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THE MYTH OF LOST PARADISE IN THE POETRY OF LEOPOLD SEDAR SENCHOR

by

Janice Sue Spleth

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to analyse the imagery in the poetry of Léopold Sédar Senghor. To fulfil this objective, we have focused on one central and unifying image, that which compares the poet’s childhood to lost paradise. This constantly recurring analogy emerges, on examination, as a key concept around which the entire work may be organized, a form of continuity which is derived from its importance in Senghor’s thought, but also from the nature of the image itself.

For Senghor, the African landscape of his childhood is by far the most important source of his symbolic imagery, as he indicates in an essay entitled “Comme les lamantins vont boire à la source”:

Et puisqu’il faut m'expliquer sur mes poèmes, je confesse—rai encore que presque tous les êtres et choses qu’ils évoquent sont de mon canton: quelques villages sérères perdus parmi les tannes, les bois, les bolongs et les champs. Il me suffit de les nommer pour revivre le Royaume d’enfance—et le lecteur avec moi, je l’espère—«à travers des forêts de symboles». ¹

In addition to providing the language for Senghor's poems, the fabulous and enchanted kingdom of childhood is itself an important symbol in the poet's repertoire, signifying for him the collective values of the African culture, of Negritude: "Voilà le mythe de l'Afrique-Royaume d'Enfance, je veux dire des vertus retrouvées. C'est le terme ultime du pèlerinage aux sources, la nostalgie de tous nos poètes, la Négritude qu'ils doivent vivre et prêcher comme la Bonne Nouvelle." ² In its association with Negritude, the image of the lost paradise of childhood holds very distinct implications for the future and for the role of the poet with respect to society: "Il m'a donc suffi de nommer les choses, les éléments de mon univers enfantin, pour prophétiser la Cité de demain, qui ressértra des cendres de l'ancienne, ce qui est la mission du Poète." ³ As a setting for his poetic imagination and as a symbol of the values
of Negritude, Senghor's lost Eden is thus an easily justifiable starting point for a study of the poetry.

It gains further importance, however, when it is considered in its relationship with the universal myth of lost paradise, for, around the world, we find a nostalgia for the primordial era which, like Senghor's childhood paradise, stands as a source of human behavior and a model for a more nearly perfect society. The broad implications of this myth and the complex of images which are traditionally associated with it provide an already well-established structure which will serve as a guideline for our study and a unified basis for our approach.

In isolating the elements of the paradise myth and in relating it to human behavior, we have had to rely on previous studies of the nature of myth. The most useful have been the works of Mircea Eliade, specifically his book entitled *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries* in which the author takes the myth of lost paradise as his point of departure in an effort to show, as the title suggests, the evidence of myth in man's rituals and in his dreams. In his definition of myth, Eliade emphasizes the impact of the concept of a primordial era on human activity: "There is no myth which is not the unveiling of a 'mystery', the revelation of a primordial event which inaugurated either a constituent structure of reality or a kind of human behavior." He describes the paraisiac quality of the primordial era and discusses man's persistent nostalgia for this paradise, his examples being drawn from both primitive religions and Christianity. The very diversity of his illustrations his assertion of the widespread existence of the myth.

The approach of myth criticism is particularly well-suited to the study of Senghor's poetry. As we have shown, it provides both a focal point for our analysis and a structure upon which the imagery may be organized. Owing to Senghor's constant utilization of African ritual and belief, the presence of myth is, in addition, clearly and readily distinguishable in his works. And finally, in a
comparative sense, this approach enables us to demonstrate the
universal aspect of the images and patterns in the poems.

It is chiefly this last point that has drawn us to the field
of myth criticism, which, through the efforts of those like Campbell
in his work *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, has sought to show the
presence of certain universal characteristics throughout the various
cultures of the world. While the existence of such common elements
has become easily demonstrable fact, the explanation of the phenom-
emon seems far more controversial, and although we shall not attempt
to answer that question, let us merely quote the following comment
by Jung which relates to the issue: "All the mythological processes
of nature such as summer and winter, the phases of the moon, the
rainy seasons and so forth are in no sense allegories of these objec-
tive experiences; rather they are symbolic expressions of the inner
unconscious drama of the psyche which becomes accessible to con-
sciousness by way of projection—that is, mirrored in the events
of nature." ⁶ Taken in this context, myth can be considered as the
expression of the experience of man's inner self. Expanding on
this point, we may say that the appearance of myth in literature
is therefore an individual's personal presentation of that experience,
whether psychic or cultural, and the effectiveness of the writer
rests in his own creative ability, in his independent variation
of the universal pattern. In demonstrating the ramifications of
the myth of lost paradise as it appears in Senghor's poetry, we
shall, on one hand, link the poet to the universal traditions which
surround the myth, and, on the other hand, show the creative aspect
of the poet's personal version of the myth.

By concentrating on this aspect of Senghor's poetry, we hope
to broaden somewhat the perspective on his works since, for the most
part, previous studies have sought to establish them in their
contemporary role as an illustration of Négritude. We are, however,
deeply indebted to our predecessors for the foundation which has
already been laid. Lilyan Kesteloot's work, *Les écrivains noirs*
noir de langue française, provides a study of the Negritude movement and serves to situate Senghor's work and ideas against that background. Léopold Sédar Senghor by Armand Guibert, a comprehensive and thoughtful biography of the poet, is an indispensable reference. Also useful is the thematic analysis, Léopold Sédar Senghor: L'Africain, by Hubert de Lusse. Dealing more directly with African influences and the concept of Negritude, as indicated by their titles, are Mauq's Léopold Sédar Senghor et la défense et illustration de la civilisation noire and Washington's dissertation, "The Concept of Negritude in the Poetry of Léopold Sédar Senghor", both of which offer extensive bibliographies. Markovitz's book, Léopold Sédar Senghor and the Politics of Negritude, views Senghor mainly as a political figure as do the studies by Milcent and Sordet and by Rous, all of which are valuable to the student of Senghor as documentation for the events of his life.

With the exception of the second chapter dealing with the love poems, our study will examine Senghor's work chronologically by date of publication. In Chapter I, we will look first at the actual nature of Senghor's childhood and adolescence and then at its portrayal as a lost paradise in the poems of Chants d'Ombre.
CHAPTER I

THE MYTH OF LOST PARADISE IN CHANTS D'OMBRE

Childhood and Youth

What was the character of those childhood years which would play such an important role in the creative expression of the adult mind? As we examine the biographical material, we become aware of certain dominant themes. We note first of all the child's close-ness to Nature and to the traditional Africa which would later provide the imagery for his poetic works. Later it is important to notice the role of the Catholic faith in Senghor's education, for while it is impossible to determine with certainty the exact source of the myth elements in Senghor's works, we cannot overlook the impact of his early religious experience.

Senghor was born in 1906 in the former Portuguese enclave of Joal, a village located about a hundred kilometers south of Dakar. This region of Senegal is inhabited chiefly by the Serers, an agricultural people numbering approximately 500,000 who are frequently cited for their industriousness and for their attachment to the soil: "Ils sont parmi les meilleurs des 'paysans noirs'. Pour eux, la terre est un symbole, la terre qu'on aime parce que l'on dépend d'elle, qu'on peut tout attendre d'elle." In contrast with their Muslim neighbors, the Serers are for the most part Catholic, although a number of traditional cults still persist.

As a member of the Serer tribe, Senghor could claim his sensitivity to Nature as a legitimate heritage, one which he would later honor with the following lines:

J'ai choisi mon peuple noir peinant, mon peuple paysan,
toute la race paysanne par le monde.
Et tes frères se sont irrités contre toi, ils t'ont mis à bêcher la terre.
Pour être ta trompette!

5
As we shall indicate in our discussion of Négritude, Senghor's fascination for the earth is more than a romantic preoccupation with nature, for it is on the intimate relationship between the African and his environment that Senghor bases his arguments for an African civilization.

In Joal, the infant was baptized and a few months later taken to Djilor, twenty-three miles away. Here, on the banks of the Sine, a tributary of the Saloum, he would spend the first years of his life, immersed in the customs of traditional African society.

By local standards, his father, Basile Diogoye Senghor, was a wealthy man, whose lands yielded rich crops of rice, millet and groundnuts, and who was, in addition, a successful merchant. Because of his father's prosperity, the young son was relieved of the laborious farm tasks usually required of the Serer child and was instead free to enjoy a childhood of relative unconstraint.

The elder Senghor's dignity in the community is testified to by his dealings with the king of Sine from whom he had received some of his lands as a gift and whose visit to Djilor so impressed the future poet:

Car j'avais eu la chance, dans mon enfance, d'entendre, de vivre cette poésie-là, quand le dernier Roi du Sine, Komba N'Dofène Diouf, venait rendre visite à mon père. Il arrivait en magnifique arroi, sous son manteau de pourpre, sur son cheval-du-fleuve. Et quatre troubadours, quatre griots l'escortaient, parmi d'autres, comme les quatre portes de la Ville et les quatre provinces du Royaume. Ils chantaient, les griots, en s'accompagnant de leur tama: de leur tam-tam d'aisselle. Que chantaient-ils sinon le Roi et le Royaume?

The pomp and splendor of the king's procession and, not surprisingly, the "griots"—the poet-entertainers who attended the king—remained a vivid spectacle in Senghor's memory, one which lends an aura of truly royal splendor to the Royaume d'enfance.

In the poem "À l'appel de la race de Saba," Senghor draws portraits of both his parents. His father, he portrays with the grandeur of a patriarch:
Et mon père étendu sur des nattes paisibles, mais grand
mais fort mais beau
Homme du Royaume de Sine, tandis qu'alentour sur les
kôras, voix héroïques, les griots font danser leurs doigts
de fougue
Tandis qu'au loin monte, houleuse de senteurs fortes et
chaudes, la rumeur classique de cent troupeaux. (p. 58)
The mother's portrait, however, is a much more human one, full of
warmth and emotion, and it is to her that the poem is addressed:

Mère, oh ! j'entends ta voix courroucée.
Voilà tes yeux courroucés et rouges qui incendient nuit et
brousses noires comme au jour jadis de mes fugues
— Je ne pouvais rester sourd à l'innocence des conques
des fontaines et des mirages sur les tanns
Et tremblait ton menton sous tes lèvres gonflées et tordues.
(p. 57)

Senghor's mother, G'Nîlame Bakhoum, came from Djilas and
was a member of the Peul tribe. The poet confesses a great
affection for her: "J'étais très turbulent, mais j'adorais
ma mère comme les enfants africains, je dormais dans sa chambre,
et même la journée quand je me réveillais de ma sieste et que
je ne la voyais pas, je me mettais à pleurer." 5 This attachment
must have been reinforced by the fact that, as in many African
tribes, clan membership among the Serers is determined by matri-
lineal descent, the woman being considered as "dépositaire de la
vie et gardienne de la tradition." 6 Thus the mother and her family
normally play a very important role in the child's life and in his
education.

This situation seems to account for Senghor's strong attachment
to his mother's brother Tokô'Waly, the eldest member of the clan
and a herdsman to whom Sédar went to learn about Nature and the
Ancestors: "Je me sentais du sang maternel ... et je recherchais
en toute occasion la société de mon oncle, qui m'a ouvert les yeux
à la vie des bêtes et aux phénomènes de la nature." 7 It is in this
role of Teacher that Senghor portrays his uncle in his poems:

Toi Tokô'Waly, tu écoutes l'inaudible
Et tu m'expliques les signes que disent les Ancêtres dans
la sérénité marine des constellations
Under this influence, Senghor spent the first seven years of his life, living in harmony with the rhythm of Nature and learning his first lessons from Africa itself.

His adventures with his young companions were not, however, to his father's liking, or perhaps the frequent visits to Djilas provoked paternal jealousy. Guibert tells us: "Autant par fierté de caste que sous l'effet d'une jalousie inavouée, le père s'insurgeait devant cette fréquentation, et il lui arrivait de battre au retour de ses escapades le fils qui vivait en toute innocence sa mythologie enfantine..." At any rate, the period of complete abandon was terminated when in 1914, Senghor was sent to the Catholic mission in Joal. But the setting here was still African, and the discipline was not so strict as to prevent the children from attending wrestling matches—a traditional sport—or listening to the singing of traditional songs. In his poem "Joal", Senghor recalls the sights and sounds which he associated with that setting:

Je me rappelle les festins funèbres fumant du sang des troupeaux égorgeés
Du bruit des querelles, des rhapsodies des griots.
Je me rappelle les voix païennes rythmant le Pantomime
Et les processions et les palmes et les arcs de triomphe.

These lines exhibit a harmonious blend of both Christian and traditional influences.

The following year, Senghor, at the age of eight, was sent to boarding school at N'Gasobil where, under the care of the Fathers of the Holy Spirit, the students learned not only to use their minds but to work with their hands as well, for lessons were accompanied by domestic and farm chores:

... la règle veut qu'ils cultivent tous l'arachide et le manioc, qu'à tour de rôle ils lavent la vaisselle et gardent les troupeaux, enfin qu'ils soignent les arbres destinés à donner de l'ombrage aux générations à venir.
The motto at N'Gasobil was "Soyez Nègres avec les Nègres afin de les gagner à Jésus-Christ." The atmosphere here was liberal, and classes freely structured. The work of the mission involved it in the life of the community, and the local dialect of Wolof was taught along with French and the rudiments of Latin.

