

« Altérité, Synchrétisme et Ecriture : Regard Croisé Entre les littératures Africaines et Occidentales »

Intitulé de l'Article:

*The African Writer Between the Alien Language and his Society*

Mohammed Seghir HALIMI

It is conceivable that the African writer, because of the situation of his society, could stand in different to that argument which calls up his humanity and commitment. This might be an answer to those who pretend that the African writer's vision of the world blurred and lacking originality; his adoption of the other's language does translate nothing but his westernized tendency. Before judging, one should know the very delicate position in which the African author finds himself.

The awkward situation of the writer between thoughts and language is , undoubtedly , the prism that orientates vision of his society. This is, in fact, what may keep the African writer in a distant position from the old romantic exotics. These writers, in general, are those who set themselves away from the old romantic exotism when they do not contradict it violently. (C.Achour and S. Rezzoug, 1995, p.70).

The writers' position is binary, i.e., it is a split between his strange perception of the foreign language and his vision of the world (society). One way of agreeing up on his conception could be to join Pierre Valery Zima's saying that « *pour l'écrivain et pour l'écriture , la réalité sociale se présente comme une réalité linguistique, et littéraire* » (1978, p. 2 12). African literature or whatever, must be interesting, it stands in recognizable relation to life, it must always have anstructure and an aesthetic purpose, a total coherence and effect ( R, Wellek, 1978, p. 212)

To consider that the African social reality induces a particular bias in the African literary expression, is to say that the African author shapes and articulates that pleasant to contemplate and painful to experience or even, in life, to witness, as again Wellek says. (Ibid, p.213)

The African writer, as a representative of his society, wants to enhance J.P.Sartre's idea that the freedom of writing implies the freedom of citizenship (1984, p.82), therefore this author, through his writing, tries to formulate the social events in literary facts. The point of mediation between the former and the latter is itself an ambiguous reality; it is the product of an unquestionable confrontation of the writer and \_ his society (R.Bathes, 1972 p. 19); the reason why these literary facts find a recipient which is, a great deal, an artistic achievement, or oeuvre littéraire. This requires a support of literary creation ( language); language on this side of literature (...), produces those images and lexis which arise from the body and the past of the writer, and which become gradually the automatism of his art,(Ibid, p. 16).

It is then necessary to refer to Louis Bertrand's strangeness (Etrangeté). For him, l'étrangeté devient, a ses yeux, la marque d' un art on d'un caractère raffiné (C. Achour and S. Rezzoug, 1995, p. 70); the language of the African writer is less a Back Scene than an Extreme limit; it is in fact as Bathes shows, a eometrical space of what is impossible for the writer to say (Op. cit, p. 16); it is in this case a bi-dimensional committed language; it has an instrumental dimension as long as it is a means. Yet if words are used in order to communicate, then there is a certain residuum, some thing not covered (J.P.Sartre, 1973, p. 85). Therefore, the end should be given a considerable merit, for one should not deny the aesthetics dimension of his/her language.

The African author who sees that his society deserves being depicted appropriately, no matter what could be its realities, occupies a position which requires him to see, scrutinize the facts and then convey them as long as they are relevant to reality. However his position as a writer is put between what vision he should adopt and by which language he ought to n deal with his society. It would be conspicuous if one attributes such a compromise to a given intelligibility between the writer and his society.

In this case a question such as: Is this pact due to a certain attitude or a particular feeling for society the African writer is called to? The answer would undoubtedly be no more than an illustration from within the two African societies; the Nigerian and the Algerian societies. Both the Nigerian and Algerian authors, especially those who write in the other's language, share that very aspect of dilemma, which one of the strangeness results. Thus, to specify one from the other is to deny that common feature which is, actually, the core of the essential matter and hence the stimulus which urges the writers, though obliquely, to find themselves meditating on one single concern; *the one of the African*.

In this sense, I prefer not to refer to a particular African writer in a given geographic area in this particular point. Instead, I try to shed light on the African author in so far as Africa is one continent. An allusion to particular cases seems necessary, but the exception does not mean difference. On the contrary, it consolidates the idea of strangeness (*Etrangeté*), which might be found even within writings themselves. That is to say, the writer is not only a subject to strangeness but he himself presents an understandable interplay and actions. This "strangeness" may be a notion of "disease", illness that all intellectuals felt and keep feeling today produced, marked by this continent. A. ' Camus has produced that much on this weird, enthralling relationship to the African land. This "strangeness" translates a long history of suffering: continuous tribal wars, mass slave deportation, colonization, wars of independences, and it goes on with political upheavals, and their consequences: migration, exile, pauperism and permanent running away.

