

## **The concept of change and the young: A psycho-social reading of Sembene Ousmane's *Les Bouts De Bois De Dieu* and *Xala*.**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Change is the only constant experience in all walks of life, literature inclusive. In the past decades, various critics have examined the selected novels of Sembène Ousmane from feminist and Marxist perspectives. However, this paper examines the selected texts from sociological perspective, with the aim of underlining some silent oversight of critics with respect to change. Pavlov's classical conditioning serves as a tool in the analyses of the selected texts. Change for positive socio-cultural, economic and political development is underlined as a quality more pronounced in the young and lacking in the older generation of characters. The attitude of the older generation in aiding obsolete traditions in opposition to the beliefs and reality facing the younger generation precisely in political representation and marital unions are examined through a close reading. The study concludes with a clarion call to African elites on the need to introduce the younger, smarter generation of youths in the helms of affairs to ensure sustainable development through the application of their technical know-how, modern ideologies and expertise if tangible socio-cultural, economic development must be realised where phallogocentric ideas have failed since independence as well as foster general entente in the society.

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### **KEYWORDS**

Change, Generation, Politics, Polygamy, Sembène Ousmane, Classical conditioning

## INTRODUCTION

Literary works have served as a mirror of the society from generation to generation. Earlier studies have described it as the reflection of the society (Balogun, 2010). It is therefore a medium of expressing ideas, views, opinion, experiences, feelings etc. Cyril Mokwenye (2000) summarises this assertion by stating that “Literature was and still is the most effective medium of manifesting African civilisation”. In 2001, research by Bertens elaborated that “a literary text is not in the first place the product of the genius of an individual author, but rather the product of a much larger culture that speaks through the writer and that convey political messages that the writer may be completely unaware of”. The submission of Bertens can be traced to the Marxist agenda achieved in literary text where the divide between the upper class of the society referred to as “bourgeois” and the subdued referred to as the “proletariat”. The division of the society has taken other forms in appearance in literary discourse with the advent of new theories. This is further strengthened in postcolonial discourse where the bourgeois, captured as writers from Europe occupy the centre position in commonwealth literature and the writers from the colonies retain the position of the margin. Feminist works break down this divide as distinction between the male and female in a phallogocentric society.

The constant deviation from the point of departure in categorising the society from the movement of one theory to the other over the last few decades of the last millennium suggests the constant evolution of the society. Society changes from one generation to another. Also, change as a concept is viewed as the progression from one state to another. Change involves involvement which affect every walk of life. It involves mobility which in this context is movement from one school of thought to another based on the increase in knowledge and the prevailing conditions in an era. Sembène Ousmane’s texts studied in this paper reflect the movement of beliefs and philosophy between the older and younger generation.

The general notion about life is affected and seen as a natural instinct in the young who believed abandoning the old societal construction of life is inevitable if progress must be made. In 2005, Sanusi asserts that: ‘Si un **fétiche** ne peut pas aider une personne, il doit la laisser telle qu’il l’a trouvée au lieu de la détruire’ [If a **fetish** cannot help someone, then he must leave it in the state he finds it, instead of destroying it]. The presentation of Sembène Ousmane depicts the younger generation as progress hungry as they utter their voice for change against the realities of the day

set up their parents in matters relating to politics, family life and language of communication. The dichotomy between the two generations of characters presented by Sembène Ousmane in *Les bouts de bois de Dieu* and *Xala* respectively is more pronounced through the lens of Pavlov's psychoanalytic classical conditioning.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Our adopted theory for this work is Pavlov's psychological classical conditioning. Ivan Pavlov and John Watson are the two names often associated with classical condition in the study of psychology. Classical condition is a type of associative learning, where two stimuli occur together enough times so that they eventually become associated with each other. The result of this association is that each stimulus eventually produces a similar response. Originally, classical conditioning only focused on reflexive behaviour such as the salivation reflex of Pavlov's dog. More recently, voluntary responses to conditioned stimuli have also been included in classical conditioning, as well as looking at emotions and internal states. Concerning the salivation of the dog, whose illustration will serve a great deal in analysing the characters in Sembène Ousmane's texts, it encompasses Pavlov accidental discovery of the salivating of his dog not just by placing the meat powder in mouth, with every other activity associated with the placing of the meat powder without placing the meat powder most of the time. Thus, he repeated a natural stimulus with a paired stimulus that causes a particular reaction. This represents the principle of continuity which states that when two things are paired together enough times, the one thing will be associated with the other. The natural stimulus of the older generation in Sembene Ousmane's texts causes them like the dog in Pavlov experiment to react. Some of the natural stimuli include memories and experiences of the past, societal teachings etc., not inherent in the younger generation.