Even in these first years of separation from his family, Senghor remained very close to the land and the people. To continue his education, however, it was necessary for the student to go to Dakar, where in 1922, he enrolled at the Collège Libermann, a seminary, for he had, at this time, a strong inclination for the priesthood which was later discouraged by his teachers.

Dakar, the capital city, represented a strong contrast to the region in which Senghor had grown up and to the village life to which he was accustomed. Also different was the educational philosophy, the liberal attitudes of the Fathers of the Holy Spirit being replaced by those less sympathetic to the African mind and traditions. France's attitudes toward education in its colonies, marked by its policy of assimilation, advocated educating the African in the values and standards of Western Civilization and minimized the importance of his traditional heritage. In contrast with the bilingual education characteristic of British colonial education, native languages had no place in the curriculum. Subject matter conformed to that required in metropolitan France. The attitudes associated with this policy are reflected in the following account by Senghor of an experience at the Collège Libermann:

Nous avions un directeur de Collège, le Père Lalouse, de colonialisme. Il insistait beaucoup sur nos défauts nègres et dénonçait notre retard sur le plan de la civilisation. Comme j'avais reçu une éducation bourgeoise et même aristocratique, je régissais en affirmant, déjà, que nous avions, nous aussi, une civilisation.10

The policy of assimilation, as it affected education, tended to create an individual alienated from his own people and culture. In Senghor's reaction, we see already the affirmation of a Black
culture which would later be developed in the philosophy of Negritude.

On leaving the Collège Libermann, Senghor next attended the private school which would soon become the Lycée Van Vollenhoven. And finally, the sense of alienation brought about by the policy of assimilation and affecting Senghor first in the form of French educational policies, would be climaxed by his physical separation from Africa, for in 1928, having received a partial scholarship from the French government, he left Senegal to continue his studies at the renowned Lycée Louis-le-Grand in Paris.

The period of the Royaume d'enfance was definitively over. It would, however, remain very strongly alive in the poet's memory, nourished by nostalgia and transformed by passing time, a personal myth from which poetic reality would be created. The countryside which he had known so intimately as a child and whose secrets he had understood—the rivers, the tannas, the exotic flora and fauna—would become the symbols with which to express the complexities of adult experiences and reactions; furthermore, it will become increasingly evident in the course of this study that the poet never ceased longing to return to the life of his childhood which in his imagination becomes analogous with paradise.

The Myth of Paradise in "Que m'accompagnent kòras et balafong"

In order to see more specifically how this relationship is established, let us examine the poem "Que m'accompagnent kòras et balafong" where the comparison between childhood and paradise appears for the first time. The poem, dated 1939 and published in Chants d'ombre, is comprised of nine rather loosely connected stanzas whose structure is subject to the meanderings of the poet's imagination. The resulting train of thought, however, clearly establishes concrete ties between the childhood Eden and the universal myth of paradise.

The comparison is explicit in the first two stanzas, lyrical
descriptions of the poet's African childhood which are immediately reminiscent of the biblical Garden of Eden:

Au détour du chemin la rivière, bleu par les prés frais de Septembre.
Un paradis que garde des fièvres une enfant aux yeux clairs comme deux épées
Paradis mon enfance africaine, qui gardait l'innocence de l'Europe. (p. 28)

The river, of course, is a traditional attribute of paradise:
"And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads" (Genesis II: 10). The presence of the child-guardian whose eyes are compared to the brightness of swords recalls the biblical image of cherubim placed at the edge of the garden to protect the way to the Tree of Life after Adam and Eve had been expelled:

23 Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.
24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.
(Genesis III)

While the elements of the description are modified in Senghor's lines, the essential relationship remains clear.

As we continue reading the poem, further similarities appear:

Quels mois alors? Quelle année? Je me rappelle sa douceur fuyante au crépuscule
Que mouraient au loin les hommes comme aujourd'hui, que fraîche était, comme un limon, l'ombre des tamariniers. (p. 28)

Just as man was immortal in the Garden, so Senghor tells, death seemed very far away. The poet may be referring simply to the distance which lies between youth and old age or to the concrete rumors of a distant war.

The inclusion of the tamarind trees would be a natural addition to the African landscape, but the image is also a part of the permanent trappings of Paradise. Certainly, the luxuriant trees which provided sustenance in Eden were a principal
part of the garden's appeal:

8 And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.
9 And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. (Genesis II)

The prominent role of the Tree of Life and of the Tree of Knowledge in the fall of man give the presence of the trees in the garden additional significance.

The temporal situation of the childhood paradise also brings it within the realm of myth. In establishing the setting, the poet asks: "Quels mois alors? Quelle année?" The same unanswered question reappears in the fifth stanza as if to emphasize that the sense of time is vague, the child's unawareness of the passage of time serving here to create the atmosphere of timelessness associated with the fabled places of myth. The disorientation of the reader is heightened as the poem weaves back and forth through the various media of memory, allegory, legend, and prophetic vision.

Elsewhere the poet places his paradise outside our normal concept of time by giving it an aura of the eternal: "Mon enfance, mes agneaux, est vieille comme le monde et je suis jeune comme l'aurore éternellement jeune du monde" (p. 31). This assertion of the enduring nature of his childhood is repeated in the last line of the poem where the speaker addresses himself to the personified figure of Africa: "Reçois l'enfant toujours enfant, que douze ans d'errances n'ont pas vieilli" (p. 370. The use of such images as dawn and childhood, however, bring us back to the realization that the paradise of which the poet sings is first and foremost at the beginning of time or even before time. There is also a tendency on Senghor's part to equate the concept of pre-time as it refers to childhood with pre-colonial Africa or at least to view in similar terms the child's exposure to Europe and the corruption of Africa through contact with Western Civilization. This leads to a third characteristic which links Senghor's childhood to the conventional concept of Eden, the element
of innocence.

In the introductory lines of this poem, those which were quoted earlier, Senghor speaks of his paradise as a barrier between the innocence of childhood and European contagion. In the second stanza, the idea is repeated:

Je me réfugiais vers toi, Fontaine-des-Éléphants à la bonne eau balbutiante
Vers vous, mes Anciens, aux yeux graves qui approfondissent toutes choses.
Et me guidait par épines et signes Verdun qui Verdun, le chien qui gardait l'innocence de l'Europe.  (p. 29)

The child thus retains his purity as did Adam and Eve before the fall. The adult, however, wears the taint of Western Civilization, and in order to regain the virtues of the childhood paradise, he must be purified of its contamination. In the eighth stanza of the poem, he seeks the restoration of that purity:

O désert sans ombre désert, terre austère terre de pureté,
de toutes mes petites
Lave-moi, de toutes mes contagions de civilisé.
Que me lave la face ta lumière qui n'est point subtile, que ta violence sèche me baigne dans une tornade de sable
Et tel le blanc mélari de race, que mes lèvres de neuf jours en neuf jours soient chastes de toute eau terrestre, et silencieuses.  (p. 35)

The desert, with its wind, sand, and intense heat, is a symbol of purity, an ordeal of purification.

If the African is merely corrupted by his association with Europe, the West itself has long strayed from the paths of spirituality and needs only await the vengeance of God: its purification will be by fire and is already visible on the horizon in the form of the imminent world conflict. The poet sees a vision of the future: "Voici que la Somme et la Seine et le Rhin et les sauvages fleuves esclaves sont rouges sous l'épée de l'Archange ... " (p. 36). Divine retribution is a persistent theme in the later collection entitled *Hosties Noires*, for it makes up the poet's personal interpretation of the horrors of the Second World War.

Apart from the first two stanzas which focus on the poet's
early years, the remainder of the poem serves as a further statement of his African identity. The third stanza takes us into the realm of allegory where the poet's precarious position between two cultures is described as an attraction to two different women; his choice falls to Africa, personified as Soukeïna in whom he finds both his muse and his commitment:

J'ai choisi le verset des fleuves, des vents et des forêts
L'assonance des plaines et des rivières, choisi le rythme
de sang de mon corps dépouillé
Choisi la trémulsion des balafongs et l'accord des cordes
et des cuivres qui semble faux, choisi le
Swing le swing oui le swing!
Et la lointaine trompette bouchée, comme une plainte de néculeuse en dérive dans la nuit
Comme l'appel du Jugement, trompette éclatante sur les charniers neigeux d'Europe. (p. 30)

The poet as a sounding trumpet and the image of the jazz trumpet are frequently repeated in Senghor's poetry; the reference to Gabriel's horn, however, is especially revealing in that it foreshadows the image of the avenging archangel in a later stanza.

In the fourth stanza, the poet reaffirms this commitment to Africa, divesting himself of his European trappings to assert that part of his being that is African. He recalls his youth and the tales of the "griots": the story of the king's visit adds a regal touch to the child's world; the legend of a heroic ancestor provides not only an element of valor but also a sense of the continuity of the tribe in the survival of the royal princess. The Princess herself is the subject of the seventh stanza, and her royalty is a symbol of the prosperity and the propagation of the race which leads the poet to contemplate the future of Africa in a vision which foretells the triumph of the values of Negritude:

Ce sont sept mille nègres nouveaux, sept mille soldats
sept mille paysans humbles et fiers
Qui portent les richesses de ma race sur leurs épaules
d'amphore
La Force la Noblesse la Candeur
Et comme d'une femme, l'abandonnement ravie à la grande force
cosmique, à l'Amour qui meut les mondes chantants. (pp. 35-36)

In the poet's vision, he dreams of a new Africa founded on what
he refers to as its authentic wealth, those cultural characteristics which we will examine later in our study of Negritude. These values are significantly the traditional values of Africa and, as such, represent the values of the childhood paradise, which the poet sees recaptured here in some future society. Thus in "que m'accompagnent kéras et balafong," Senghor has juxtaposed the two poles of his imaginary universe: the childhood Eden and its recreation in some earthly form. The search to reconstruct the lost paradise which represents the poet's African heritage is fundamental to Senghor's thought and is reflected in both his poetry and his political objectives.

In many respects, this search takes on the characteristics of the traditional quest theme, and Northrop Frye identifies possible prototypes in Christian mythology:

There are thus two concentric quest—myths in the Bible, a Genesis—apocalypse myth and an Exodus millennium myth. In the former, Adam is cast out of Eden, loses the river of life and the tree of life, and wanders in the labyrinth of human history until he is restored to his original state by the Messiah. In the latter Israel is cast out of his inheritance and wanders in the labyrinths of Egyptian and Babylonian captivity until he is restored to his original state in the Promised Land. As in the biblical myth, Senghor takes the role of Adam exiled from his Eden and of Israel, too, in search of the Promised Land.

As the poet's vision recedes, he returns in the last stanza to contemplate the memories of his African childhood which come to center on the personified figure of the African night:

Nuit d'Afrique ma nuit noire, mystique et claire noire et brillante
Tu repose accordée à la terre, tu es la Terre et les collines harmonieuses.
O Beauté classique qui n'es point angle, mais ligne élastique égante élanée! (p. 37)

The poet uses a contrast here between rigidity, which he attributes to technological cultures, and suppleness, which he associates with Africa, a relationship further developed in other poems.
This image is one of the three personifications of Africa which appear in the poem, and while each of these figures serves its unique function and exhibits distinctly individual characteristics, together they all share certain traits in common. Senghor almost invariably perceives Africa in a female form, and although she is elsewhere depicted as the poet's mistress, in "Jue m'accompagne kôras et balafong," it is rather a maternal image which is dominant, the poet assuming the role of a child.

The allegory of Soukeïna, whom the poet calls "sister", is introduced by what is apparently a children's nursery rhyme:

Entendez tambour qui bat!  
Maman qui m'appelle.  
Elle m'a dit Toubab!  
D'embrasser la plus belle. (p. 30)

Consequently, the reader sees the poet in the opening lines as a small boy, being cradled in the arms of the black girl who is the collective representative of Africa, its land and its people.

The maternal nature of the Princess is far more evident, for she is responsible for the continuity of the tribe. In several lines, she appears as a veritable fertility goddess: "Tu es l'organe riche de réserves, les greniers qui craquent pour les jours d'épreuve/—Ils nourissent fourmis et colombe oisives" (p. 34). Elsewhere she is figuratively linked more specifically to the earth: "Tu es ton peuple./La terre sombre de ta peau et féconde, généreusement il l'arrose de la tornade séminal" (p. 34). The Princess and her consort are here described in images depicting the primordial couple, the Earth and Sky, the original source of human life.

While the Princess is portrayed in images drawn from the land, the last personification of Africa is a landscape which takes on human form as we have already seen. Once again, the figure represents Africa and the African spirit which, for Senghor, is Negritude. This third image is far more sensual than the two preceding ones, but the poet continues to portray himself as a child: "Repos l'enfant toujours enfant, j'ai douze ans d'errances
n'ont pas vieilli" (p. 37).

On one hand, it is easy to explain the poet's personification of Africa as a woman simply because he very clearly states that the African mind thinks of the land as female, as Mother Earth.

Mais l'objet lui-même, très souvent, est senti comme une personne. C'est le cas des phénomènes naturels: plaine, fleuve, forêt. Nous l'avons dit: l'Ancêtre, en occupant le sol, s'est lié à lui au nom de la famille. Et la Terre est un génie féminin; et l'on célèbre, "solemnellement", le mariage mystique du groupe et de la Terre-Mère. 13

This anthropomorphic concept of objects also indicates a possible cultural source of the poet's persistent use of personification.