It is known ironically enough, that on the African continent, Africans vote with their feet It may be a sarcastic definition of strangeness, yet African authors have devoted most of their talent to this quest of the other: the stranger who may be the one they have always dreamt to be.

The ideological system of colonization has been a violent destructive force on

the world, as it is known. The cruel reality of colonization *is* precisely its history of slavery, in some African spaces, murder, violence, rape and torture of non-European peoples by European nations with the motives of sheer greed. This ruthless take over

was rationalized through the racist ideology that native Africans were inferior savages. In Black Skin, white Masks , Aime Cesaire describes the effects of this damaging hostility:

*...Millions, of men have been skillfully injected with fear, inferiority, complexes, repudiation, servility, despair, and abasement ( F.Fanon, 1967,p.07)*

Undoubtedly, the Africans want eagerly to *get rid of* such a vile legacy, yet it is difficult to succeed claiming independence from the colonizer is not sufficient to end the effect of colonialism; it is almost impossible since the closed and changed cultures are not a dream that fades, the more time elapses; in this sense, A. Holla stresses that:

*Colonialism...which brings new values, new beliefs, foreign languages, alien traditions... can not be shed like the skin of a snake and tossed away and forgotten ([http://](#))<sup>1</sup>*

It is not possible to annihilate all things, for there is always some thing left behind; Holla goes on describing the lasting effects of an imposed alien culture as a colonial residue. 'Residue' is especially obvious, nowadays, in some African nations despite independence. Yet

one has not to speak about language as being the only colonial residue, for the way of thinking and behaving is an ineluctable residue.

In so far as the complete eradication of colonial residue is not possible, it is not plausible top that the cultural traditions of Africa before the colonial intrusion and subjugation of its people can fully be regained. Entire languages have been wiped out by means of compulsory substitution or by making proof of that virtual linguistic unification especially that in some African nations, one singles out the existence of different ethnic groups that speak again different native languages. Apart from the Black African nations, it is noticed in North Africa, particularly, in Algeria where there are at least twelve ethnic groups which share ethnicity, but show different

linguistic performance. Ethnic groups and villages have been subject to destruction,

which resulted in the disappearance of certain knowledge, i.e., ideas and traditions have been lost in the abyss of time. However, it is indisputable that the spirits of tradition have survived a great impact; perhaps, there are ways of accessing the past n of which the west is unaware. It is right then that *the world is full of mysteries. Not everything can be seen. But everything exists* (Agatucci, 1982)<sup>2</sup>

The African author in the light of such strangeness recreates for himself his own unique image and being. He may contrive his own vision of the world. One may ask a question over the writers' possibility of forging his identity and thus his story. Achebe might have answered this question when interviewed:

*Story is really the basis of our existence ...who we are, what we think we are, what our people say we are,*

*what other people say we are... ( Rob Backer and Ellen Drapper, 1992)*

It is not therefore conceivable that a serious African writer should stand aside from this very fact, or1 even be indifferent to it. His argument to this fact may call his full humanity into question because there is a clear duty to make a statement.

To say that this aspect is particular to a given author is to localize geographically the Romanesque and the Ideological discourse. The foundations of the modern ideologist, which are in categories from which the Romanesque genre takes a significance have been elaborated in Europe in XIX century. It is in the same epoch, in Europe, that the Romanesque genre has known its extraordinary development. Yet, if ideology has found in the Arab world, for instance, a prodigiously prolific ground, its implantation would have never been subordinated to that ideology through which it is looked at as being dependent.

Whether the novel serves as an intermediate adjuvant in the world of the debatable ideological considerations or not, the confirmation is backed up by both C. Bonn and C.Achebe. Their conception of the novel is that:

*le roman n'a pas de tradition dans la littérature Arabe. Mais il est aussi et surtout parce qu'il est perçu des le départ comme une annexe du discours idéologique, a l' usage de la lecture occidentale en dialogue avec laquelle l' idéologie moderniste se constitue'.*(Ch Bonn, 1986,p.14)

African writing in general has taken European mediations of art and transformed them into an answer for their own needs. They have created images in their own likeness. The African writer may meet that inherent contradiction in affirming the ideology of his society: the non-localized language is inevitable; the geographical space of this affirmation is, undoubtedly, that space of evidence<sup>3</sup>. That a language is planetary is to annihilate all the traditional local languages of the writer's referential space in so far as it is considered non-assimilating as well as a modality, stating the generality of the ideological debate in the frame within which a society is defined.

