the Black man did not count. The Black man was anything but considered as a human being in right and dignity. Indeed, if in Africa or in the Antilles, the assimilationist policies of France considered Africans as full French citizens, but in France, what was recognized in Africa was nothing but a chimera, since they were confronted with the most exacerbated racism. This feeling of ambivalence experienced by African students and Afro-descendants made them realize that they were only a visible minority that could not enjoy any rights. To say how disastrous the situation of the Black man was in those years, Senghor recalls the way they were treated:

"On the one hand, we were treated as subjects or as second-class citizens; more profoundly, we were denied the fact that we had a civilization - at least an equal civilization even though it was different - and we were denied the right to recognize this difference, to cultivate it and to claim, for it, an equality that was not identical, but complementary". (L. S. Senghor, 1972, p.13.).

Beyond all forms of struggles undertaken by Africans and Afro-descendants of the French West Indies for the recognition of the dignity of the Black man and his belonging to the race of men, struggles that led to the demand for independence of the "ex-colonies", colonial France became reluctant to grant them independence. In his speech at the closing of the Brazzaville Conference held from January 30 to February 8, 1944, Charles De Gaulle, the leader of Free France, stressed that :

"The ends of the work of civilization accomplished by France in the colonies rule out any idea of autonomy, any possibility of evolution outside the French block of the empire. The possible constitution, even distant, of self-governments² in the colonies is to be ruled out".

This quotation from De Gaulle raises the problem that requires us here and unquestionably reflects the situation in which the African continent finds itself. In his words, De Gaulle emphasizes that it is out of the question to allow the colonies to be independent, and especially to let them make the decision to leave the French empire in order to be able to impulse their evolution towards the betterment or, which amounts to the same thing, their development. Precisely, it is a question for De Gaulle of keeping his hand on the future of the French African colonies. So he had to add from the top of his pedestal: "It belongs to the French Nation, and it belongs only to it, to proceed, when the time comes, to the imperial reforms of structures that it will decide in its sovereignty. It is understandable that France still wants to keep the colonies in its bosom, its sphere of influence.

Indeed, shortly before "independence", France had multiplied agreements of all kinds with its colonies to force them to remain under its domination. And, as J. Nanga (2006, p. 3) has noted:

"Through numerous agreements (economic, cultural, military, political) concluded with local elites, co-managers of the transition to neo-colonialism (1956-1960), and multiple institutions, the metropolis was able to maintain the ties of dependence of the "ex-colonies. This was a necessity for the middle power that was France, compared to the United States and the USSR".

We see it, the maintenance by France of the "ex-colonies" in its bosom, is something vital for it, because its survival depends on it. It could not be otherwise insofar as,

"Colonialism was a military control of the colonized peoples. Decolonization was not supposed to call it into question. Thus, among the cooperation agreements signed between the metropolis and its "ex-colonies" at the time of independence, military agreements figure prominently. The ideal for the metropolis were defense agreements that allowed for a French military presence on the territory of the "ex-colony" or the right to intervene in the event of a threat of destabilization of power - including by the people - on the territory of the host country or in a country of the "pre-square"³. (J. Nanga, 2006, p. 4).

Jean Nanga paints here the true face of colonization/decolonization and neocolonization. Indeed, if colonization was the process of occupation by which the colonizing power took over given territories and/or countries militarily, it is no less true that the decolonization that followed did not put an end to it, but rather prolonged it. If decolonization, indeed, was a radiant moment for the dominated peoples, it was as well "An endless trap" to quote the title of the first novel of the Beninese writer Olympe Bhêly-Quenum published in 1960. Surprising as it may seem, decolonization is a neo-colonization whose lead cover is symbolized by the financial and defense agreements. The military agreements signed in a hurry with the "ex-colonies" are intended, on the one hand, to defend the territories of the "pre-squared" against external assaults, and above all to crush ruthlessly any hint of uprising or insurrection of the peoples of the said territories, and on the other hand, to make the neo-colonization permanent. The establishment by France of military bases in Africa, in addition to the defense agreements signed with the countries of its "pre-squared", speaks volumes. As for the financial agreements, the prohibition made to the independent African countries to create their own currencies, is a way to seal the economic dependence with France. The FCFA, the common currency of the "ex-colonies" is undoubtedly the "symbol of post-colonial dependence". For as J. Nanga (2006, p. 7) points out

The dependence of so-called African central banks on the French Treasury gives the latter decisive power in financing the economic projects of member states of the FCFA zone and in guiding their economic policies.