On the other hand, the poet's description of Africa as a woman may relate to the ramifications of the paradise myth. Myth being a reflection of human experience, a parallel may be drawn between the notion of Eden and life in the womb; birth would therefore pass for the exile of man from the garden into a world fraught with difficulties and lacking that first innocence. In some cultures, the relationship is made strikingly obvious be the similarity between myths of creation and the process of childbirth. Eliade notes the recognition of this implication in modern psychoanalysis:

... one might say that there was once a "paradise" (which for psychoanalysis is the pre-natal period, or the time before weaning), ending with a "break" or "catastrophe" (the infantile trauma), and that whatever the adult's attitude may be towards these prilordial circumstances, they are none the less constitutive of his being. 14

A perhaps comparable trauma of separation being part of the poet's personal drama, it is easy to see how the poet might transfer maternal associations to Africa and the paradise of his childhood.

In the last lines of the poem "Que m'accompagne kôras et balafong," the poet refers again to Negritude and uses the
lui cette abstraite humanité incolore: il est noir.
Ainsi est-il acclamé à l'authenticité: insulté, asservi,
il se redresse, il ramasse le mot de "nègre" qu'on lui
a jeté comme une pierre, il se revendique comme noir,
en face du blanc, dans la fierté. 16

It was this reaction which lead to the cultural revolt implicit
in the Negritude movement and which would lead in the post-war
era to the independence of a large number of African nations.

Senghor has done much to give Negritude its more precise
outlines and to carve it into a recognizable philosophy. Defined
in its broadest sense, Negritude is "le patrimoine culturel, les
valeurs et surtout l'esprit de la civilisation négro-africaine." 17

In order to point out more specifically what Senghor considered
these qualities to be at the time he wrote "Que m'accompagnent
kôras et balafong," let us examine an article entitled "Ce que
l'homme noir apporte" which, like the poem, was also dated 1939.

The title of the essay is in itself significant, for in
addition to being the foundation of the new Africa, Negritude,
according to Senghor, is also the infusion which can revitalize
and remodel a spiritually decadent Western Civilization, and
it is along this line that he begins:

Que le Nègre soit déjà présent dans l'élaboration
du monde nouveau, ce ne sont pas les troupes d'Afrique
engagées en Europe qui le prouvent; elles prouveraient
seulement qu'il participe à la démolition de l'ancien
ordre, du vieil ordre. C'est dans quelques œuvres
singulières d'écrivains et d'artistes contemporains que
le Nègre révèle sa présence actuelle; et aussi dans
quelques autres, moins parfaites, peut-être, émouvantes
cependant, venant d'hommes noirs. 18

Going on to enumerate the specific qualities which characterize
what Senghor terms "l'âme noire", 19 he first takes up the
question of the African's perception of the world and then
relates it to his religious and social life; he concludes with
a look at the black personality as it is revealed in the arts,
especially in sculpture and in music.

In defining the African soul, Senghor is quick to distinguish
Bien des ouvrages ont paru sur «l'âme nègre». Elle demeure forêt mystérieuse sous le vol des avions. Le P. Libermann disait à ses missionnaires: «Soyez Nègres avec les Nègres afin de les gagner à Jésus-Christ.» C'est dire que la conception rationaliste, les explications mécaniste-matérialistes n'expliquent rien. Ici moins qu'ailleurs. Combien dévorer par le Minotaure, qui ne se seraient pas égarés avec la complicité d'Ariane, de l'Émotion-Féminité. C'est d'un confusionnisme tout rationaliste, précisément, d'expliquer le Nègre par son utilitarisme, quand il est pratique; par son matérialisme, quand il est sensuel. (N.H., p. 23)

Rational, mechanistic, materialistic—these are adjectives which characterize Western Civilization, according to Senghor, and they are balanced on the African side with a certain sensitivity which he associates here with emotion and femininity. He emphasizes that: "l'émotion est nègre, comme la raison hellène" (N.H., p. 24).

It is this characteristic which lies at the basis of what Senghor considers the black personality, for it governs his relationships with others and with the physical environment; in short, it determines the way he looks at the world:

La nature même de l'émotion, de la sensibilité du Nègre, explique l'attitude de celui-ci devant l'objet, perçu avec une telle violence essentielle. C'est un abandon qui devient besoin, attitude active de communion; voire d'identification, pour peu que soit forte l'action, j'allais dire la personnalité de l'objet. (N.H., p. 24)

The nature of animism is, according to Senghor, partially a reflection of this ability to identify intensely even with inanimate objects. The author uses the word "anthropopsychisme" to categorize the human qualities which the Negro attributes to nature:

Ainsi, toute la Nature est animée d'une présence humaine. Elle s'humanise au sens étymologique et actuel du mot. Non seulement les animaux et les phénomènes de la nature—pluie, vent, tonnerre, montagne, fleuve—, mais encore l'arbre et le caillou se font hommes. Hommes qui gardent des caractères physiques originaux, comme instruments et signes de leur âme personnelle. C'est là le trait le plus
profond, le trait éternel de l'âme nègre. (N.H., pp. 24-25)
The resulting inclination toward personification is readily evident in Senghor's own poetry.

The essay next shows how the African personality affects the religious and social structure. Senghor vehemently refutes the accusation that African religion contains neither an established dogma nor a moral code. He points to the general belief in a supreme being who remains, however, somewhat distant from human affairs. An elaborate form of worship has developed instead around the minor gods, more characteristically, the ancestors. Senghor notes the importance of sacrifice in this ritual and describes its significance as follows:

Je vois un triple but aux sacrifices: participer à la puissance des Esprits supérieurs, dont sont les Ancêtres; communier avec eux jusqu’en une sorte d’identification; enfin, être charitable aux Ancêtres. Car les Morts, tout puissants qu’ils soient, n’ont pas la vie, et ils ne peuvent se procurer ces <<nourritures>> terrestres qui font la douceur intense de vivre. (N.H., p. 26)

The sense of charity which is manifested in the African's relationship with the Ancestors is the central element of African religion. Senghor tells us: "Non, ni la peur, ni les soucis matériels ne dominent la religion des Nègres, encore qu’ils n’en soient pas absents, que le Nègre ressente, lui aussi, l’angoisse humaine. Mais l’amour et la charité, qui est l’amour fait action" (N.H., p. 26).

It is love which supersedes the need for any strict moral code and which provides the basis for right action:

Dès lors, qu’importe la morale et qu’il n’y ait pas de sanctions? Mais il y a une morale, qui est sanctionnée, ici-bas, par la réprobation des membres de la communauté et de sa conscience. Le sentiment de la dignité chez les Noirs est bien connu. La morale consiste à ne pas rompre la communion des vivants, des Morts, des génies et de Dieu, de la maintenir par la charité. Et celui-là est puni proprement d’isolement qui rompt ce lien mystique. (N.H., pp. 26-27)

As for what the Black offers to the other world religions, Senghor cites his "religiosité", as he describes the general religious
nature of his people; he defines it as "... la faculté de percevoir le surnaturel dans le naturel, le sens du transcendant et l'abandon d'amour" (N.E., p. 27). The supernatural indicates for Senghor the essential qualities of an object as opposed to merely its visible aspect, or, as he puts it, that which transcends the natural or apparent limitations. This attitude toward the object will contribute to Senghor's explanation of African art and helps us to understand the analogical image in the poet's own writings.

Having already indicated the importance of the community as it relates to religion, Senghor goes on to describe it as a group of ever widening circles to which the individual is linked first as a member of a family and, by virtue of this tie, to the tribe, the kingdom, and eventually the confederation or empire. Senghor praises the moral strength of the family unit, but at the same time, notes the importance of each individual within that unit, where he stresses the independence of the woman and the dignity of her role: "C'est que la femme est la Mère, dépositaire de la vie, et la gardienne de la tradition" (N.E., p. 28).

We are reminded, too, that the family unit cannot be considered as separate from the clan to which it belongs:

Celle-ci est la véritable famille négro-africaine. Elle comprend tous les descendants d'un même ancêtre, homme ou femme. C'est ici qu'apparaît le mieux l'aspect unitaire de la famille, fondement et préfiguration de la société noire. L'Ancêtre clanique est le chânon qui unit le côté divin au côté des hommes, génie lui-même et sorte de demi-dieu. (N.E., pp. 28-29)

This spiritual bond which links the members of the clan to the clan Ancestor and to each other further explains the African's relationship to the land and the structure of his political organization.

Senghor points out the difference between property as conceived by the capitalist and the African's sense of communal stewardship of the land, which is divided among the members of
the clan. The right to work the land is transmitted to the clan through the Ancestor; understanding the mystical nature of the worker's bond with the soil he tills, it is not surprising that the attitude toward work itself reflects a sense of spiritual communion:

*C'est que le travail de la terre permet l'accord de l'Homme et de la Création*, qui est au cœur du problème humaniste; qu'il se fait au rythme du monde: rythme point méconnu, qui est libre et vivant; celui du jour et de la nuit, des saisons qui sont deux en Afrique, de la plante qui pousse et qui meurt. Et le Nègre, se sentant à l'union de l'univers, rythme son travail par le chant et le tam-tam. Travail nègre, rythme nègre, joie nègre qui se libère par le travail et se libère du travail. (N.H., p. 31)

This rhythm too is an essential part of the black aesthetic and an important element in Senghor's poetry.

In discussing African political structures, Senghor again emphasizes the role of the group, specifically the spiritual aura which surrounds the king as head of the group and his role as a symbol of unity. He also mentions the egalitarian nature of the palabre.

In closing this section on the African society, Senghor stresses the contribution of the family to the well-being of the individual and suggests that the problems of our times lie partly in the disintegration of the family:

*Ce que le monde moderne a oublié, qui est une des causes de la crise actuelle de civilisation, est que l'épanouissement de la personne exige une direction extra-individualiste. Il n'a lieu que sur la terre des Morts, dans le climat de la famille, du groupe. Ce besoin de communion fraternelle est plus profondément humain que celui du repliement sur soi, autant que celui du surnaturel.* (N.H., p. 32)

His conclusion is that among the contributions which black culture can make to the world is a renewal of the meaning and importance of the family and the community.

Senghor speaks next of the contributions of the Black to the arts and, in doing so, reveals much of his own poetic theory.
Once more, the writer formulates his argument by contrasting African and European civilization. In the domain of art, he says, the influence of materialism and rationalism led in the 19th century to the degeneration of style: "Le réalisme et l'impressionnisme ne sont que les deux aspects d'une même erreur. C'est l'adoration du réel qui conduit à l'art photographique. À la limite, l'esprit se satisfait d'analyser et combiner les éléments du réel, en vue d'un jeu subtil, d'une variation sur le réel" (N.H., p. 34). African art, on the other hand, is strongly tied to religion and is therefore rich in significance: "Les sculpteurs ont pour fonction essentielle de représenter les Ancêtres morts et les génies par des statues qui soient, en même temps, symbolique et habitable. Il s'agit de faire saisir, sentir leur âme personnelle comme volonté efficace, de faire accéder au surréel" (N.H., p. 34). Senghor notes the preponderance of anthropomorphic art in Africa; and we are reminded that the world is, for the Black, a reflection of his own human state. Art becomes, then, not a reproduction of the object but a presentation of its supernatural qualities: "Mais, parce que cet art tend à l'expression essentielle de l'objet, il est à l'opposé du réalisme subjectif" (N.H., p. 35). This relationship between art and nature is easily apparent in the structure of Senghor's imagery.

Even the rhythmic quality of sculpture exercises a religious function: "C'est ainsi que le rythme agit sur ce qu'il y a de moins intellectuel en nous, dépositivement, pour nous faire pénétrer dans la spiritualité de l'objet; et cette attitude d'abandon qui est nôtre est elle-même rythmique" (N.H., p. 35). African art, devoid of extraneous decoration, is, in Senghor's mind, a form of classicism, depending only on purity of line to convey the artist's sense of the spiritual world.

The spirituality which is an essential part of the African's contribution to the world of plastic arts is already present in
already present 19th century music. The contribution of the African in this area is rather in technique, new fields of harmony and rhythm, new instruments, and the intangible quality of "soul". These qualities combined, however, tend to bring music closer to nature and consequently to revive it: "Tout restreints qu'ils soient, ces apports nègres ont influencé assez profondément la musique contemporaine. Elle y a gagné d'être plus riche et plus dépouillée, plus musclée et plus souple, plus dynamique, plus généreuse, plus humaine, parce qu'elle plus naturelle. Le vieux mythe d'Antée n'a pas perdu de sa vérité" (N.R., p. 38). The myth refers to the monster son of Poseidon whose strength was renewed upon striking the earth.

Senghor concludes by developing this image in his summary of the values which black culture offers to the rest of the world:

Le service nègre aura été de contribuer, avec d'autres peuples, à refaire l'unité de l'Homme et du Monde: à lier la chair à l'esprit, l'homme à son semblable, le caillou à Dieu. En d'autres termes, le réel au surréel —par l'Homme non pas centre, mais charnière, mais nombril du Monde. (N.R., p. 38)

These qualities then are representative of what is meant by the term "Negritude" and constitute as well the values of the childhood paradise. They serve not only as the foundation of the Africa of the poet's visions but also as the African's contribution to the integrated world civilization.