## **ANALYSES OF TEXTS**

The apposition in the disposition of the characters in Sembene Ousmane's *Les bouts de bois de Dieu* and *Xala* used in this study is traceable to the classical conditioning of the characters. Varying dispositions and attitude between the both set of characters throughout the texts underline the validity of Pavlov's assertion of one stimulus producing a reaction with a paired stimulus. In both texts of Sembène Ousmane, the issue of polygamy, language and cultural

heritage, divorce, politics and agitations underline a dichotomy between the classical conditioned generation and the non-classical conditioned one.

The portrayal of African women in francophone literary texts from independence till date has always placed the men in the helm of affairs politically with lack of interest from their female counterpart. Few of Africa literary works have recognizes the role of women in politics such as sanusi's *Le bistouri des larmes* where Yetunde alias Abibatou was finally given the opportunity to contribute to the development of his immediate community. Ousmane's *Les bouts* present a dichotomy with the younger generation. Characters such as Ad'jibid'ji and Penda representing the younger generation of women, break from the societal construction of accruing political interest and roles to a unified sex. The dichotomy between both generations is captured in the conversation between Ad'jibid'ji and her great grandmother Niakoro.

D'abord, on ne sort pas d'une maison comme quelqu'un qui vient de subir un affront. Dit Niakoro la vielle, et puis où allais-tu si vite ?

A l'assemblée des hommes.

Ad'jibid'ji devait avoir huit ou neuf ans...

A l'assemblée des hommes ! répéta Niakoro... Qu'as-tu donc à être toujours fourrée avec les hommes ? Ils préparent une grève. Ce n'est pas quelques choses pour toi... Ce n'est pas une place pour une femme, encore moins pour une fillette de ton âge. Qu'as-tu donc à passer tout ce temps avec les hommes ?

'In the first place', old Niakoro said, 'why do you leave this house without saying a word: and next where are you going in such a hurry?'

To the gathering of the men.

Ad'jibid'ji must be eight or nine years old...

'To the gathering of the men' Niakoro repeated... why are you always poking your nose in the affairs of the men? They are preparing a strike, and that is not a thing for you... It's not a place for a woman and even less for a child of your age. Why must you spend all your time with the men? (*Les bouts*, 1960, pp.17-18)

The exchange between the duos depicts their various philosophies in life as construed by the different times they lived in. Niakoro as a representative of the older generation sees the political gathering of serious decision making such as the strike action, as the sole responsibility of men. Her perception is underlined as she sharply rebukes the young Ad'jibid'ji for her interest in staying with the men during their deliberations leading to the strike action. Her summation in the expression "ce n'est pas une place pour une femme" [It's not a place for a woman] suggests a

classical conditioned mindset throughout her existence. For her, political discussions, education and act of governance are strictly men's business, hence no woman, especially a young girl should invest time in learning and getting involved in the process. On the other hand, Ad'jibid'ji constant presence in the men's meeting to learn the ways of politics and governance goes against this long aged societal myth. Thus, she symbolizes change for African younger women on the need to seek political education just like their male counterpart to make positive contribution when the opportunities present themselves.

Like Ad'jibid'ji who was interested in politics, the writer goes further to reveal the future of African women and their possible exploits in the political atmosphere with the introduction of Penda after her return from one of her numerous trips to Dakar. Penda's participation in the men's meeting after accepting the responsibility of leading the female folk during the period of the industrial action is instructive. Her main duty was to supervise the distribution of the daily ration of palliatives given to the women, while attending the men's meeting twice a week to give reports and suggestions. This is underlined in the expression "Désormais, deux fois par semaine, Penda officiait..." (*Les bouts*, p. 224) [From then, Penda officiates twice in a week]. The narrator further explains her struggle with this particular responsibility owing to the sociological construction caused by classical conditioning as evident in Niakoro as she exclaimed thus: "Pourquoi me suis-je jetée dans cette affaire? Je n'ai rien à retirer" (*Les bouts*, p.225) [Why did I get myself involved in this issue? I have nothing to profit from it]. Like Niakoro, though Penda got herself involved in politics, the societal classical conditioning still resurfaces as she constantly questions the validity of her participation which is in contrast with societal norms.