² *Self-governments signifie* gouvernements autonomes.

³ Emphasis added. This sentence perfectly illustrates the nature of the links that France intended and continues to maintain with its "ex-colonies".

It is obvious that African central banks are dependent on the French Treasury. The latter dominates the entire economic sphere of the CFA Franc zone. Even if the French establishment strives to present the CFA⁴ Franc as a saving currency for French-speaking African states in that it allows for a fixed parity with the Euro, thus facilitating trade, it remains a post-colonial currency that is a drain on the economies of the countries that use it. The declaration of the French Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin, in Dakar in December 1997, is in line with this perspective and shows this duplicity:

"The euro will facilitate trade and investment. With the strengthening of the role of the euro as an international reserve currency, the commodity exports of these [FTA] countries will gradually be denominated in euros and thus become less dependent on fluctuations in the dollar". (N. Agbohou, 1999, p. 67).

There is thus, in fact, a game of fools that is taking shape in the background between the "ex-colonies" and the Western metropolises. Such a game only benefits the colonizing powers, condemning the dominated countries to manage and maintain their poor development.

Aware of the deception surrounding the CFA franc, Nicolas Agbohou, an Ivorian economist, revolts against the imposition of the CFA franc on certain African countries and publishes a reference book with a revealing title: *The CFA franc and the euro against Africa - For an African currency and South-South cooperation*. In this incisive, hard-hitting book, the author presents the CFA franc as a straitjacket for African countries in the franc zone. To tell the truth, this currency is for him the primary cause of the persistent misery, the permanent humiliation, the underdevelopment that has become a mineral reality in the countries of French-speaking Africa.

While some economists have presented the pegging of the CFA franc to the euro as an opportunity to be seized, or even a blessing (Ousmane Diallo, 2002), Nicolas Agbohou had long before challenged this approach. For the pegging of the CFA franc to the euro is just as harmful to the development of countries in the CFA franc zone:

The euro is a modern technique for blocking the PAZF [African countries of the franc zone]. It perpetuates the extraversion of the domination of African primary economies by the European Union. The latter, thanks to its currency, is sure to be supplied with raw materials without discontinuity. Through this game of fixity between the euro and the CFA franc, Europe reconstitutes and protects its captive African markets of yesteryear against its American competitors, whose dollar is subject to exchange risks (N. Agbohou, 1999, p. 67).

Cela dit, la question qu'il convient de se poser est la suivante : les « Élités » africaines sont-elles gestionnaires de la transition au néocolonialisme ? Autrement dit, sans la collaboration des « Élités » locales africaines, la France aurait-elle pu réussir à maintenir dans la durée un tel système de prédation et de domination ?

The African "elites" and the conscience of negroity

Let us say at once, that by consciousness of negroidism we mean a consciousness that has undergone colonial mental formatting and that has a visceral self-hatred and does not feel any embarrassment to continue to serve by resignation and pessimism the colonist or the master of yesterday. Such a consciousness has difficulty to leave its state of minority (Kant), to seize spirit and/or human. But the human is the one who does not alienate his freedom of thinking to a third. He learns to think by himself, in all autonomy, and endeavors to assert his dignity and his rights. It is in this that he gives meaning to his life, a meaning that he shares with all those who have a proven trade with reason. From this fact, a question emerges: are Africans in general, and African "elites" in particular, among those who use their reason wisely? Nothing is less certain!

Indeed, the perfect type in whom this consciousness of negroidism is embodied and who, at the very least, has an ambiguous relationship with rationality, is the African "elite" which Emmanuel Mounier had pointed out as being one of the most serious dangers facing independent Africa.

In fact, in his book *L'éveil de l'Afrique noire*, Mounier called the attitude of African "elites" who did not understand their responsibility in the development process of the African continent an abomination. He was already sounding the alarm by calling them to account for the fact that some of them were showing signs of abandoning the nourishing sap of their culture:

" Many of you are inclined to despise this Africa that pulls you back, like those young Europeans from simple backgrounds who, discovering culture or luxury, become enemies of their own past. They embrace more or less explicitly the contempt of some whites for things African. They thus become accomplices to racial disdain, believing that they are freeing themselves from it by this sort of unconscious denial". (E. Mounier, 2007, p. 117).