Senghor's poem, "Prière aux masques," explicitly illustrates the ideas set forth in this article and serves as a further exposition of the principles of Negritude. The very nature of the poem is spiritual, for it is essentially a prayer which asks guidance and blessing for the future of civilization, not Western Civilization but a new civilization to which the Black will also contribute. The poet addresses himself to the masks, the artistic representation of the Ancestor as well as his dwelling. The mask is also an African art form which has drawn much admiration from the West:
Masques! O Masques!
Masques noir masque rouge, vous masques blanc-et-noir
Masques aux quatre points d'où souffle l'Esprit
Je vous crie dans le silence!
Et pas toi le dernier, Ancêtre à tête de lion. (p. 23)

The Ancestor is, for the African, his essential link with the
spiritual world and constitutes a fundamental part of the identity
of the living:

Masques aux visages sans masque, dépourvus de toute fossette
comme de toute ride
qui avez composé ce portrait, ce visage mien penché sur
l'autel de papier blanc
A votre image, écoutez-moi! (p. 23)

The poet therefore places himself in position on the line of time
between past and future, praying to the Ancestor in the name of
generations to come.

As in the article, "Ce que l'homme noir apporte," the poet
looks upon Europe as a dying civilization:

Voici que meurt l'Afrique des empires—c'est l'agonie
d'une princesse pitoyable
Et aussi l'Europe à qui nous sommes liés par le nombril.
(p. 23)

In the sense that the old relationship between Europe and her
colonies was preparing to undergo a vast transformation, the
image is a striking one: the myth of white cultural and racial
superiority was dealt a crushing blow by the conflict of the
Second World War. One of Africa's new generation of writers,
Marcien Towa, describes as follows the African reaction to
World War II.

En dépit de la diversité des voies suivies, par
les différentes puissances coloniales, les résultats
obtenus sont largement analogues: crainte respectueuse
du maître blanc, aspiration à s'identifier à lui.
Mais voici que soudain l'Allemagne tombe sur la France
comme la foudre. La Hollande et la Belgique ont succombé
avant elle et la Grande-Bretagne est menacée. La France
se couche et «collabore». Stupéfact des colonisés qui
n'en croient pas leurs oreilles. Le mythe de la France,
nation riche, puissante, noble, généreuse, etc...
s'effondre ainsi que les autres mythes semblables
putidemment édifis par les puissances coloniales.
De plus la propagande des nazis proclame que les
Français et tous les non-aryens appartiennent à
des races inférieures, que ce sont les Aryens qui,
toujours et partout, auraient créé les civilisations
supérieures; il y aurait donc Blanc et blanc! 20

The post-war rehabilitation of African civilization was there-
fore imminent, and the remainder of the poem contrasts the
decadence of Western Civilization with the revitalizing potential
of Negritude, for Senghor believes in the interdependence of
the two as indicated by the image of the umbilical cord:

Fixez vos yeux immobiles sur vos enfants que l'on commande
qui donnent leur vie comme le pauvre son dernier vêtement.
Que nous répondions présents à la renaissance du Monde
Ainsi le levain qui est nécessaire à la farine blanche.
Car qui ap:rendrait le rythme au monde défunt des machines
et des canons?
Qui pousserait le cri de joie pour réveiller morts et
orphelins à l'aurore?
Dites, qui rendrait la mémoire de vie à l'homme aux
espoirs éventrés?
Ils nous disent les hommes du coton du café de l'huile
Ils nous disent les hommes de la mort.
Nous sommes les hommes de la danse, dont les pieds
reprennent vigueur en frappant le sol dur. (pp. 23-24)

These contain the essence of Senghor's concept of Negritude and
aptly mirror the spirit of the ideas expressed in "Ce que l'homme
noir apporte." Rhythm, joy, vitality—such is the authentic
wealth of Africa and is contrasted here with the purely economic
wealth which gives Africa its reason for being in the white
man's world. In the last line, we see an image similar to
that at the end of the essay; the poet stresses once again
the role of Negritude in bringing civilization closer to nature
and the strength which is thereby gained.

The ideas expressed in "Ce que l'homme noir apporte"
and in "Prière aux masques" were not Senghor's alone, nor were
they developed in a vacuum, for while Negritude is undeniable
a philosophy, it is also, as we emphasized earlier, a movement.
It is necessary to realize that Senghor's arrival in Paris coincided with a period of extensive interest in Negro culture. In art, Picasso and the cubists were rehabilitating the African aesthetic; in music, jazz and the blues—with the dancers that accompanied them—had found their way to Europe. More important from a literary point of view was the interest in the works of Negro-American writers and in the writers themselves. These circumstances were the evidence of the Black Renaissance, a rediscovery of Negro culture which began with the abolition of slavery in 1863 and which had its strongest impetus in America where it manifested itself in areas as diverse as the separatist movement of Negro churches, the organization of the NAACP, and the "Back to Africa" movement preached by Marcus Garvey.

The literary expression of this movement had already begun to develop what would later become the key principles of Negritude, for, as early as 1903, W. E. B. Du Bois, a contemporary of Garvey's and a supporter of Pan-Africanism, had treated some of Negritude's basic themes in his book, The Souls of Black Folk, an articulate declaration of the black man's alienation in the white man's world which advocated a return to African values as a means of obtaining a valid cultural identity. Similar themes appeared in the writing of Dr. J. Price-Mars of Haiti and in the wealth of literature produced by the writers of the Harlem Renaissance; for example, Claude MacKay, Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and James Weldon Johnson.

It was these latter who bore the spirit of the Black Renaissance to Paris where in the salons of Paulette Nardal and René Maran, the American authors congregated with black students from Africa and the West Indies. Among these, we find Senghor and the other leaders of the Negritude movement, including Aimé Césaire and Léon Dumas, all of whom were strongly influenced by the American writers. Senghor cites the typical African elements in the rhythm, imagery, and themes of Negro-American
poetry as proof of their shared Negritude. Among these common characteristics, he emphasizes similarities in the concept of Nature: the kinship of the black man to the soil and a concept of Nature as a living force frequently humanized and rendered through personification:

... le charme de la poésie négro-américaine lui vient moins des idées ou des sentiments exprimés que de son expression même: de sa négritude. Et cette expression retrouve, naturellement, son authenticité quand il s'agit de chanter la Terre-Mère. Tant il est vrai que le Nègre est fils de la Terre! 21

Thus we can consider the writers of the Harlem Renaissance both precursors of the general Negritude movement and a probable literary source for Senghor's own intensive use of Nature.

The period itself, therefore, prepared the way for the creation of a literature dealing with Black Culture, and the evidence of the growth of this movement may be found in the appearance of several journals. The first one which deserves our attention was La Revue du monde noir, a publication sponsored by Paulette Nardal and the Haitian Doctor Sajous. It came out in November, 1931, and continued for six issues; the articles were by African, American, and West Indian authors. Although short-lived, it indicated a substantial development of interest in Negro culture. In 1932, the single issue of Légitime Défense was published by a group of West Indian students, headed by Étienne Léro. More than a literary document, Légitime Défense was a black manifesto attacking not only black writers for their imitation of white literary standards but the entire black bourgeoisie for its submissiveness to cultural oppression. The writers were politically motivated by the writings of Marx and the philosophy of the surrealists. The publication articulated a sentiment which was widespread among black students in Paris, and the recognition of this community of interest is illustrated by the title of the review L'Étudiant noir which appeared in 1934 and which was spear-headed by Senghor in the company of
Léon Dumas and Aimé Césaire. It stressed the importance of cultural affirmation rather than political change and introduced the word "Negritude" for the first time, an expression coined by Aimé Césaire to formalize a movement and a concept which had long been recognized in the abstract.

Paris, therefore, proved to be a catalyst for the ideas which comprise the philosophy of Negritude. Also important was the European experience itself which, for the African student, leaving his people to enter into an entirely foreign way of life, coupled physical separation with cultural alienation. In so doing, it raised a question of identity to which Negritude was a resounding response. Senghor's personal experience can be indicated as an illustration.

Exile From Paradise

In Paris, Senghor began working toward a career in education. At the Lycée Louis-le-Grand, he counted among his fellow students several who were destined for political or literary prominence, including Georges Pompidou, who was instrumental in introducing Senghor to Socialism and who also shared with him his preferences in French Literature. Senghor received his licence-ès-lettres from the Sorbonne in 1931 and the following year prepared a mémoire entitled "L'Exotisme chez Baudelaire." Having obtained French citizenship, he went on to receive the agrégation in grammar in 1935. After the performance of his military service, he was appointed to the Lycée Descartes in Tours and later to the Lycée Marcealin Berthelot at Saint-Pour-des-Fossés, where he was teaching at the outbreak of the war.

In spite of this noteworthy success, Senghor was far from being a docile assimilé. His first years at the lycée were marked by a period of religious crisis partially triggered by the inconsistencies which he encountered in a Christian society. Although he later returned to the church, his disillusionment with Western
values provoked a cultural alienation which underscored the reality of racial separateness. Unable and unwilling to identify himself as European, he turned to Africa, hoping to find a cultural heritage and, with it, an identity. His experience was shared by other black students, and nurtured by the favorable circumstances which we have mentioned, it led eventually to the widespread reaction against white cultural domination and reassertion of African culture, two dominant themes of Negritude.

In Senghor's first collection of poetry, we find a lyrical record of this sense of alienation which confronts the poet. The theme is present both in the poet's nostalgia for Africa and in his account of a hostile European environment. The two continents become the poles of a complex of images, while the distance between them becomes the barrier which separates the poet from the paradise of his personal myth.

Imagery of place figures prominently in this schema, the haunting rhythm of place names reverberating in the writer's memory and in the lines of his poetry. As we have seen, the poem "Que m'accompagne kôras et balafon" is a verbal atlas of the holy places of the poet's Eden: the fountain of Kam-Dyamé, Ngasobil and the Fountain of the Elephants, Bouré and Boundou—the fabled sources of gold—, and Elissa, the home of the ancestors. Not only do the unfamiliar and exotic places spur the reader's imagination, but they serve as additional material for the poet's arsenal of rhythm and sonorities. In "Tout le long le jour", for example, we find the following line: "A travers Cayor et Baol de sécheresse où se tordent les bras les baobabs d'angoisse" (p. 13). The poet uses the strained vowel sounds of the words "Cayor" and "Baol" to emphasize the image of the twisted branches. This incidental use of African place names, appealing both to the imagination and to the senses, is an identifying characteristic consistent throughout the whole of Senghor's poetry.

Elsewhere, the place is itself the focal point of the poet's
attention and the center around which he groups a complex of images. The village of Joal, for example, is the subject of the poet's nostalgia in "Forte dorée" which describes his efforts to imitate, with the aid of his imagination, the pastoral setting of his childhood in this strange and new environment of Europe:

J'ai choisi ma demeure près des remparts robés de ma mémoire, à la hauteur des remparts
Me souvenant de Joal l'Ombreuse, du vicieux de la terre de mon sang.
Je l'ai choisie entre la Ville et la plaine, là où
S'ouvre la Ville à la fraisheur première des bois et des rivières.
Mes regrets, ce sont les toits qui saissent au bord des eaux, bercés par l'intimité des bosquets (p. 10)

The presence of the river recalls the description of the childhood paradise in "qui m'accompagnent kôras et balafong." Symbolically an attribute of the biblical Garden of Eden, the water imagery is also realistically representative of the scenes which the young Sédar knew on the banks of the Sine near Djilor or along the coast at Joal; imagery, therefore, in which he hoped to find some semblance of his lost paradise.

In the poem entitled "Joal", it is not the landscape, but the people and human activity which is remembered and evoked:

Je me rappelle les festins funèbres fumant du sang des troupeaux égorgés
Du bruit des querelles, des rhapsodies des griots.
Je me rappelle les voix païennes rythmant le Tantum Ergo
Et les processi ns et les palmes et les arcs de triomphe.
Je me rappelle la danse des filles nubiles
Les chœurs de lutte—oh! la danse finale des jeunes hommes, buste
Penché élancé, et le pur cri d'amour des femmes—Kor Siga!

Je me rappelle, je me rappelle...
Ma tête rythmant
quelle marche lassée le long des jours d'Europe où parfois
Apparaît un jazz orphelin lui sangloté sangloté sangloté

(pp. 15-16)

The exile's longing for Africa is developed here by means of a
contrast between the mechanistic repetition of the march and the unfettered emotion of jazz. This already striking image is given additional depth when we consider that, for Senghor, the African's sense of rhythm is an essential component of his Negritude.

A similar reaction is triggered in the touching lines of "Médée ou 'Blues'," the jazz notes again evoking Africa in the midst of a foreign culture: "... Oh! le bruit de la pluie sur les feuilles monotones/coule sur la seule Solitude", Duke you je claire jusqu'au sommeil " (p. 25). In this poem, the alienated soul of the poet expresses its longing in images which describe both the physical and psychological contrast between the European setting and the Africa of his memories. The tone is one of aloneness and despair.