To clearly elucidate and clear the thin line between feminist's consciousness's as a lot of feminist critics have done using the younger female characters political consciousness and achieved results over the years, Bakayoko is introduced later in the text. Bakayoko as a young man had travelled far and wide and gathered experiences like Penda, unlike the older generations who had remained either in Thiès or in Dakar all their lives. His appearance during the deliberation of the workers in Thiès with Isnard and his timely contribution can be considered a catalyst that speeds up the victory of the Africans. His approach to the entire discussion led to the failure of Isnard team, the workers understanding of the real issue and the heroic march of the women from Thiès to Dakar. His most heroic moment is captured in his address to the authorities

in Dakar as a representative of the Africans in this once in a lifetime opportunity to turn things around. An extract of his heroic address is captured below.

Il était normal que tout le monde puisse parler sauf les grévistes. Je vais donc parler en leur nom. Depuis plus de quatre mois nous sommes en grève...cela nous fait vivre une vie dure, sans eau, sans feu, sans nourriture. C'est un destin cruel pour un homme, davantage pour une femme, plus encore pour un enfant et pourtant nous le supportons.

It would have been very strange if everyone had been able to speak here except the men on strike. What I have to say, then, I say in their name. For more than four months now we have been on strike... It has been a hard life in that time- without food, without water and without even fire. It is a hard path for a man and harder still for the women and children, but we chose it and we have trod it (*Les bouts*, p. 336).

The introductory remark of Bakayoko proved the capacity of the younger generation to pay attention to details. From his speech, he underlined the disadvantaged position of the Africans who were not allowed to speak for themselves as contained in the expression “tout le monde puisse parler sauf les grévistes” [everyone had been able to speak here except the men on strike]. The inhuman nature of not being able to have the basic necessities of life is further underlined with the introduction of ‘eau’, ‘feu’ and ‘nourriture’ preceded by the negative preposition “sans” (without). His demands formed the most heroic aspect of the speech that allowed the African community to shout “non, non, continue, crièrent les voix dans la foule” (*Les bouts*, p.337) [no, no, continue shouted the voices from the crowd] as a means of encouragement and agreement with his representation. The excerpt below underlined his demand and the possible change later experienced by the Africans in the text.

On a dit que les gouverneurs nous avaient apporté de nombreux et grands changements. Il est vrai que je suis jeune, mais je n'en a pas vu beaucoup et je demande aux vieux ouvriers de dire ce qu'ils ont vus... Il paraît que nos revendications seront satisfaites, mais lesquelles ? Nous avons demandé la retraite, les allocations, l'augmentation de salaires, un cadre auxiliaire, le droit d'avoir notre propre syndicat. Pas un de ceux qui ont parlé avant moi n'a prononcé un seul de ces mots. Ils sont pourtant fort simples.

You were told also that the governors have brought you many improvements and changes. It is true that I am young, but I haven't

seen many of them and I could call on the older workers to tell us what they have seen...We are told that some of our demands will be satisfied, but which ones? We have asked for pensions, for family allowances, for a raise in pay and the right to have a union recognized by the company. But not one of the men who spoke before me even mentioned a single one of these words. Why not? They are simple enough (*Les bouts*, pp. 336-337).

Bakayoko's demand for better living and working conditions for the Africans is vehemently captured in the above excerpt. Specific demands are indicated by the usage of the french definite articles "le, la, l' and les" as determinants for the introduction of words containing such demands as we have in "la retraite, les allocations, l'augmentation de salaires, un cadre auxiliaire, le droit d'avoir notre propre syndicat". These depict the intention of the speaker. Also, by referring to himself as "jeune" he classified himself as different from the older generation with a different opinion on politics and policies affecting the Africans. This is evident as he remarked in between his speech "Pas un de ceux qui ont parlé avant moi n'a prononcé un seul de ces mots" [But not one of the men who spoke before me even mentioned a single one of these words]. This underlines the dichotomy in the perception of the young in terms of elements that constitutes a positive change in contemporary post-independence politics. The demand for political autonomy as recorded in "le droit d'avoir notre propre syndicat" [he right to have a union recognized by the company] never mentioned by any of the Africans that spoke before him also highlights the defining role of the young in policy making process for sustainable development and progress.

The dichotomy in the demand of Bakayoko and the other Africans that spoke before him reveals the classical conditioning of the older generation. This was earlier expressed by Mabigue who believed God has given the Europeans final authority over the Africans as he explains to Ramatoulaye:

Dieu...il a assigné à chacun son rang, sa place et son rôle ; il est impie d'intervenir. Les toubabs sont là : c'est la volonté de Dieu.