⁴ CFA, Abbreviation for Communauté Financière Africaine franc in the countries of the West African Economic and Monetary Union and for Franc de la Coopération Financière en Afrique in the countries of the Central African Monetary Union.

What can be understood through this quote from Mounier is that the African "elite" is an irresponsible "elite". This irresponsibility is all the more serious because it has its head elsewhere. One of the main reproaches that is addressed to this "elite" is that it is

"an elite of uprooted people", cut off from the populations, cut off from the call of the nourishing earth for which it was however necessary to form technical executives. The African elite born of the most ridiculous mimicry appeared in the eyes of Mounier, as a missed opportunity to emancipate in truth the African populations from the precariousness to which colonization had exposed them". (J. Nanema, 2006, p. 41).

Faced with the plundering by foreign firms and other carnivorous lobbies that endanger the lives of the disinherited, disadvantaged and exploited populations, the African "elites" are silent. They are accomplices of regimes that exacerbate tribal divisions and kill any culture that wants to be national. Consequently, C. A. Diop (1913, p. 215-216) aptly describes the situation of the African "elites" in these terms:

The harm that the occupier has done to us has not yet been healed, that is the root of the problem. Cultural alienation ends up being an integral part of our substance, of our soul and when we believe we have got rid of it, we have not yet done so completely.

Often, the colonized resembles a little, or the ex-colonized himself, the slave of the 19th century who, freed, goes to the doorstep and then returns home, because he no longer knows where to go.

However, if European imperialism set out to break the psycho-affective link that Africans had with their language, it relied on the fact that language is the habitat of the being as much as it is a producer of culture. It will be recalled that the imposition of the "bird head symbol" soaked in excrement in elementary school to prevent us from speaking our languages speaks volumes. The truth is that culture carries the values of the people, which are the basis of their identity. And it is precisely because these values found its identity that they structure the glance of the people and, by ricochet, model its relation to the world. Thus, in order to ensure the control of the culture of the people it had to enslave, imperialism succeeded by several subterfuges: the establishment of educational institutions, the teaching of foreign literature, the imposition of religion and the dance tied to folklore.

And this, so that the colonized represent themselves through the eyes of dominant nations, of dominant classes. The colonial phase of imperialism produced an African elite whose mentality was in harmony with the needs of the ruling classes of imperialist countries. And it was often this African elite that received the reins of power during the neocolonial phase. This class, because of the mental and cultural characteristics it has taken from the ruling classes, sees no contradiction between itself and the needs of these classes in the imperialist nations. (Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, 1983, p. 52).

A priori, if these institutions had their affective charge at the beginning of colonization, it does not remain less than they were, in many respects, weapons of mental domination, if not a cancer which destroyed morally and intellectually those who believed to find in them, all things considered, their plank of salvation. Instead of leading this fight for the emancipation of the people, the African "elites" have rather served as a bridge to the carnivorous neoliberalism to cement the impoverishment of their people. For them, serving the interests of yesterday's and today's masters is more beneficial than trying to provide clean water to the people, or building schools to teach programs adapted to the immediate environment and needs of the African child. African elites have not yet understood that they must work to avoid becoming accomplices to a dead past that offers no possibility of progress for the beleaguered, alienated and dominated black humanity. It is here that Jacques Nanema's thought takes on its full meaning:

The African peoples aspired to freedom against the colonial yoke, but once independence was achieved, the successors of the colonial master quickly handed over the bit of subordination and alienation to their brothers. (J. Nanema, 2006, p. 50).

In fact, the problem of Africa is its elite. Africa does not have an elite with a noble vision of the future of the continent, embodying a philosophy that puts man at the center of his actions. Having been at the school of the Whites, and even at the university where they swallowed and ingested the colonial clichés about Blacks, the African "elite" is extremely negrophobic. This feeling of aversion to everything black or African that we call negrophobia is constitutive of their philosophy of life. Not only does she look down on her compatriots, but she also has a visceral hatred of Black people. The lack of vision of African politicians and "elites" is turned into hatred of the other. The use of violence is a subterfuge to hide their incompetence, "their lack of imagination, their impotence to think about the time that is coming in order to map out some kind of itinerary (the absence of a societal project, which manifests itself, for example, in the exacerbation of contradictions and ethnic intrigues)" (J. Nanema, 2006: 54). Could it be otherwise? Since, as J. Nanema (2006, p. 54) shows again,

Colonization has not only marked black bodies with its iron, it has castrated them in depth and reduced them to their poorest expression. After this historical deluge, what is left but bodies without souls, beings without faith in themselves, beings without a vocation of their own, tormented beings, reduced to agitating and reproducing the violence that has denied and neanized them?