Voilà cependant qu'au cœur de Juillet, je suis plus aveugle tu'Hiver au pôle.
Mes ailes battent et se blessent aux barreaux du ciel bas
Nul rayon ne traverse cette voûte sombre de mon ennui. (p. 25)

The speaker laments the darkness, the absence of the warm African sun and the light which time and again symbolizes hope in Senghor's poetry. By their melancholy mood and by their imagery, these lines seem to indicate the inspiration of Baudelaire.

Senghor's fondest memories of his homeland, however, are those of African nights. In part, this preference is symbolic, night and darkness being sympathetic images for Negritude as we have already seen in "Que m'accompagne kôras et balafon":
"Nuit qui fonds toutes mes contradictions, toutes contradictions dans l'unité première de la négritude." On the other hand, his portrayal of the African night in "Nuit de Sine," illustrates specific characteristics of what he considers the values of African culture:

Femme, pose sur mon front tes mains balsamiques, tes mains douces plus que fourrure.
Là-haut les palmas balancées qui bruissent dans la haute brise nocturne
À peine. Pas même la chanson de nourrice.
Qu'il nous berce, le silence rythmé.
Écoutons son chant, écoutons battre notre sang sombre,
Écoutons
Battre le pouls profond de l'Afrique dans la brume des villes perdus.

Voici que décline la lune lasse vers son lit de mer étale
Voici que s'assoupissent les éclats de rire, que les conteurs eux-mêmes
Dodelinent de la tête comme l'enfant sur le dos de sa mère
Voici que les pieds des danseurs s'alourdissent, que s'alourdit la langue des chœurs alternés. (p. 14)

In both form and imagery, the poem is punctuated by the rhythm which Senghor associates with the black "soul": the abstract rhythm which is the very pulse of Africa as well as the concrete rhythm of the drums which accompany the dancers. Also in evidence is the characteristic fraternity of Negritude, for, in contrast with the solitude of Europe which we saw in "Ndéssé ou 'Blues'," the African night is peopled with a variety of benevolent figures. There are first of all the human beings: the dominant feminine presence as well as the distinct silhouettes of family and friends. Night itself becomes personified and other inanimate objects take on human characteristics:

C'est l'heure des étoiles et de la Nuit qui songe
S'accoude à cette colline de nuages, drapée dans son long pagne de lait.
Les toits des cases luisent tendrement. Que disent-ils, si confidentiels, aux étoiles? (p. 14)

And in the last stanza, the circle is completed by the awareness of the unseen ancestor: "Femme, allume la lampe au beurre clair, que causent autour les Ancêtres comme les parents, les enfants au lit"(p. 14). The poet hereby emphasizes the supernatural aura attached to the night.

In an article entitled "Le mythe dans la poésie populaire au Sénégal et sa présence dans l'oeuvre de L.-S. Senghor et de Birago Diop," Lamine Diakhate discusses the traces of traditional myth which appear in the works of these contemporary writers. In Senghor's use of the image of Night, Diakhate sees a condensation
of popular mythology, and, having cited several instances in which the image appears, he theorizes:

Dans les exemples que voilà, Sédar SENGHOR fait de la Nuit la charpente de ses poèmes. La Nuit est tour à tour évocation, incantation. Elle est porteuse de choses miraculeuses. Elle est le cadre dans lequel se SITUE la vie active d'un monde. Mais la Nuit subjugue. Elle présente un mélange étrange de sérénité et d'angoisses dans l'attente. C'est le moment de l'exécution des œuvres hautes, le seul instant propice à la tentation surrêve, celle-là qui est comme une échelle entre la terre et le ciel, entre les Initiés et les Morts. 22

The communion with the Ancestors which appears in "Nuit de Sine" is founded firmly on Senegalese traditions which provide a further explanation for Senghor's strong attraction to the African night and its profound significance for him in his exile.

There is, then in Senghor's nostalgia, something which goes much deeper than mere longing for familiar landscapes and climates. As we have seen, the African's ties with the land are formed by ancient spiritual traditions, and, for him, the meaning of existence is largely dependent on the cosmological cycle which links him to his clan, his ancestors, and the land. To leave the ancestral home and the resting place of one's forefathers is to disrupt the natural order implicit in such a structure. The resulting disequilibrium becomes another facet of the poet's isolation as he depicts it in the initial poem of *Chants d'ombre*, "In memoriam." This poem, dominated by the theme of exile and the sense of alienation, well deserves its key-note position in the collection. As in other poems, Senghor uses the magic of place names and, in this case, emphasizes his dislocation by juxtaposing the names of French and African rivers.

Je contemple mes rêves distracts le long des rues, couchés au pied des collines
Comme les conducteurs de ma race sur les rives de la Gambie
et du Saloum
De la Seine maintenant, au pied des collines. (p. 9)

The alliteration between the words "Saloum" and "Seine" only
serve to emphasise the contrast which the poet uses to express his feeling of estrangement whose deeper connotations become evident as the poet's thoughts turn to his ancestors, the divine link between the supernatural and the community. It is the African's need to retain his ties with the dead through prayers and sacrifices which renders the poem "In memoriam" so poignant and gives deeper meaning to the poet's prayer:

Laisson-moi penser à mes morts!
C'était hier la Toussaint, l'anniversaire solennel du Soleil
Et nul souvenir dans aucun cimetière. (p. 9)

The poet's dead do not lie in the cemeteries of Paris but belong instead to the distant country of his childhood. In spite of this distance, he calls upon the ancestors for protection:

O morts, qui avez toujours refusé de Mourir, qui avez su résister à la mort
Jusqu'en Sine jusqu'en Seine, et dans mes veines fragiles,
Mon sang irréductible
Protégez mes rêves comme vous avez fait vos fils, les
 migrateurs aux jambes minces. (p. 10)

The inspiration for these lines is, in one sense, closely correlated with fundamental African beliefs: in the context of the poem, however, we find an additional figurative meaning in which the ancestors and the blood-line on which the poet draws for strength become affirmations of his racial heritage and analogous with his Negritude. The poet elaborates on this significance in "Le totem," where both the ancestor and the totem, supernatural elements of distinctly African origin, become symbols of the poet's Negritude and consequently of his identity:

Il me faut le cacher au plus intime de mes veines
L'Ancêtre à la peau d'orage sillonnée d'éclairs et de foudre
Mon animal gardien, il me faut le cacher
Que je ne rompe le barrage des scandales
Il est mon sang fidèle qui requiert fidelité
Protégeant mon orgueil nu contre
Moi-même et la superbe des races heureuses... (p. 24)

A conflict is evident here between the value which the poet places on his African heritage and its inadmissibility to the European
mind, and we begin to sense the second aspect of the poet's alienation: the hostility of the European environment. It is a rather subdued theme in Senghor's poetry, but it is by its very nature, a powerful one, usually tempered, however, by the poet's own feelings of fraternity and good will. Returning again to "In memoriam," we see that this second aspect of alienation plays an important role in the poem. It begins: "C'est Dimanche/ J'ai peur de la foule de mes semblables au visage de pierre " (p. 9). As we have seen, the poet calls upon the ancestors for protection from the hostility which surrounds him, and he concludes:

O Morts! défendez les toits de Paris dans la brume dominicale
Les toits qui protègent mes morts.
Que de mauvaise manière sûre, je descends dans la rue
Avec mes frères aux yeux bleus
Aux mains dures. (p. 10)

Senghor uses the word "brother" to describe the man he fears and thereby softens the conclusion of the poem which ends in his characteristic attitude of hope.

The meeting of hostility with fraternity appears again in "Neige sur Paris." Snow is metaphorically interpreted as divine purification sent to an erring people as a sign of God's mercy:

Seigneur, vous avez visité Paris par ce jour de votre naissance
Parce qu'il devenait mesquin et mauvais
Vous l'avez purifié par le froid incorruptible
Par la mort blanche. (p. 21)

This in turn inspires the poet with forgiveness for the cruelties which have been committed toward his people and himself: "Voici que mon coeur fond comme neige sous le soleil" (p. 22). The list of sins to be forgotten is paradoxically a reminder of the rejection which the poet has personally encountered and the history of the mistreatment of his race:

J'oublie
Les mains blanches qui tirèrent les coups de fusils qui croulèrent les empires
Les mains qui flagellèrent les esclaves, qui vous flagellèrent
Les mains blanches poudreuses qui vous giflèrent, les mains
peintes poudrées qui m’ont giflé
Les mains sûres qui m’ont livré à la solitude à la haine
Les mains blanches qui abattirent la forêt de rôniers qui
dominait l'Afrique, au centre de l'Afrique
Droits et durs les Saraux beaux comme les premiers hommes
qui sortirent de vos mains brunes. (p. 22)

In spite of the harshness of these lines, forgiveness is the
dominant theme of the poem which ends on a note of fraternity and
of love:

Mon coeur, Seigneur, s’est fondu comme neige sur les toits
de Paris
Au soleil de votre douceur.
Il est doux à mes ennemis, à mes frères aux mains blanches
sans neige
À cause aussi des mains de rosée, le soir, le long de mes
joues brûlantes. (pp. 22-23)

The same device is used in "Prière de Paix," the concluding poem
of Senghor’s next collection, Hosties Noires (1943).

Ostensibly a prayer for forgiveness, this later poem
also affords the poet an opportunity to draw up a list of
grievances directed against the French:

Seigneur la glace de mes yeux s’embue
Et voilà que le serpent de la haine lève la tête dans mon
cœur, ce serpent que j’avais cru mort...

III

Tue-le Seigneur, car il me faut poursuivre mon chemin,
et je veux prier singulièrement pour la France.
Seigneur, parmi les nations blanches, place la France à la
droite du Père.
Oh! je sais bien qu’elle aussi est l’Europe, qu’elle m’a
ravi mes enfants comme un brigand du Nord des bœufs,
pour engraisser ses terres à cannes et coton, car la
sueur nègre est fumier.
Qu’elle aussi a porté la mort et le canon dans mes villages
bleus, qu’elle a dressé les miens les uns contre les autres
comme des chiens se disputant un os
Qu’elle a traité les résistants de bandits, et craché sur les
têtes-aux-vastes-desseins.
Oui Seigneur, pardonne à la France qui dit bien la voie droite
et chemine par les sentiers obliques
qui m’invite à sa table et me dit d’apporter mon pain, qui
me donne de la main droite et de la main gauche
enlève la moitié. (p. 94)
In both of these poems, the method used to describe Senghor's attitude toward France is deceptive, for despite his apparent soft-pedaling of the issues, his outrage is nonetheless felt, and his images are only made more vivid by the paradox.

That Senghor's attacks against racial prejudice and colonial oppression are neither more direct nor more frequent has sometimes been held against him by certain members of the younger generation of African nationalists who would, like Marcien Tow, complain: "On s'attendait que l'auteur décide d'engager une lutte résolue contre un oppresseur si coupable. Mais il pardonne, mieux, il prie pour lui ..." 23 By and large, Senghor, while feeling deeply the offenses against his race, does not seek retaliation, and, as we have shown, the account of his confrontation with hostility in the white world is constantly balanced by the poet's forgiveness. When, in the final poem of Chants d'ombre, entitled "Le retour de l'Enfant prodigue," he thanks the ancestors for having granted him that protection against himself which he sought in "Le totem," he is justly able to say:

Soyez bénis, mes Pères, soyez bénis!
Vous qui avez permis mépris et moqueries, les offenses polies les allusions discrètes
Et les interdictions et les ségrégations.
Et puis vous avez arraché de ce cœur trop aimant les liens qui l'unissaient au pouls du monde.
Soyez bénis, qui n'avez pas permis que la haine gravelât ce cœur d'homme. (p. 50)

Here we find still another image by which the poet expresses his sense of alienation and indeed a striking one with which to conclude our study of the theme of exile in Chants d'ombre: the inconceivable separation of the heart from the heartbeat.

Return To Paradise

The hostility which the poet feels in his European exile and his nostalgia for the childhood paradise cause him ultimately to seek to return to Africa. This return is accomplished only in
part through memory as we have seen in "auc m'accompagnant
kôras et balafong": "Qu'au moins me console, chaque soir,
l'humeur voyageuse de mon double" (p. 36). But memory alone
cannot appease the poet's longing, and the last two poems in
the collection concern his efforts to cross the boundaries of
Time and Space, to return once more to Eden.

In the poem "Par delà Éros," the journey, while beginning
initially as a real one, melts quickly into the realm of metaphor
and assumes many of the traditional elements of the quest, with
the poet donning the cloak of the Hero. We have therefore found
it interesting and useful to examine this poem in the light of
Campbell's study of the heroic adventure, The Hero With A Thousand
Faces. Not only is the similarity evident in the general structure
of the poem but in the eventual insight which the adventure affords
the poet.

The introductory section of the poem, entitled "C'est le
temps de partir," opens on what Campbell terms "the call to
adventure." The speaker's desperate need for the journey is
indicated in the opening lines:

C'est le temps de partir, que je n'enfonce plus avant mes
racines de ficois dans cette terre grasse et molle.
J'entends le bruit pincant des termites qui vident mes
jambes de leur jeunesse. (p. 38)

The poet here describes the corruption and degeneration that he
has undergone through exposure to Western Civilization. In the
image which he has chosen to depict his condition, he sees himself
as a tree, a figure of virility and even life itself, which, having
been up-rooted from its mother soil, becomes weak and prey to
disease. In order to regain his strength, the poet must effect
the long and arduous voyage back to the land of his origins.