God... He has assigned a rank, a place and a role to everyone. It is blasphemous to think of changing his design. The *toubabs* are her because that is the will of God (*Les bouts*, p. 83).

Mabigue's submission like most Africans and some Europeans, like Isnard who regarded the African workers as children that needs constant supervision, runs contrary to Bakayoko's demand. He believed political liberation and the right to form quasi political union among the workers is a necessity for progress and continuous fulfillment in life and career. This could be said to be the reason why none of the Africans that spoke before Bakayoko made any reference to such an all-important issue in the text. The dichotomy depicts actions of a classically and non-classically conditioned group. Factors such as racial superiority and religious dogma can be identified catalyst for the conditioned mindset with Isnard and Mabingue. As a European, Isnard is caught in the web of racial discrimination and pride as he sees Africans as lacking intelligence and ability for self-governance while Mabingue's suggests a brain washed man in the web of religious dogma as he ascribed everything to the will and act of God. Bakayoko on the other hand breaks free from such fixation as he objectively outlines the demands of his people in the quest for better working and living conditions.

In *Xala*, though little is known as far as politics is concerned, Rama's position and political ideologies are captured in an outburst between her and El Hadji. In the heat of anger and fury, El Hadji addresses the political consciousness of his daughter as he exclaimed: "Ta révolution, tu la feras à l'université ou dans la rue, mais jamais chez moi" (*Xala*, p.30) [your revolution, you will do in the university or in the street but never in my house]. This expression by El Hadji further gives credence to the introduction of Rama as a leader of a revolutionary movement on the growth and sustainability of the prestigious African *wolof* indigenous language. Thus, Sembène Ousmane presents the younger generation as political conscious and active in both texts as the young male and female characters get involved in the decision-making process to ensure a desirable outcome for collective benefit of the society through their actions.

Another common reality in Ousmane's texts that calls for change is the issue of marriage. Polygamy is a common experience in African society before, during and after colonization. Exposure to western education by the first generation of African elites did not change this perception and reality in the continent. Rather, the availability of more money gave opportunity for the satisfaction of excessive libidinal irrational desires. El Hadji's third marriage reflects this reality in *Xala*. The writer presents once again a dichotomy between the older and younger generation. Rama, a university student represents the younger generation of African women who



desire a progressive change in the area of marriage. Rama's desire to effect positive change that will move society forward is enshrined in her detest for polygamy as she often affirms before her fiancé. In a bid to defend what she believes and stands for, Rama got into a heated argument with her father as recorded in the excerpt below.

Rama était debout. Son regard croisa celui de sa mère, et elle dit: Je suis contre ce mariage. Un polygame n'est jamais un homme franc. La gifle atteignit la joue droite de Rama. Elle chancela et tomba. Le père s'était de nouveau rué vers Rama... -Ta révolution tu la feras à l'université ou dans la rue, mais jamais chez-moi...- partons ! Allons-nous-en, El Hadji, disait la mère en entraînant l'homme vers la porte.

Rama stood where she was. She caught her mother's eyes and said: am against this marriage father. A polygamist is never frank. El Hadji's slap struck her on her right cheek. She stumbled and fell. He moved toward her to repeat the blow. You can be a revolutionary in the university or in the street, but not in my house never... Come, El Hadji let's go said the girl's mother, pulling him towards the door (*Xala*, p. 30).

The rejection of El Hadji's third marriage to a young lady of the same age with his daughter led to a domestic conflict. It is a case of divergent opinion. It took a progressive form from verbal to physical assault. The rejection of the marriage plan in the declarative expression "Je suis contre ce mariage" [Am against this marriage] followed by her audacious statement in describing a polygamist in the expression "Un polygame n'est jamais un homme franc" [a polygamist is never frank] serve as conflict triggers. This is evident in the reaction of El Hadji in the expression "La gifle atteignit la joue droite de Rama" [El Hadji's slap struck her on her right cheek]. The slapping of the young lady underlines patriarchal domination. It depicts male hegemony practiced in Africa before and immediately after colonization. Also, the word "révolution" employed by El Hadji in addressing the Rama after slapping her, underlines movement from one level and school of thought to another. It suggests a break away from the classical norm where the young have little or no opinion in marital issues of their parents. The refusal of the young lady also suggests her rejection of societal norms. The young lady as a representation of the younger generation is also depicted as an agent of change not just for a healthy family but a better society in the long run.