The African author's vision of the world germinates into a literary achievement, yet it remains encapsulated in between the adequate choice of language and the suitable context. In his book *Hopes and Impediment*, Achebe warns:

*Let no one be fooled by the fact that we may write  
in English, for we intended to do unheard things with it  
(1988, p. 76)*

To make a cut between writing and language is not evident; for Barthes explains in the summary of his book 'le Degré Zéro de l'écriture' that:

*'Dans toute l'oeuvre littéraire s'affirme une réalité  
formelle indépendante de la langue et le style: l'  
écriture considérée comme le rapport qu'entretient l'  
écrivain avec la société, le langage littéraire e  
transforme par sa destination sociale' ( la Quatrième  
de couverture, 1953, 1972)*

Language and writing are interrelated. The latter is defined by the former and the evidence of writing has a straight connection with the intelligibility of a given moment of history, not to say history as a whole. In this regard Barthes, again, shows that *I' écriture littéraire porte a la fois I' aliénation de I' histoire et le rêve de l'histoire: comme nécessaire, elle atteste le déchirement des langues, inséparable du déchirement des classes: comme liberté, elle est la conscience de ce déchirement et I' effort même qui veut le dépasser' (Ibid)*

Clara Reeve stresses that the novel, be it African or western, is a picture of real life and manners and of the time in which it is written (R.Wellek,1978, p.216). Therefore, the African writer through the mediation of his heroes, allows himself the first and foremost impossible task of establishing a coherent and concrete relationship between what Lukacs calls *le vécu de l'homme et ses raisons de vivre* (M.Zeraffa,1971,p.48). The African novelist, in a way, sees that difference which lies in the values, or as again Zeraffa explains it to be *des contradictions de droit (ou de degré) entre le plan de valeurs et celui de I' existence* (Ibid). It is here, as Lukacs says, where the Romanesque structure lies (Ibid).

The conciliation which the novelist wants to create between the concrete world and his literary achievement requires, as adjuvant, an individual; because in the concrete world the individual is looked at through society while in the Romanesque the individual appears like the looking glass of the social. Therefore, they are 'Faux Miroirs' (Ibid,p.38).

The message of the African writer is addressed to a given public; certainly the public to whom he intends to send this message is the one who ignores or denies the African social reality of his people and he wants that the effect on the reader tends more towards rational conviction. Moreover, the effect of reading incites to the subscription to a history and to characters. What is worth noting is that the African writer succeeded a great deal in incorporating or borrowing some elements from the Oratory genre to the Romanesque one.

The question of the novelist in this case is to know how to provide his impression of the social reality. This impression might be variable, i.e., the more one changes the geographical space, the more he is acquainted with another different impression.

It seems then clear why a direct reference to Mouloud Feraoun (Algerian) and Chinua Achebe (Nigerian) is needful and helpful.

Feraoun in his novel starts by providing a description of the landscape where

the action located well as the peasants (*Fellahs*), who appear in his novel as a forgotten continent' where 'civilization has never existed'. The very noticeable point is that underlined difference as far as the inherent model of the language of description is concerned: the universe of civilization. Therefore Feraoun describes the object in its referential difference. He talks about Tizi Hibel but the cultural reference is purely western (occidental), i.e., the foreign cultural references which situate the lieu of expression of le Fils du Pauvre, in a humanism and more particularly in its metaphoric function.

Ulysses, Don Quixote and Tartarin seem to be Feraoun's references. They are mentioned in his novel to qualify the heroes of the *Kabyle poems*:

*Nous avons encore de nombreux poèmes qui chantent des héros communs. Des héros aussi ruses que Ulysse, aussi Flers que Tartarin, aussi maigre. que Don Quichotte ' (p. 15)*

Feraoun goes on talking about his society, about his family. He finds in la Fontaine's les Fables another reference to that fat Kabyle

landlord, in that he resembles a great deal to 'financier of the Fable' (p.16). Feraoun's explanation of how his family hides its division may remind us of Molière especially when Geronte says to Scapin:

*Je te pardonne a la charge que tu mourras (p. 61)*

Indeed the very reference is the one of the French school, but one can say that the addresser and the addressee are all two subjects within a significant process or action whose object is *Kabylie*. However, the language is French. Language in its broadest sense is seen as a system of logical and cultural references. Tchekhovt's and Michellet's quotations respectively, at the beginning of the first and the second part, provide a certain legitimacy to *le Fils du Pauvre*, because these two famous writers' quotations could be read as an inter textual dialogue. Undoubtedly, Feraoun has an objective because 'as Barthes says: *La langue de l'écrivain est bien moins un fond qu' 'une limite. Elle est le lieu géométrique de tout ce qu'il ne pourrait pas dire sans perdre(...) la stable signification de sa démarche et le geste essentiel de sa sociabilité( R. Barthes, 1972, p.16)*

Feraoun's position is likely to be neutral, i.e., one does not single out any distinction between Feraoun's conception of the relationship between the signification and the thing **signified**<sup>4</sup>, for his allusion to his society, or to his life through a language which is not his, does not change nor even alter the portrait he develops over the Kabyle society. Definitely, any attempt to disassociate language of its culture is avoidable, yet this does not mean that a writer must write only in his mother language

Feraoun's objective goes beyond the mere description of his society. His eager desire for studying being a 'School Master' makes of him an ambassador of his society. He feeds on the 'leçon Normalienne' with the Neophyte zeal and as a good student, he avoids any indoctrinating **ideology**<sup>5</sup>. As a writer, Feraoun's vision of the world is germinated within his society to get, by then, an outlet in writing. In fact what is writing, but a rapport between creation and society. Therefore, the existence of the

French school in the life of Feraoun contributes, according to him, a great deal in the promotion of his society; the juxtaposition of writing and exam, in the first part of *Le Fils du Pauvre*, means the sanction of the French school to him, i.e., his inability of writing prevented him from reaching his objective: *After renouncing the exams (Menrad) has wanted to write, He thought he could write* (p. 10).

One notices that writing is directly linked to the social promotion of the

narrator and not of the author since Feraoun (author) says that he had managed to study, to obtain a diploma and to bring relief to his relatives. Writing his novel had been his manner to ask for apology. Yet, Feraoun shows in the very beginning of his novel that his character is then worth questioning this double vision: the one of Fouroulou and the other of Feraoun. Menrad is in Kabylie among the blinds (p.09)<sup>6</sup>, a milieu from where he springs.

*The writer of Le Fils du Pauvre, through his biography that is partly a collective*

*account, and via the language of the colonizer, endeavoured to transmit in the flow dominating culture, but described in the reflux the dominated culture. This is the reason why he regards French as being an encompassing language. This point of view, in a sense, joins up Sartre's declaration when interviewed by Pierre Verstraeten about his relationship to the French language. He said:*

***I regard language as some thing we are inside. Language is a kind of vast reality, what I would call a practico-inert entity. I am in constant touch with it - not in so far as I utter speech... (1968, p.77)***

*Therefore, Feraoun avoids writing in his mother language for it is not universal and certainly he will be unable to introduce someone to his society through his mother tongue (Kabyle), specially that one knows that the ethnic language is limited to a given group. However le Fils du Pauvre does not obey this so pretended norm for it appears as a witness for an anthropological and ethnographical consideration: Feraoun introduces the native to the colonizer through teaching the French culture to his kinsmen. Yet against his will, he appears as a sur-Indigene to the colonial authorities. This spontaneous ethnography though reveals the very historical reality, shows the established order in which communities refuse any type of communication.*

*It is admitted that for Feraoun's novel is similar to the ones of the nineteenth century realist writers, at least as far as the choice of the title is concerned. There is, instance, Flaubert's Madame Bovary and Salambo, as well as Balzac's Le Colonel Chabert and Eugenie Grandet. This seems acceptable since Feraoun, is, innocently and by the mediation of the liberating school, liberated of his misery (Y.Necib, 1986, p. 18). Undoubtedly certain contemporary influences, especially, the ones of Camus with whom he was in contact, are inevitable; Camus' titles: L'etranger, les Justes, Caligula are relevant to Feraoun's le Fils du Pauvre. The latter is conforming to the normative titles of the French writers, for they bear no single mark of authenticity or originality (Names of Kabyle places or persons, or even all what could make reference to North Africa). It is this point that may make of the writings a every subject to censorship.*