The call to set out proceeds not from any outside source
but from within the poet himself, an almost instinctive urge fired
by the returning spring and the poet's own passions:
Est-ce le Printemps—partir!—cette première sueur nocturne,
le réveil dans l'ivresse... l'attente...
J'écoute africaine—plus bas la batterie des roues sur les
rails—la longue trompette qui interroge le ciel.
Ou n'est-ce que le hennissement sifflant de mon sang qui se
souvent
Thorun boulain qui se cabre et rue dans l'aurore de leurs
ultime?
C'est le temps de partir. (pp. 38-39)
The longing for Africa is translated as the longing rather for a
woman who, once known and loved, becomes the objective of the poet's
return.
The journey is not to be a pleasant or easy one:
C'est le temps de partir, d'affronter l'angoisse des gares,
le vent courbe qui rase les trottoirs dans les gares de
Province ouvertes
L'angoisse des départs sans main chaude dans la main. (p. 38)
Such mundane obstacles seem hardly suited to fill the role of that
fatal first threshold which Campbell claims exists between the
everyday world and that of heroic adventure, but these obstacles
do indeed constitute the very real barrier between Europe and
Africa, between Exile and Eden.

With the third section of the poem, called—similar to
the collection itself—"Chant d'ombre," the atmosphere merges
into the poet's inner world of fantasy as he enters at last the
lost garden of childhood. The real world is eradicated by the
opening line: "L'aigle blanc des mers, l'aigle du Temps me ravit
au-delà du continent." An airplane? Possibly, but let us note the
importance which Eliade attaches to flight and birds in rituals
which represent a mystic return to Paradise:

Space takes on quite a different aspect in the count-
less myths, tales and legends concerning human or super-
human beings who fly away into Heaven and travel freely
between Earth and Heaven, whether they do so with the
aid of birds' feathers or by any other means. It is not
the speed with which they fly, nor the dramatic intensity
of the aerial voyage that characterise this complex of
myth and folklore; it is the fact that weight is abolished,
that an ontological mutation has occurred in the human
being himself. It is not possible here to pass in re-
view all the species and varieties of this "flight" and
of the communications between Earth and Heaven. Let it
suffice to say that the motif is of universal distribu-
tion, and is integral to a whole group of myths concerned
both with the celestial origin of the first human beings
and with the paradisiac situation during the primordial
illud tempus when Heaven was very near to Earth and the
mythical Ancestor could attain to it easily enough by
climbing a mountain, a tree or a creeper. 24

Flight is then the ideal vehicle by which the poet is enabled to
return to Paradise, to the place and time of his beginnings.

That this flight represents some substantial change in the
poet himself is indicated by the direct references to rebirth in
the introductory stanza:

Je me réveille je m'interroge, comme l'enfant dans les bras
de Kouss que tu nommes Pan.
C'est le cri sauvage du Soleil levant qui fait tressaillir
la terre
Ta tête noblesse nue de la pierre, ta tête au-dessus des monts
le Lion au-dessus des animaux de l'étape
Tête debout, qui me perce de ses yeux aigus.
Et je renaiss à la terre qui fut ma mère. (pp. 40-41)

We have already seen instances in which the poet viewed Africa
as a maternal figure, and, in these lines, he speaks of his return
as a return to Mother Earth. The poet imagines himself a chilli,
and the setting of the return at dawn is an additional image
associated with the theme of rebirth.

Referring again to Campbell, it seems worthwhile to note
that he considers Pan among the traditional guardians which stand
"at the entrance to the zone of magnified power," 25 and he includes
a lengthy description of Pan's role:

The Arcadian god Pan is the best known Classical example
of this dangerous presence dwelling just beyond the pro-
tected zone of the village boundary. . . . The emotion
that he instilled in human beings who by accident adventured
into his domain was "panic" fear, a sudden groundless fright.
Any trifling cause then—the break of a twig, the flutter
of a leaf—would flood the mind with imagined danger, and
in the frantic effort to escape from his own aroused un-
conscious the victim expired in a flight of dread. Yet
Pan was benign to those who paid him worship, yielding the boons of the divine hygiene of nature: bounty to the farmers, herders, and fisherfolk who dedicated their first fruits to him, and health to all who properly approached his shrines of healing. Also wisdom, the wisdom of Omphalos, the World Navel, was his to bestow: for the crossing of the threshold is the first step into the sacred zone of the universal source.26

By defining Pan as the purveyor of special wisdom which Campbell indicates him to be, we can find in his presence on the threshold of the poet's Eden a clue to the deeper meaning of the poem and a foreshadowing of the self-knowledge which the poet is to achieve as a result of his adventure.

From the beginning, the woman takes on symbolic significance. She is first identified with the Lion, the poet's totem animal, and she thereby becomes associated with the clan ancestors. This awe-inspiring image of the Lion with the piercing eyes will occur again with a similar function in a much later poem, "Chant de l'initié":

Voilà qu'émerge de la Nuit, pur, l'autel vertical et son front de grès
Puis la ligne de ses sourcils, comme l'ombre fraîche d'un kori.
Au Félérin dont les yeux sont lavés par le jeûne et les cendres et les veilles
Apparaît au Soleil-levant, sur le suprême pic, la tête du Lion rouge
En sa majesté surréelle. O Tueur! O Terrible! et je cède et défaille.
Je n'ai pas une corne d'antilope, je n'ai qu'une trompe pleine de vide
Ma pleine besace intégrale. Ah! que tu me foudroies de tes éclairs jumeaux
—Formidable douceur de leur rugit! délice inexorable de leurs griffes!
Et que je mette soudain pour renaître dans la révélation de la Beauté!
Silence silence sur l'ombre... Sourd tam-tam... tam-tam lent...
Lourd tam-tam... tam-tam noir...(p. 195)

The symbolic hour of dawn, the encounter with the totem, and the consequent ritual death and rebirth are all repeated above and used explicitly in conjunction with the ordeal of the initiate.
This symbolism can to some extent be transferred to "Chant d'ombre," for, at this point, the speaker's experience takes on the character of the ordeal which Campbell notes is typical of the heroic adventure: "Beyond the threshold, then the hero journeys through a world of unfamiliar yet strangely intimate forces, some of which severely threaten him (tests), some of which give magical aid (helpers)." 27

In this instance, the ordeal emerges as a mountain which must be scaled; the poet's hardships are described in terms of physical suffering:

Je glisse le long de tes parois, visage escarpe.
Le meilleur grimpeur s'est perdu. Vois le sang de mes mains et de mes genoux
Comme une libation le sang de mon orgueil antagoniste,
déesse au visage de masque. (p. 41)

Furthermore, before he can claim his prize, the poet fears that he must also undergo purification, for he has left the innocence of paradise and exposed himself to the contamination of Western Civilization:

Me faudra-t-il lâcher les tempêtes de toutes les cavernes magiques du désert?
Rassembler les sables aux quatre coins du ciel vide, en une ferveur immense de sauterelles?
Puis dans un silence immémorial, le travail du froid apocalyptique? (p. 41)

The images of purification which we see here—the desert wind and sand and their European equivalent, snow—appear consistently throughout Génghis's poetry.

At last, however, the hero is victorious and overcomes the defenses of the woman:

Glissent déjà tes paroles confuses de femme, comme des plaintes d'heureuse détresse, on ne sait
Et le pierres, brusque et faible chute, vont prendre le fracas des cataractes.

Toute victoire dure l'instant d'un battement de cils qui proclame l'irréparable doublement. (p. 41)

In claiming the object of his quest, the poet continues following
the pattern of the traditional tale of the hero. According to Campbell, the wooing and winning of the bride may represent the apex of the hero's journey:

The ultimate adventure, when all the barriers and ogres have been overcome, is commonly represented as a mystical marriage...of the triumphant hero-soul with the queen-Goddess of the World. This is the crisis at the nadir, the zenith, or at the uttermost edge of the earth, at the central point of the cosmos, in the tabernacle of the temple or within the darkness of the deepest chamber of the heart. 28

Elsewhere, Campbell elaborates on the qualities of the woman and on the deeper connotations of the union:

She is the paragon of all paragons of beauty, the reply to all desire, the bliss-bestowing goal of every hero's earthly and unearthly quest...she is the incarnation of the promise of perfection; the soul's assurance that, at the conclusion of its exile in a world of organized inadequacies, the bliss that once was known will be known again: the comforting, nourishing, the "good" mother—young and beautiful—who was known to us, and even tasted, in the remote past. 29

On the psychological level which Campbell claims for it, the traditional romance becomes the ideal vehicle by which to represent the poet's return to Eden; his quest to restore the golden era of his childhood is resolved through his union with the woman who, if we are to accept Campbell's criteria, appears, among her other guises, as a mother figure associated with the idyll of childhood.

Senghor tends to sustain this association by stressing her African origins: "Tu fus africaine dans ma mémoire ancienne, comme moi comme les neiges de l'Atlas" (p. 41). He further endows her with a supernatural aura by associating her with the Ancestors, as we have seen, are linked in Senghor's mind with his African identity: "Oui c'est bien l'aîeule noire, la Claire aux yeux violets sous ses paupières de nuit" (p. 42). This characterization of the woman serves to complete the poet's allegory, which, beneath the surface of its traditional structure, reveals
a meaningful encounter between the poet and his Africa.

In this respect, "Chant d'ombre" acts as an introduction to Songhor's love poetry, for, in his conquest of the woman, the poet found one of the means by which he can return to his lost Eden. As we will show in our second chapter, the comparison of Africa to a woman is, for Songhor, a reversible equation, and in his love poems, the woman often shares physical and spiritual characteristics of the childhood paradise. The two are identified to such an extent that they are frequently indistinguishable from each other.

There is a second method, however, by which the poet can hope to restore the paradise of his youth; that is, through the restoration of African culture and, consequently, through the pursuit of Senegal's political interests. This image of the poet as a man of action, a portrait which characterizes his later collections, appears in "Far delà Èròs" in direct opposition to the image of the poet as lover which has dominated the poem up to this point. The confrontation not only involves two facets of the poet's personality but, on another level, juxtaposes what Campbell identifies as two distinct categories of heroes:

The supreme hero, however, is not the one who merely continues the dynamics of the cosmogonic round, but he who reopens the eye—so that through all the comings and goings, delights and agonies of the world panorama, the One Presence will be seen again. This requires a deeper wisdom than the other, and results in a pattern not of action but of significant representation. The symbol of the first is the virtuous sword, of the second, the scepter of dominion, or the book of the law. The characteristic adventure of the first is the winning of the bride—the bride is life. The adventure of the second is the going to the father—the father is the invisible unknown. 30

The hero in "Far delà Èròs" begins to emerge into the second and greater of Campbell's classifications.

The movement of this poem is one of transition in which the focus changes as the primary role formerly acted by the woman
is gradually occupied by the ancestors. The woman is still regarded as an embodiment of Africa: the poet calls her "Égyptienne" and links her through his imagery with the land:

Je sais que la fierté de ces collines appelle mon orgueil.
Debout sur l'apréte de leurs sommets couronnées de gom-
miers odorants
Je sais l'echo du nombril qui rythme leur chant
---Un lac aux eaux graves dort dans son cratère qui veille.
Seule, je sais, cette riche plaine à la peau noire
Convient au coc et au fleuve profonds de mon âme viril. (p. 44)

Here, the physical description of the woman and that of the land-
scape merge: the woman is Africa, Africa is the woman, and the poet is her lover.

The relationship between the man and woman which is depicted in "Par delà Érōs" differs, however, from that which we have just developed in "Chant d'ombre"; for, if we are to continue to analyse this poem from the standpoint of the heroic adventure, we can no longer regard the woman in question as in herself the culmination of the poet's quest but rather as a further obstacle in his journey. In the traditional adventure, the hero's encounter with the woman does not invariably lead to a happy union; the woman may be depicted as a temptress, and the hero meets his challenge by overcoming that temptation, a pattern which, according to Campbell, can be seen in the myth of Oedipus or in Shakespeare's Hamlet:

The innocent delight of Oedipus in his first possession or the queen turns to an agony of spirit when he learns who the woman is. Like Hamlet, he turns from the fair features of the world to search the darkness for a higher kingdom than this of the incest and adultery ridden, luxurious and incorrigible mother. The seeker of life beyond life must press beyond her, surpass the temptations of her call, and soar to the immaculate ether beyond. 31

Senghor makes use of this variation in "Par delà Érōs" where the woman is depicted as an invitation to the poet to digest from his greater mission, and, interestingly, he returns to
the biblical myth of Eden for his images:

Tu es descendue de ce mur où t'avait accrochée la ruse des Anciens.
Admise dans le cercle à toute faiblesse fermé
Tu es le fruit suspendu à l’arbre de mon désir—soif éternelle de mon sang dans son désert de désirs!

Je suis mes Pères, vous avez jeté ce filet sur ma vacance vigilante
Pour attraper l’Enfant prodigue, cette fosse à lions.

(p. 44)

In the transition from the first to the second stanza shown in the lines above, the poet changes his mode of address from the "tu" form by which he indicates the woman to the plural "vous" with which he invokes the Ancestors. The latter seem first to compete with the woman and then to replace her as the center of the poet's attention:

Ne soyez pas des dieux jaloux, mes Pères.
Laissez tonner Zeus-Upsibramètès, que Jehovah embrasse la superbe des villes blanches.
N’enervez pas ma jeunesse aux jeux de la maison
Mes griffes de panthère au pagne amical de mes soeurs.