Like Rama, Bakayoko manifested a breakaway from classical societal norms with respect to polygamy. This is evident as he rejected the opportunity of having a second wife after N'Deye Touti approached him the night after the heroic moment where the African workers demanded their rights. The narrator gives a comprehensive summary of the mentality of the young and the possible reason why others fall into the snare of this long-aged practice of polygamy in the excerpt below.

Je voudrais devenir ta seconde femme. Quoi ?... Je me suis posé des tas de questions à ce sujet, je me suis dit que si tu refusais, ce serait parce qu'après t'être déclaré publiquement contre la polygamie. Il te serait difficile de te déjuger. Je sais que tu es vraiment contre. Moi aussi je ne l'étais, c'était une de nos coutumes que je ne pouvais comprendre. Et puis, il arrive que l'on se mette à aimer ce que l'on croyait détester... au moins puis-je me dire que comme je suis née musulmane, ma religion m'y autorise.

I would like to be your second wife What?...I have thought about it seriously and asked myself a lots of questions; and I told myself that if you refused, it would be because it would be difficult for you to reverse yourself now, after you have said that you were against polygamy. And I know that you are really against it. I was too; it was one of our customs that I would never understand. But it happens sometimes that you come like something you thought you hated... And at least I can tell myself that since I was born a Muslim, my religion authorizes it (*Les Bouts*, p.343).

The words of N'Deye Touti give a revelation of the reasons and means through which the African society has been classically conditioned over the years. The narrator depicts the young as anti-polygamist in the expression “je sais que tu es contre... je ne l'étais” [ I know you are against it. I also do not want it]. The place of culture and religion are also underlined as classical conditioning agents. This is captured as the young lady explained “c'était une de nos coutumes... ma religion m'y autorise » [it was one of our customs ... my religion authorizes it]. This suggests that religion mixed with culture act as fundamental elements in the process of classical conditioning. However, Bakayoko's refusal of such proposal sends a lucid message to an avid reader. It explains the lack of interest in younger African males in meddling with polygamy, even if the younger females are compelled to agree because of religion and culture.

Contrary to the laudable actions of the younger generation; male and female, as witnessed from the case of Rama and Bakayoko, the older generation, constituting the *hommes d'affaires*, the wives of El Hadji in *Xala*, have proven to be suffering from classical conditioning from the general disposition toward polygamy. The elite in the *groupes des hommes d'affaires* (Businessmen), giving their support to El Hadji in the beginning of the text underline the level of classical conditioning operant in the society.

Nous sommes les premiers hommes d'affaires dans ce pays. Notre responsabilité est grande. Très grande ! Nous devons nous montrer à notre hauteur de la confiance de notre gouvernement. Afin de bien achever notre journée mémorable, je vous rappelle que nous sommes tous conviés au mariage de notre frère El Hadji Abdou Kader Beye. Si nous sommes pour la modernité, cela ne veut pas dire que nous avons renoncé à notre africanité.

We are the leading businessmen in the country, so we have a great responsibility. A very great responsibility indeed. We must show that we can measure up to the confidence the government has placed in us. But it is time now to bring this memorable to a close by reminding you that we are invited to the wedding of our colleague El Hadji Abdou Kadar Beye. Although we are anxious to belong to the modern world, we haven't abandoned our African customs (*Xala*, p.9).

The hand of support extended to El Hadji by his colleagues who are well abreast with his already existing polygamous situation, calls for concern as far as the fight against polygamous practices is concerned. Despite their enlightenment as contained in the clause "Si nous sommes pour la modernité", they unanimously gave their support for a third marriage. Their consents from the sentence "cela ne veut pas dire que nous avons renoncé à notre africanité" underlined the classical conditioning of the group. Thus, their exposure to western education that gave them the privilege of knowing the ills of polygamy could not help them in dissuading their friend from such futile adventure. This clearly underlines the fact that traditions supersede knowledge in the older generation who has been classically conditioned to the observance of such norms.