It is necessary to underline that other African writers were those whose writings tend towards rational interpretation and thinking. This incites the reader to question the author's use of a foreign language. Achebe for instance, in *Things Fall Apart* is one example of this alleged rational

tendency. This story seems to be coming from the much further back than the mere turn of the nineteenth century since, although, he had plenty of experience of the traditional non-Christian way of life in his own childhood, he really re-creates the world and time of his great grand father, Udo Osiny. This because, Achebe himself says that he had grown up at the cross roads of cultures:

*On one arm of the cross we sang hymns and read the Bible night and day. On the other my father's brother and his family, blinded by the*

*heathenism, offered food to idols (D. Carroll, 1979, pp.01,02).*

It seems necessary to juxtapose Achebe and the Igbo society, considering that he is

a cotemporary writer dealing with the traditional African (Igbo) society. It is a serious matter that raises many questions over Achebe's novel and its background as well as the objective standing behind the choice of those typical characters. Therefore one would ask:

Why is the Igbo background treated in so much detail in the novel ?

What is Achebe's position vis-a-vis the Igbo culture?

Does it make any sense to Achebe to set himself the problem of his

relationship to the Igbo traditions?

Is it really significant to choose Things Fall Apart as a title, and to link it to the

disintegration of a whole cultural patrimony?

This set of questions is open to debate. The fact is that Achebe does not write for a given reading audience; he writes for a much larger audience beyond the borders of the African continent, an audience which has no idea of the traditional Africa just what they might have read about it.

Achebe's compromise with his society is not interpreted only by his earnest reproduction of the 'typical character', but in his natural effect of detailed and realistic treatment of the past, and in part a result of his desire to present things as they really

were. This shows in a sense his *nostalgia* which is not of a sentimental sort, for he says in Hopes and Impediment that his first novel *was an act of atonement with my past, the ritual return and homage of a prodigal son* (1989, p.38). Therefore, the writer's nostalgia consists in overriding desire to establish, in his novel, the Igbo society as a *reality*. Yet his reference to the conflict of his characters seems to be his vision of the future of the African society. One has to accept this reality, because Okonkwo is just a medium through whom he sets his criticism and conveys his message. In this regard Mauriac says:

*Ces personnages fictifs et irréels nous aident a nous mieux connaître et*

*a prendre (^conscience de nous même'.,. he adds 'Ce sont pas les héros qui doivent servilement être comme dans la vie, ce sont au contraire les êtres vivants qui doivent peu a peu conformer aux leçons que dégagent les analyses des grands romanciers' (1972, p.116)*

In fact, through his criticism, Achebe invites the reader to see himself the history of his people, i.e., his story presents a historical view that embodies tables corresponding to the principal historical stages of his people. Although hardly touches on the colonial area, the writer insists upon it. It is the point that turned upside down the history of the Igbos. The author seems convinced that he Africans are not mature enough to

understand the present, and then prepare the future. Through the reproduction of Cervantes's character<sup>7</sup> 'Don Quixote' who fights against wind mills in order to re-establish authentic values, those of the middle age chivalry, and which were abandoned by the 'Renaissance'. This fight is, indeed, significant, but delusive and tragic at once, because these values do no longer exist in the consciousness of the collective mind. Next to him, the valley presents the group that adopts itself to a new world. Achebe's Okonkwo, too, fights but against the new established order brought by the intruders; he fights for the re-establishment of the traditional authentic values. Achebe's reproduction meant an advice that the past of the Igbos may serve as a guide book, and that history, as Borges says, is 'the mother of history' (Piegay- Gros, 1996, p. 166), for both Achebe and Cervantes believe that historical truth is what had happened, and not thought had happened, as again, Borges writes:

*Truth, whose mother is history, is an emulator of time, trust of actions, evidence of the past, example and acquaintance of the present and the future's warning (Ibid)*

Achebe's objective, resides in the fact of not considering a historical conflict as personal drama; that is why he refuses that his character (Okonkwo) in Things Fall Apart lives and narrates the arrival of the colonizers. In this perspective, Simon Gikandi suggests that the narrator's and Achebe's sympathies are not with the heroic character Okonkwo, but with the 'storyteller' or witness (Obierika) who refuses to endorse Okonkwo's commitment to the central doctrines of his culture or the European colonizer's arrogance use of power ([http://:](http:///))<sup>8</sup>.