(p. 45)

The woman, by the very attraction which she holds for the poet has become an obstacle in his quest for a higher ideal.

In the next stanza, he describes his new ambition:

Mon âme aspire à la conquête du monde innombrable et déploie ses ailes, noir et rouge
Noir et rouge, couleurs de vos étendards!
Ma tâche est de reconquérir le lointain des terres qui bornaient l’Empire du Sang
Où jamais la nuit ne recouvrait la vie de ses cendres, de son chant de silence
Ma tâche, de reconquérir les perles extrêmes de votre sang jusqu’au fond des océans glacés
Et des âmes. ....

(p. 45)

Up to this point, the poet has been obsessed by his desire to return to the childhood Eden; there is no doubt that the fulfillment of that wish is portrayed in the allegory of the united lovers. In the process, however, the hero has gained additional
self-awareness which is expressed as a confrontation with the ancestors and is evidenced by this transformation in both the direction of his quest and the quality of his objectives. Far from being directed toward the place of his childhood or even upon the inner self, these lines radiate outward from the homeland to encompass the whole world: innumerable peoples, faraway lands, and the very depth of the oceans. The flying standards of black and red are the proclamation of the hero's African heritage, and the mission which he acknowledges here foreshadows the real role of Léopold Sédar Senghor in reviving African civilization. They predict the building of a new Africa which will become so much a part of his life and poetry in the years to come, and which, by restoring the dignity of the Black and his traditions, will come to replace in many respects the poet's Eden as the center of his imagination.

The woman now disappears entirely from the poem, and, in "Visite," the hero faces his ancestors alone in the final lines:

Je songe dans la pénombre étroite d'un après-midi.
Me visitent les fatigues de la journée
Les défunts de l'année, les souvenirs de la décade
Comme la procession des morts du village à l'horizon des tanns. (pp. 45-46)

In the increasing importance of the ancestors, who are addressed as "mes Pères," and in the hero's assuming a new mission, the adventure takes the form of what Campbell labels the "atonement with the father" and which characterizes the higher category of heros:

When the child outgrows the popular idyl of the mother's breast and turns to face the world of specialized adult action, it passes, spiritually, into the sphere of the father—who becomes, for the son, the sign of the future task, and for the daughter, the future husband. Whether he knows it or not, and no matter what his position in society, the father is the initiating priest through whom the young being passes on into the larger world. 32

The above pattern appears also in an earlier poem in the
collection entitled "Le Message." The structure is again a journey threatened by many obstacles, but this time the poet's destination is Élissa, the home of the ancestors, where he reports on the state of his people under colonialism:

Au Gardien du Sang j'ai récité le long messager
Les épizooties le commerce ruiné, les chasses quadrillées
la déloyauté bourgeoise
Et les mépris sans graisse dont se gonflent les ventres des captifs. (p. 19)

The ancestor, in his turn, accuses the people of having abandoned the traditional ways to which he advocates their return:

Allons à Nibissel à Fa'oy: récitez le chapelet de sanctuaires
qui ont jalonné la Grande Voie
Rafaites la Route Royale et méditez ce chemin de croix et
de gloire. (pp. 19-20)

The names of the pagan holy places stand out in strange contrast with the Christian rhetoric by which the poet refers to them but which serves to indicate the sacredness and the seriousness of the command which the poet then accepts: "J'ai entendu la Parole du Prince./Héraut de la Bonne Nouvelle, voici sa répétition d'ivoire." (p. 20). The baton of ivory is the hero's symbol of authority and the scepter image by which we recognize the supreme hero who becomes the father's emissary: "The hero blessed by the father returns to represent the father among men. As teacher (Moses) or as emperor (Huang Ti), his word is law. Since he is now centered in the source, he makes visible the repose and harmony of the central place." In this poem, the establishment of harmony rests upon the return to the traditional virtues which the hero himself now champions.

In "Le retour de l'Enfant prodigue," the elements of the paternal encounter appear again and, because of the terminal position of the poem, gain additional weight by setting the final tone of the collection. The biblical story of the Prodigal Son to which the title refers is itself an illustration of the theme of atonement with the father which Campbell describes:
20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: (St. Luke 15: 20-22)

A similar desire for reconciliation marks the poet's attitude.

Like "Par delà l'Océan," "Le retour de l'Enfant prodigue" is also the description of the exile's return to Africa. In contrast with its predecessor, however, "Le retour de l'Enfant prodigue" brings the poet face to face with brutal reality; revery and allegory become less important as the poet returns in fact to the home where he spent those first idyllic years. Unlike the figure in the parable, who is met by his father with rich gifts and a lavish feast, Senghor's Prodigal finds death and destruction. The tone of disappointment is inescapable, for, while he has succeeded in overcoming the obstacle of Space, he cannot cross the insurmountable barrier of Time. The childhood paradise which he remembers has undergone irreparable change.

The initial image by which the passage of time and the subsequent disintegration of the poet's paradise are represented is the death of the poet's father, an event which dates back to 1933 but which still affects the poet in these lines:

Et mon cœur de nouveau sur la marche de pierre, sous la porte haute d'honneur.
Et tressaillent les cendres tièdes de l'Homme aux yeux de foudre, mon père. (p. 47)

Note here the crossing of the threshold, the first phase of a hero's journey or the initial separation required of the initiate in the rite of passage.

The house in which the poet spent his childhood has fallen into a state of disrepair and also shows the ravages of time:

Et perce pâtre, mais perce d'une longue note surréelle cette villa brûlante, dont fenêtres et habitants sont minés des termites.
Et mon cœur de nouveau sous la haute demeure m'â
édifiée l’orgueil de l'Homme (p. 47)

Because it was built by Basile Senghor, the house is associated with him as is indirectly the giant tree which once stood in the courtyard:

Que vaste que vide la cour à l'odeur de mort
Comme la plaine en saison sèche qui tremble de son vide
Mais quel orage bûcheron abattit l'arbre sacré, à
Et tout un peuple se nourrissait de son ombre sur la terrasse circulaire (p. 48)

That this tree is tied in Senghor's imagination with the memory of his father we can see in "A l'appel de la race de Saba":

Au milieu de la cour, le ficoïde solitaire
Et devient à son ombre lumineux les épouses de l'Homme
de leurs voix gravées, graves profondes comme leurs yeux et
les fontaines nocturnes de Fimma.
Et mon père étendu sur des nattes paisibles, mais grand mais fort mais beau
Homme du Royaume de Sine . . . (p. 58)

Linked with the father in life, the tree is a symbol of vitality and potency; its removal is a fitting epitaph.

As we have shown, it is a traditional function of the tree in paradise myths to serve as a link between Man and Paradise; the destruction of the tree is then equated with the breaking of ties between them:

When Heaven had been abruptly separated from the earth, that is, when it had become remote, as in our days; when the tree or the lianes connecting Earth to Heaven had been cut; or the mountain which used to touch the sky had been flattened out—then the paradisiac state was over, and man entered into his present condition. 34

The felling of the tree in Senghor's poem seems to carry with it just that connotation: the realization that the childhood paradise has vanished with the passing years.

Although the physical landmarks of Senhor's Eden are subject to temporality, the ancestors, who are its spiritual inhabitants and the guardians of the poet's Negritude, are beyond the boundaries of time, and so it is to them that he addresses himself:
Je m'allonge à terre à vos pieds, dans la poussière de mes respects
A vos pieds, Ancêtres présents, qui dominez fiers la grand-salle de tous vos masques qui défient le Temps.

The Son's feeling here is one of regret or perhaps guilt on account of his long absence, and, as on previous occasions, reconciliation must be preceded by purification:

Servante fidèle de mon enfance, voici mes pieds où colle la boue de la Civilisation.
L'eau pure sur mes pieds, servante, et soules leurs blanches semelles sur les nattes de silence.
Paix paix et paix, mes pères, sur le front de l'Enfant prodigue.

(p. 48)

We should remember at this point the role of cleansing or purification in initiation ceremonies.

The remainder of the poem becomes a reaffirmation of the poet's heritage and a commitment to restore the traditional values: "Je ressuscite mes vertus terriennes!" (p. 51). In this way the poet effects a reconciliation with the ancestors to whom he offers total submission: "Donne-moi de mourir pour la querelle de mon peuple, et s'il le faut dans l'odeur de la poudre et du canon" (p. 51). He calls upon them to help him fulfill his commitment:

Donne-moi la science fervente des grands docteurs de Tombouctou
Donne-moi la volonté de Soni Ali, le fils de la bête du Lion—c'est un raz de marée à la conquête d'un continent.
Souffle sur moi la sagesse des Kéftas.
Donne-moi le courage du Gueulwâr et ceins mes reins de force comme d'un tyêdo. (p. 51)

As a source of special knowledge, the ancestors take on the character of initiators who provide the initiate with the insights necessary to cope with the demands of his mission.

As in the preceding poem, the commitment will now lead away from Africa:

Ah! bordent de nouveau mon sommeil les si chères mains noires
Et de nouveau le blanc sourire de ma mère.
Demain, je reprendrai le chemin de l'Europe, chemin de l'ambassade
Dans le regret du Pays noir.
Here we find explicitly the image of the mother whom the poet must leave behind if he is to take up the mission directed by the ancestors.

**Conclusion**

In analysing these two poems dealing with the return of the poet to Africa, we have drawn frequent parallels with the structure of the traditional hero tale. In "Par delà Éros," the adventure follows the classic outline, and in "Le retour de l'Enfant prodigue," we discovered many elements which characterize the hero's encounter with the father, especially as it represents a rite of initiation. We find this structure significant in that the hero tale represents an inner confrontation which it imposes on the poetic universe, the personal experience of the writer. In this instance, we detect Senghor's own identity crisis and the vehicle for its solution; the alienated individual who is described earlier in the collection has undergone an illuminating experience and has been reintegrated into his surroundings. By the end of Chante d'ombre, the poet has come to the realization that the physical kingdom of childhood is gone forever. If he is to return to paradise, he must devise a way which is within the necessary dictates of Space and Time: the quest is to be redirected and the nostalgia for the perfect time of childhood clothed in acceptable adult ambitions.

In "Par delà Éros" and in "Le retour de l'Enfant prodigue," the return is depicted variously as the union of lovers and a confrontation with the ancestors. These two encounters contain the new nature of the poet's quest, and in the remainder of this study, we will examine more fully their ramifications as they are developed throughout Senghor's poetry. We will look first at the love poems, for, in spite of his rejection of the woman in "Par delà Éros," the poet will continue to find his Eden identified with her. Chiefly, however, he will seek it in the
future of Africa and in the accomplishment of his ancestor-directed mission: the traditions of the childhood paradise will become the guideline for a new state. As in myths of lost paradise the world over, the Golden Age at the beginning of time can be recovered, although not, in this case, without struggle and sacrifice. The anachronism here is that the writer's awareness of himself must necessarily predate his writing, and that these poems, founded in form and content on the concept of Negritude, are the actual evidence of Senghor's commitment.
CHAPTER II

THE IMAGE OF WOMAN IN SENGHOR'S WORKS AND ITS ASSOCIATIONS WITH THE MYTH OF LOST PARADISE

General Characteristics of the Senegalese Woman

The image of woman appears frequently throughout Senghor's entire poetic work with praise of feminine beauty and the theme of love providing the principal material for a significant group of poems. In this chapter, we will analyze the poet's portrayal of woman and her function here as related to the search for lost paradise, for she carries with her a wealth of connotations which figure distinctly "par delà Èros." She is the source of life and the guardian of tradition, in fact, the ideal symbol of Negritude. In a sense, she has always existed in the poet's Eden, for her description carries evident maternal associations. She is the female deity of the land or even a microcosm of the African continent. Like the Ancestors, she is eternal; she defies the passage of time. She is the way by which the poet may return to the lost paradise:

Toi Ange de l'Enfant Prodigue, Ange des solutions à la clarté de l'aube
Quand les brouillards toute la nuit hâ! ont pesé profond
sur mon angoisse
Tu es la porte de beauté, la porte radieuse de grâce
À l'entrée du temps primordial. Et je jouais avec les cailloux et colombes. (p. 182)

The images of light and spirituality with which the poet clothes the woman in these lines bear a remarkable similarity to those which Baudelaire dedicated to Mme de Sabatier:

Que ce soit dans la nuit et dans la solitude,
Que ce soit dans la rue et dans la multitude,
Son fantôme dans l'air danse comme un flambeau.

Parfois il parle et dit: "Je suis belle, et j'ordonne
Que pour l'amour de moi vous n'aimiez que le Beau;
Je suis l'Ange gardien, la Muse et la Kadone."

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The strength of the parallel resides only partially in Senghor's admiration for Baudelaire; it indicates as well a similar idealization of the subject and helps to situate the Senghorian woman among those who before her have acted as muse and guide to their poets.