Among the older women in the text, the same classical conditioned mentality is operational. This is witnessed in the families of all the wives of El Hadji. The Badyen's, strong advocacy for the marriage of their little girl to a man old enough to be her father is instructive. Her initiation of the entire journey to matrimony between her niece and El Hadji is further heightened as she tries to

prove to N’Gone’s mother the safety of her daughter and a better future. This is contained in the statement : “El hadji est polygame, mais chacune de ses épouses dispose d’une villa...Pour N’Goné, c’est son avenir et celui de ses futurs enfants assurés” (*Xala*, p.22) [El Hadji is polygamous but each of his wives have a villa...For N’Gone, it is a secured future for her and her future off springs]. Her quest for material gains blinded her from seeing the danger of polygamy. Also, the permissive culture for a man to marry more than one wife captured in the interrogations “N’était-il musulman? Fils de musulman? (p.22) [His he not a muslim? Son of a muslim] is an additional factor that pushes the Badyen to act the way she did. These interrogations underline religion and culture earlier observed in the ‘groupe des hommes d’affaires’ as tools used for the classical conditioning process of the older generation. In the text, they serve as stimuli in line with Pavlov’s experiment. Hence, response to the stimuli of religion and culture is portrayed as reasons for the support of the third marriage by the other generation.

The first wife of El Hadji, Awa, is also presented as a woman classically conditioned by the cultural and religious practices of polygamy. She is introduced to the readers as a devoted muslim woman who would not harbor hatred for anyone and will always carry out the wishes of her husband as a good wife. With her five times daily prayers, she is only preoccupied with her religious rite and the education of her children. Her expression of uncertainty and acceptance of the third marriage in a conversation between her and her daughter Rama is captured in the expression “Moi si... je dois y faire acte de presence. Sans quoi, on dirait que je suis jalouse” (*Xala*, p.29) [me also...I ought to be present. If not, people will say i am jealous]. Her explanation of the reason for her presence in the third marriage ceremony is traced to the demands of tradition. Though she never supported the idea, tradition and customs demand she gives her consent by being present in the marriage ceremony of the third wife.

Like Awa, Oumi is forced to accept the arrival of a younger wife into the family. Unlike in the case of Awa where culture demanded her presence, Oumi’s case runs deeper as it encompasses ancestry in line with religious inclination. This is captured in the reprimand giving to Oumi by her mother thus: “Ta première est d’origine catholique, comment toi, née musulmane, oses-tu refuser?” (*Xala*, p.67) [your first co-wife is from a catholic background. How can you, born a muslim dare object]? Religion is portrayed as a tool used in the validation of polygamy in line with the expression of Oumi’s mother. Thus, like N’Deye Touti in *Les bouts*, who consented to

becoming a second wife despite her hatred for polygamy, Oumi is forced to remain in the marriage because of the laws and permission of Islam on the right of a man to get married to more than one wife. The speech of the mother as a representation of the older generation also depicted classical conditioning. Having observed the practice of polygamy all her life, the request for a divorce by Oumi because of El Hadji's third marriage to N'Goné seems abominable as she sharply questioned "comment toi, née musulmane, oses-tu refuser?" [...]. Also, Oumi's decision to never complain about the matter suggest the transfer of a classical conditioned mind set backed up by religion from parent to offspring.

## CONCLUSION

Contrary to the argument of feminist critics such as Elizabeth Ogini (2002) who argued that women are the element of real societal change and progress, the role of certain women in the text proved otherwise as they remained dormant and docile due to the experience of classical conditioning put in place by culture and religion amongst other personal life experiences. Most docile women in the text belong to the older generation who hold steadfastly to ancient tradition such as women non-participation politics. The older men are no better as they attached sacredness to such reunion with their ill decisions. On the contrary, the presence of the likes of Ad'jibid'ji who secretly enjoy the discussion of the men during the meeting reveals the repressed interest of women participation in politics. Also, Penda regular dialogue with the men in the political arena and mobilising the women in the revolutionary march express the positive neglected role of the young for progress through active political participation repressed by the mind-set of the older generation. For the younger men, Bakayoko's timely intervention inhibited the short triumph of Isnard and his colleagues who almost deceptively won the war against the oppressed Africans. His presence in the meeting and interrogation of Isnard helped the older Africans who had been handling the deliberations to discover the reality behind the entire exercise. The case of Rama in *Xala* and Bakayoko in *Les Bouts* concerning the issue of polygamy also suggest the victory of monogamy over polygamy in the nearest future because of the change inherent in the younger generation. The young therefore serves as agent of tangible revolutionary change through the application of current ideas in handling issues and problems that patriarchal older generations have failed to do from independence till date. Hence, the younger generation's opinion should be considered valuable and opportunities should be given to

them if socio-cultural, economic, political and overall development of the African continent will be attained in the nearest future.

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