The point to which the author leads his character is particularly partial, since he is in formal contradiction with his initial potentialities. This systematic way of dealing with his character has a very profound preoccupation and may, particularly, reveal the literary and historical influences he had been subjected to. It is evident that Achebe has been

impressed by Anglo-Saxon writers, and that he had been studying at Ibadan University. D.Coussy, in this perspective, shows that Achebe, has borrowed from Thomas Hardy the essential structure of his intrigue, to know how to present the crisis of a society in front of the oddity of history, a society where one of its members is intransigent (Okonkwo who refuses making concession and the Igbo society). Conrad's Influence is seen in Achebe's endeavour to retain the tragic perception of efforts that men develops *in* order to try to arrive to action. Coussy shows as well that Achebe's influence by Yeats who had seen history as a rotatory movement, around which each society affirms itself, imposed itself, to be destroyed by both internal and external forces which underline and destroy it. In this case, one notices that Yeats's presentation of a society in its issues joins up Achebe's vision of his society and its difficulties. This is what may hint at Achebe's choice of his title.

The fate of the Igbo society consists in a slice of the whole picture of the great disaster that affected the world during WW I, therefore Things Fall Apart is not haphazardly chosen; it has a direct reference to the cataclysm underlined by Yeats. The verses of William Butler Yeats The Second Coming (1921)<sup>9</sup>, written after the catastrophe of WWI, and with communism and Fascism rising, is a compelling glimpse of an inhuman world about to be born. Yeats believed that history in part moved in two thousand-year cycles; the Christian era, which followed that of the ancient world, was about to give way to an ominous period represented by a pitiless beast in the poem (Ibid).

The Anglo-Saxon influence does not mean acculturation; it is rather an attempt to relate the two literary models: the African and the Anglo-Saxon. Yet the way in which he transforms language to his particular ends distinguishes his writing from the writing of other English language novelists. Achebe translates Igbo proverbs and weaves them into his story; he alters English to reflect native Nigerian language in use without,

obviously, distorting the nature of the English. He offers, in this case, 'bifocal'<sup>1</sup> lenses through which one can see beyond easy generalizations about 'third world'<sup>1</sup> and 'Africa'.

What is Achebe's task, but an endeavour to develop African literature. Rene Wellek, in this regard, says:

***The relationship between language and literature is a dialectical relation: literature has profoundly influenced the development of language (1978, p. 175).***

A question over Achebe's use of language may arise. One notices that Achebe deliberately introduces the rhythms, speech patterns, idioms, and other verbal nuances of Igbo culture, therefore, this use of language has a dual character; it is a means of communication and carrier of culture (Ngugi, 1986, p. 13), for he believes that the use of English language is not a problem as far as he is concerned. In a speech entitled *The African Writer and English Language*, Achebe said:

***I have been given the language and I intend to use it (Ibid, p.07)***

Yet, in so far as language is a carrier of culture he adds:

***I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit new African surroundings (Ibid, p. 08).***

Achebe's language tends to preserve the Igbo values, their sense of particularity as members of the human race. Achebe's language carries culture which, as Ngugi says, embodies those moral, ethical and aesthetic

values, the set of spiritual eye glasses through which they come to view themselves and their place in the universe (Ibid, p. 14).

Things Fall Apart pictures the Igbo society, realistically, through spoken and written language. Yet starting with the premises that African literature is a continuous tradition, or a complex of traditions, going back thousands of years and embracing both oral and written forms. From ancient Egypt come the oldest known texts of Folktales. Modern African literature springs from and contributes to this age-long tradition. In this sense, one can say that Achebe uses a western literary genre like the realistic novel and tragedy,<sup>10</sup> transmits the culture of the Igbos by means of written literature and orature.