We can therefore expect nothing from these "rotten" "elites", to use a term that Sony Labou Tansi loved, devoid of vision for Africa whose only merit is to continue to serve the master of yesterday to bleed and plunder Africa. In short, the African "elites" are the real problem of Africa's poor development and not the solution.

We believe that the development of Africa rests fundamentally on a voluntarist policy capable of releasing the national genius by developing the local potentialities. This policy must emphasize the values of excellence and this without ethnic discrimination. However, to succeed, such a policy must necessarily cut the colonial umbilical cord. What Mali is showing to the world is a perfect example of what must be done to liberate Africa. It will be necessary to bring the *Charter of Imperialism*⁵ to the attention of African youth. This "Charter" was drawn up in Washington during the "slave trade", then discreetly negotiated at the "Berlin Conference in 1885" while the Western powers were dividing up Africa. It is possible that this charter is a forgery created by conspiracy theorists. But the fact remains that the abuses it denounces, namely European colonization with its attendant violence and Western domination that has become global, are no longer matters to be questioned. Therefore, it is a question of making a revolution for the liberation of the African self.

Whatever the case, Africa must build strong states on a continental scale, based on law and justice anchored in virtue and respectful of human rights. For a long time in Africa, good men have no longer been considered as models in society. Only the bastards, this band of gravediggers of the republic have the esteem of the people because they have developed this false belief that what counts is what is displayed. The turnkey development conceived in Euro-American firms under the Western paradigm can in no way develop Africa. We can only truly initiate the development of the continent if we get out of the ethnic gaze that prevents us from looking at otherness as a value. However, this new citizen or patriotic look that we call for with all our wish has no meaning unless we strip ourselves of our egoisms that we drag like ball and chain. More than 2,500 years ago, Antisthenes, an ancient Greek philosopher, left us with these meaningful words: "We must take as our allies those who have a noble and just soul. Virtue is a weapon that one must always carry with him (...) A good man must be esteemed more than a relative". (D. Laërce, 1965, p. 11).

IV. CONCLUSION

From what precedes, it emerges that the development is a movement by which a phenomenon, a thing pushed by the internal dynamics of the becoming passes from a first state to a second state which itself will become first compared to the much more improved state which will occur. We understand that the development is the dialectic of the latent to the patent. And in the dynamics of human societies, development is a never-ending process that has no end.

Africa's poor development is due to endogenous and exogenous factors. With regard to exogenous factors, the burdens of history have allowed the colonizing countries to spread their spider's web over the entire continent to prevent it from developing, arguing that a colony does not develop, it is pumped from outside. As for the endogenous factors, it must be admitted that beyond the chatter of the political classes who have no faith in the African man, the African "elites" co-managers of the bad development of Africa, have not thought of promoting the blossoming of individuals and ethnic groups in order to make them more capable of facing the challenges imposed on us by nature and modernity. On the contrary, these "elites" have rather worked to phagocytize people and tribes in order to better secure a base of unrepentant fanatics for future political battles.

This means that African heads of state and political party leaders are basically only tribal leaders. In the management of the republica, as the Latins say, no one is above the fray to think of a united life together likely to promote a national consciousness. Basically, the nation had disappeared in the consciousness of the African "elites". The ministerial cabinets, the state enterprises are filled with relatives of the tribe who have neither qualification nor competence in the services where they are assigned, even less noble vision of the common good. All of them are called to the trough so as not to have to blame themselves once the power is "lost". How in these conditions can one still think about the development of Africa. African politicians have become so addicted to power that they do not intend to leave the chair despite their almost negative record. The question is whether it is not time for a mental, intellectual and social revolution to be triggered? In other words, what can we expect from people who have climbed the ladder of the hierarchy until they reach their threshold of incompetence?

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