

英文要旨

Being a writer in Africa : Reading works of Bernard Dadié and Véronique Tadjó

In the nations of West Africa, in particular the former French colonies, most of the literary works are still written in French. This is mainly because these nations including the Ivory Coast have chosen French as their official language since independence was declared in 1960, making French mandatory in the public school system. The origin of African literature in French of West Africa dates back to the autobiographical novels written by a few educated indigenous Africans during the 1950's. Since then, literary works have been written mainly by intellectual elites in this region, while for the majority of people French remains an unreadable language. For most of these African authors, writing is a way to examine and understand the existing difficulties or cruel hardships within their society or within the greater African continent. At the same time it seems that in the process of writing they take an introspective approach to their role in African society. This thesis paper explores half a century of African literature written in French by West Africans, and further examines what has led and continues to lead these Africans to write, what is the meaning to write for them, and why so many literary works have been produced even if many of the people whom the writers describe in their text can't read books in French. For these purposes I will compare two Ivorian writers from different generations : Bernard Dadié (1916-) and Véronique Tadjó (1955-). In this comparative study, I will in particular focus on Tadjó's writing style and how she confronts some of problems in Africa, like civil wars, as an African writer today.

In the 1st chapter the historical background of this literature is followed. West African writers are heirs of the *négritude* movement invented in Paris during the 1930's by Black intellectuals from the colonies. French colonial authorities educated a few indigenous people to assimilate them to French

culture. The objective was to train assistants for colonial administration duties, but as a consequence of this policy, these educated people acquired an European sense of value and perspective and saw their surroundings and themselves through it. Consequently négritude intellectuals refused French assimilation and instead expressed themselves through poetic works. This literary movement and consciousness had a great influence on educated Africans (“évolués”) in French West Africa. Additionally this chapter also explores the colonial school system of French West Africa to show the reality of such an assimilative education. Forced to learn French language, culture and history, the « évolués » were separated from their own culture. Then after World War II, facing the radical political changes of the French colonies and their new experiences, some of “évolués” wrote autobiographical novels. Writing is supposed to be a way for them to reflect their own culture, how they were formed at school, and what kind of role they were charged in the colonized society. During this period, if they wanted to express themselves in writing, they had to write in French because African expression was traditionally mainly oral. However most of writers of this region continue to use French even after the independence, because of the preserved political and economic relationship with France. Although the writers are placed in difficult situation because of the lack of French comprehension by the public majority, they attempt to express the serious conditions within Africa.

In the 2nd chapter, the life and works of Dadié and Tadjó are examined. Dadié gained the title of “évolué”. Following his participation in the anti-colonial movement, the experiences of which are included in his novel *Climbié* published in 1956. Similarly Tadjó published her first book of poetry entitled *Latérite*, in 1984. Tadjó studied in France and America, and later taught at university in the Ivory Coast and now teaches in the South Africa. As her mother is from France, French is her first language for expression. With both authors, experience, cultural background, gender, generation and expression of identity are very different, but, they do share something in

common : they are two of the highest educated people in their own epoch and when they write, they are motivated by the desire to study and understand themselves as well as the reality of the Africans.

In the 3rd chapter Dadié's *Climbié* and Tadjó's *Champs de bataille et d'amour* (*Battle field and field of love*) are compared. The main character of each text, Climbié and Eloka are intellectuals and they analyze the problems of their society making good use of their knowledge and try to find a way to change the present state. However, Tadjó's main character Eloka seems to feel more lonely and helpless against the accumulated problems of his country when compared to Climbié, Dadié's self identified character. Moreover, on one hand for Dadié his writing acts as a testimony of the brutal reality of Africans' life. Thus in *Climbié*, Dadié expresses his views on colonized African society and remarks on the distinct experiences of his generation, especially the anti-colonial movement driven by French oppressive forces. But in the end of the story, the main character Climbié believes that the movement in which he participated shook sufficiently French government and he still maintains hopeful for a peaceful future. On the other hand, Tadjó too is certainly motivated by the real matters in Africa and focuses especially on one of the conflicts of recent years, the genocide of Rwanda in 1994. But, contrary to Dadié's *Climbié*, Tadjó's text is more difficult to read. The reader is forced to pursue dispersed monologues of Eloka and his wife, Aimée, but it is not always easy to interpret what they feel and think, because Tadjó's writing presents there several meanings. Moreover, beside Climbié, Tadjó's main characters don't know how to imagine their future. What they can do is only to look back their life, and try to change their point of view and their relationship with others. Tadjó doesn't give solutions to the present problems in Africa, but her book does invite her readers to search them together with her main characters.

In the 4th and 5th chapters, to study the differences of expression between Tadjó and Dadié, I will compare in addition one other work from each author.

These texts refer to the famous “Reine Pokou” (“Queen Pokou”). She is thought to be the ancestor of the Baoulé, one of about sixty ethnic groups in the Ivory Coast. It was Dadié who described her for the first time in his literary text in 1936. His text, *Assémien Déhylé*, shows that Pokou was a queen who sacrificed her son to calm a seething river. This legend of Pokou is so well known in the Ivory Coast that, after Dadié, many Ivorian writers produced literary works making reference of her and her sacrifice. When the Ivory Coast was devastated by violence and fell into a civil war in 2002, Tadjo again made reference to this legend and presented another images of Pokou in her book *Reine Pokou* (*Queen Pokou*) published in 2004. In these chapters, following the study about the back ground and intention to describe Pokou’s sacrifice of Dadié, Tadjo and other authors, the background of this Ivorian crisis is explained. Additionally, each authors’ texts are examined one by one. In fact, Tadjo criticizes Pokou’s sacrifice, and other authors’ emphasis of it, because of the justification it provides towards sacrificing children and youth for the conquest of power in Africa today. I will show how Tadjo analyzed this legend and how she expresses her criticism on Pokou’s sacrifice, and reveal her intent of using her writing to guarantee a rich experience of reading for those who open her book. This is her way to cope with difficulties in Africa today as an African writer.

In the 6th chapter, through the viewpoint examined above, I will study briefly some other subjects that Dadié and Tadjo treat mutually in their works, but in which Tadjo shows her own point of view and independently executes her other writing.

Hoping to give energy in Africans’ life, West African authors have been writing since the beginning of African founded French literature. Now, Tadjo comes succeeding her predecessors, and adding her originality to each work. Although the situation in Africa doesn’t permit any immediate solutions, Tadjo shows her readers how to see and think of things from several sides, demonstrating that there may be more than one solution.