### Bibliography

#### Works of Fiction

- Achebe, C. (1958), '*Things Fall Apart*', Heinemann, London,
- Camus, A. (1950), '*L'Etranger*', Gallimard, Paris
- Cervantes, M. (1993), '*L'Ingénieux Hidalgo Don Quichotte de la Manche*', Booking International, London
- Fraoun, M. (1950), '*leFils du pauvre*', Seuil, Paris

#### Critical Works

- Achebe, C. (1989), '*Hopes and Impediment*', Heinemann, London
- Achour, C et Rezzoug, S. (1995), '*Convergences Critiques*', OPU, Alger
- Barthes, R. (1972), '*Le Degré Zéro de l'écriture*', ed Seuil, Paris
- Bonn, C. (1986), '*Problématiques Spatiales du Roman Algérien*', OPU, Alger
- Fanon, F. (1967), '*Black Skin White Masks*', Grove Press, New York
- Nacib, Y. (1982/1983), '*Mouloud Feraoun*', SNED, Alger

- Ngugi, W.T, (1986) *Decolonising the Mind*, Heinemann, London
- Sartre, J.P. (1948/1972), ‘ *Qu’est-ce que la littérature ?*’, Gallimard, paris
- Sartre, J.P. (1968), ‘ *Politics and Literature*’, Calders and Boyars, London
- Valery Zéma, P. (1978), ‘ *Pour une Sociologie du Texte Littéraire* ‘, Union Générale d’Edition, Paris
- Wellek, R and Warren, A. (1978), ‘ *Theory of Literature*’, Penguin Books, London
- Zérafra, M. (1976), ‘ *Roman et Société*’ PUF, paris

### **Electronic References**

Achebe Things Fall Apart (1958): *Reading and Studing Questions*,

<http://www.cocc.edu/cagatucci/classes/hum211/achebTFA.htm>

Agatucci, cora, edu. ( (Fall 1998), ‘*Cultures and Literature of Africa*’ Course Pocket for Hum 211. Central Oregan Community College,

<http://www.stg.brown.Edu/projects/...ndow/post/poldiscourse/holla4.html>

Holla, A. ( 1997), ‘*Post Colonial Risedue*’ Brown university, London,

<http://www.stg.brown.Edu/projects/...ndow/post/polidiscourse/holla4.html>

<sup>1</sup> ‘Post Colonial Risedue’ Brown university, London, 1997:

<http://www.stg.brown.Edu/projects/...ndow/post/poldiscourse/holla4.html>

<sup>2</sup> Agatucci, cora, edu ‘*Cultures and Literature of Africa*’ Course Pocket for Hum 211. Central Oregan

Community College, Fall 1998.

<http://www.stg.brown.Edu/projects/...ndow/post/poldiscourse/holla4.html>

<sup>3</sup> The geographical space is the space of evidence; the one of the generalizing ideological values, because a nation is inexistent but only in planetary language (Universal language).

4 J.P.Sartre sees that signification is the logical entity constituted by words (the meaning of sentences), and signified is the object. (1968, p.86)

<sup>5</sup> Feraoun se nourrit de la leçon normalienne avec le zèle du Neophyte. Et en bon élève, il se méfia des idéologies qui endoctrinent (Youcef Nacib, 1986, p. 19) <sup>6</sup> parmi les aveugles (Le Fils du Pauvre)

<sup>6</sup> Parmi les aveugles (Le Fils du Pauvre)

7 I have made reference to 'Don Quixote' of Cervantes and not, for example the one of Pierre Minard, because the latter considers and defines history as being the very source of truth, i.e., that the historical truth is not what happened but thought had happened; secondly, because the period in which the same story is written is completely different: Almost two centuries are enough to get that divergent perception and thus conception of the world.

8 Achebe Things Fall Apart (1958): Reading and Studying Questions, [http://www.cocc.edu/cagatucci/classes/hum211/acheb\\_TFA.htm](http://www.cocc.edu/cagatucci/classes/hum211/acheb_TFA.htm)

9 The Second Coming (1921), by W.B. Yeats. Achebe took his title from the following verses: Turning and turning in the widening gyre The falcon cannot hear the falconer; Things Fall Apart; the centre cannot hold; Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world, The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and every where The ceremony of innocence is drowned; The best lack all conviction, while the worst Are full of passionate intensity.

<sup>10</sup> The song of Uchendu, 'For whom is it well, for whom is it well?

There is no one for whom it is well'

is cited in his speech to Okonkwo and the other family members (a dirge) sung when a woman dies very like the closing lines of Oedipus Rex, the great classical Greek tragedy. Many similarities have noticed between Achebe's first novel and classical tragedies Oedipus and Hamlet in the European tradition. How can one read Okonkwo as a hero in terms of Aristotle's concept of tragedy? Aristotle may define 'tragedy' as a dramatic narrative in which serious and important actions turn out disastrously for the protagonist or

*tragic hero* . The classical Western tragic hero is the main character of great importance to his state or culture and is conventionally of noble birth and high social station,