Senghor's poem "Femme noir," which praises the beauty of the black woman, opens with the lines: "Femme nue, femme noire/ Vêtue de ta couleur qui est la vie, de ta forme qui est beauté!" (p. 16). The black woman is here and elsewhere in Senghor's works an appropriate symbol of Negritude in at least two senses. On one hand, the images in this poem serve as an essential step in the attack against a white value system. While "black" is indeed, for the poet, the color of life, literary admiration of a woman because she is black effectively shatters linguistic traditions and challenges the accepted moral polarity between the words "black" and "white." As Mezu indicates, the ramifications of this challenge are tremendously extensive:

Dans ce poème, "Femme noire," et dans quelques autres poèmes de Senghor que nous verrons plus tard, le poète noir s'efforce de revaloriser tout ce qui vient de l'Afrique noire: femme, art et valeurs. Lors de la Renaissance noir, les poètes négro-américains renversèrent la hiérarchie solaire des poètes et des écrivains blancs. Selon cette hiérarchie, le jour et le soleil et par extension la couleur blanche contiennent tout le bien; la nuit et la couleur noire renferment tout le mal. Les poètes négro-américains établirent la hiérarchie raciale qui place la couleur noire au sommet de la vie; Senghor adopte cette vision dans sa glorification de la femme noire.2

We are only touching here on a problem of wide dimensions, that of language and the difficulties incurred when the members of one race or culture are obliged to employ a means of self-expression derived to meet the needs of a substantially different people. In Senghor's case, the situation is aggravated by the fact that he is not only using an intrinsically unsuited idiom, but he is using it precisely to affirm his racial identity. His
response to the dilemma is, in part, to reverse the established
conventions of imagery, as he does in his praise of the black
woman, a procedure for which the writers of the Harlem Renaissance
provide ample literary models.

On the other hand, the African woman is an apt symbol of
Negritude because of her very femininity. First, she represents
the continuity of the race and consequently the preservation of
traditions: "La femme, parce que <permanente> de la famille et
donneuse de vie, a été promue en source de force vitale et gar-
dienne de la maison, c'est-à-dire dépositaire du passé et garante
de l'avenir clanique." 3 This role assumes greater importance
when we remember the religious importance attached to the prop-
agation of the clan in African tradition. In addition to this
social function, the female, by virtue of her sex, projects, more
than the male, the virtues of Negritude: "Car la Femme est, plus
que l'Homme, sensible aux courants mystérieux de la vie et du
cosmos, plus perméable à la joie et à la douleur." 4 Acutely sen-
sitive to her surroundings, woman illustrates the relationship
with nature which Senghor believes typical of Black Culture, and
which he sees as the key to revitalizing civilization: "Le
service nègre aura été de contribuer, avec d'autres peuples, à
refaire l'unité de l'Homme et du Monde . . ." 5

The poem "Femme Noire" figures in Senghor's first collection
of poetry and yet, even at this point, woman is depicted as an
access to the paradise which the poet seeks:

J'ai grandi à ton ombre; la douceur de tes mains bandait
mes yeux.
Et voilà qu'au coeur de l'Été et de Midi, je te découvre,
Terre promise, du haut d'un haut col calciné
Et ta beauté me foudroie en plein coeur, comme l'éclair
d'un aigle. (p. 16)

The poet describes his rediscovery of the African woman with the
biblical reference to the return of the children of Israel from
exile in Egypt to the Promised Land.
These lines also show the African woman as both mother and mistress and compare the affection of the child for its nurse to the admiration of the adult male for feminine beauty. As we have seen in "Par delà l'âme," Africa itself is perceived in these two roles:

Et je renais à la terre qui fut ma mère. (p. 41)

Je sais le Paradis perdu—je n'ai pas perdu souvenir du jardin d'enfance où fleurissent les oiseaux
Que viendra la moisson après l'hivernage pénible, et tu reviendras mon Aimée. (p. 43)

The female figure in the love poems continues this duality, and we are reminded once again of Campbell's depiction of the hero's conquest of the goddess as an adult expression of the child's attraction to the beautiful mother and the memory of childhood.

Touching on this question is the parallel which can be set up between the way in which Senghor relates to his mother in the poetry and his relationship with the women in the love poems.

Senghor devotes only two poems to his mother, and these few lines can offer but a limited and stylized view of the woman to whom the biographers tell us Senghor was very close. In the lengthy poem, "À l'appel de la race de Saba," which addresses her directly, she is described as angered or perhaps disappointed in her son who must justify his chosen way to her:

Mère, oh! j'entends ta voix courroucée.
Voilà tes yeux courroucés et rouges qui incendient nuit et
brûlent noire comme au jour jadis de mes fuyues
—Je ne pouvais rester sourd à l'innocence des conquêtes,
des fontaines et des mirages sur les tanns
Et tremblait ton menton sous tes lèvres gonflées et tortues.

(p. 57)

The son tries to reassure her that he has not abandonned the ideals of his childhood: "Je ne souffle pas le vent d'Est sur ces images pieuses comme sur le sable des pistes" (p. 58). He asks support in his resolve from the spirits to whom he sacrifices:
qu'ils m'accordent, les génies protecteurs, que mon sang
ne s'affadisse pas comme un assimilé comme un civilisé.
J'offre un poulet sans tache, debout près de l'Ainé, bien
que tard venu, afin qu'avant l'eau crèmeuse et la bière
de mil
Cible jusqu'à moi et sur mes lèvres charnelles le sang chaud
salé du taureau dans la force de l'âge, dans la plénitude
de sa graisse. (p. 59)

Compare this passage to the following lines taken from "Autres
chants" :

Mais quand ouïrai-je ta voix, allégresse lumineuse de l'au-
rore?
Quand me mirer dans la glace souriante de tes yeux larges
comme des baies?
Et quelle offrande apaisera le masque blanc de la déesse?
Sera-ce le sang des poulets ou des cabris ou le sang gratuit
de mes veines?
Seront-ce les prémices de mon chant dans l'ablution de mon
orgueil? (p. 147)

The mistress, like the mother, exhibits anger which must be ap-
peased with sacrifices, the structure of the two poems thereby
displaying an interesting similarity. In the latter, however,
the woman is herself the deity who requires sacrifices of a
keenly personal nature.

Anger is also an identifying characteristic of the lady
in "Epitres à la Princesse"

Je regrette les jours d'alors—tu levais le pont sur toute
évasion
Et tes colères qui brisaient les vases précieux, les fibres
de mon coeur
Délices ou douleurs, je ne sais. (p. 140)

The temperament exhibited here is consistently absent, however, in
"Chants pour Sigemar" and its more African heroine.

A second portrait of the mother appears in "Ndessé," where
she is described rather as a comforter and the poet wishes himself
a child again:

Je ne suis plus que ton enfant endolori, et il se tourne
et retourne sur ses flancs douloureux
Je ne suis plus qu'un enfant qui se souvient de ton sein
maternel et qui pleure.
Reçois-moi dans la nuit qu'éclaire l'assurance de ton regard
Redis-moi les vieux contes des veillées noires, que je me perde par les routes sans mémoire. (p. 82)
The stories which the mother tells lighten the son's burdens but serve as well to remind him of the dignity of his heritage: "Dis-moi donc l'orgueil de mes pères!" (p. 82).
The elusive woman of Senghor's love poems, provides, in her many disguises, this same refuge for the poet in moments of distress:

Croire qu'il y a des mains plus calmes que des palmes, plus douces que berceuse nyominka
Mains douces à bercer mon cœur, 6 palmes sur ma peine et mon sommeil. (p. 180)
The comforting role of the woman in this poem resembles rather closely that of a mother or nurse because of the poet's use of the verb "bercer".

The woman, too, sings songs or tells stories which reassure the poet of his African identity:

... Etait-ce toi la nègresse aux yeux verts, Soyan?
Contre l'épaule de la Nuit cubaine, si j'ai pleuré sur tes cheveux fanés!
Prêtresse du Vaudou en l'Ile Ensoorcelée, mais souviens-toi du victimaire
Aux yeux droits et froids de poignards. Sous l'ombrage lilial d'Amboise, poétesse
Tu m'as filé souvent des blues. Ah! la voix de lumière et son halo de sang!
Les ombres transparentes des chantres royaux pleuraient au son de la trompette. (p. 183)

Here, the melody of jazz replaced the mother's stories in reminding the poet of his Negritude. In "Épitres à la Princesse," there is an exchange of stories. The African tells the history of his ancestors:

Gréces à la Princesse qui se faisait loisirs de mes récits,
pleurant aux malheurs de ma race:
Les guerres contre l'Almamy, la ruine d'Élissa et l'exil
à Dyilôr du Saloum
La fondation du Sine....

... . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Et cet autre exil plus dur à mon cœur, l'arrachement de soi
à soi
A la langue de ma mère, au crâne de l'Ancêtre, au tam-tam
de mon âme...
Je dis grâces à la Princesse qui annonça la résurrection de
Dylor. (p. 138)

The princess provides encouragement merely by listening but also
teaches her admirer through the recitation of her own legends which
he recalls here:

J'ai mémoire de Lanza le Troubadour.
Quand il chantait la geste des Wikings, les amours d'Halvor
et de Dina
Mon cœur se prenait au miroir. (p. 141)

This ability on the part of the Senghorian woman to refresh and
encourage the poet is continually recurring. Sylvia Washington
appears to take this into consideration when she remarks: "The
spiritual and emotional nourishment associated with Woman informs
the concrete imagery expressing her form and function." The charac-
teristic is by its very nature maternal, and that it is equally
evident in the portrayal of the mother and the mistress seems more
than coincidental. Certainly, it is reasonable and natural for
a man to try to reconstruct in his relationship with the woman
he loves the role of the mother in the idyll of childhood.

Passing from the psychological character of the woman, let
us examine her physical description. Here we notice at once the
poet's penchant for portraying her in terms of landscape imagery.
Woman is a part of the landscape in Senghor's poetry. It is the
background against which she is presented, and its vegetation and
terrain provide the metaphors with which to describe her. In
other instances, her image is imposed on the face of the land.
There appears to exist for Senghor a certain correspondence between
the two which renders them inseparable and, in some instances,
even indistinguishable.

This parallel is illustrated by the themes of separation and
longing which characterize the love relationships in the same way
that exile and nostalgia are dominant in Chants d'ombre. The
similarity of the poet's feelings in both instances is evident in the following lines:

Je verrai d'autres cieux et d'autres yeux
Je boirai à la source d'autres bouches plus fraîches que citrons
Je dormirai sous le toit d'autres chevelures à l'abri des orages.
Mais chaque année, quand le rhum du Printemps fait flamber la mémoire
Je regretterai le pays natal et la pluie de tes yeux sur la soif des savanes. (p. 172)

Here the woman and the land manage to retain their separate identities, but elsewhere in "Chants pour Signare" the African setting exists only to furnish images with which to describe the woman: "mon amie, couleur d'Afrique," "ce teint de tatou fier," "la forêt bleue de tes cheveux," "le palmier souriant sous l'Alizé." Such images place the woman in the region with which the poet is most familiar. The imagery may, however, situate the woman in a wider setting; for example, in "Chaka," a poem which includes all Africa in its scope, the heroine, Nolivé, is portrayed: "Ma Négresse blonde d'huile de palme à la taille de plume/ Cuisses de loutre en surprise et de neige du Kilimandjaro" (p. 121). The reference here is East African and beyond the boundaries of the childhood paradise.

The woman from northern Europe described in "Épitres à la Princesse" is set against a seascape, a reflection of her particular surroundings:

Le ciel de ton esprit, le pays haut de ta prestance, la nuit bleue de ton cœur
Me seront fêtes à fin de l'Initiation. Tu es mon univers.
Voici l'arc-en-ciel sur l'Hiver comme ton oriflamme.
Tu m'ouvre le visage de mes frères les hommes-blancs
Car ton visage est un chef-d'oeuvre, ton corps un paysage.
Tes yeux d'or vert qui changent comme la mer sous le soleil
Tes oreilles d'orfèvrerie, tes poignets de cristal
Ton nez d'aigle marin, tes reins de femme forte mon appui
Et ta démarche de navire oh! le vent dans les voiles de misaine... (p. 139)

In these lines, the poet claims the woman as a microcosm of his universe.
This merging of the woman and the land also characterizes the poet's concept of the earth which, in a similar manner, displays feminine attributes. In the following passage, the poet gives the childhood setting to which he wishes to return the features of a woman's face:

Mon refuge dans ce visage perdu, ô plus mélodieux qu'un masque pongvé!
Dans ce pays d'eau et de tanns, et d'îles flottant sur les terres.
Et je rebâtrai la demeure fongible au bord de cette courbe exquise
Du sourire énigme qu'aiguissent les lèvres bleu-noir des palétuviers.
Et je paîtrai les songes calmes des sauriens, et sorcier aux yeux d'outre-monde
Contemplerai les choses éternelles dans l'altitude de tes yeux.

(p. 188)

The way in which the land is described tends to make it a love-object.

As we have seen, in African lore, the land is traditionally considered female, the bride of the totemic ancestor. By identifying the land with his mistress, the poet is, in a sense, imitating that mythical union. This analogy is explicit in "À la mort":

Je sais que l'Hiver s'illuminera d'un long jour printanier
Que l'odeur de la terre montera m'évivrer plus fort que le parfum des fleurs
Que la Terre tendra ses seins durs pour frémir sous les caresses du Vainqueur
Que je boudrai comme l'Annonciateur, que je manifesterai l'Afrique comme le sculpteur de masques au regard intense

(p. 26)

The poet as the embodiment of Africa becomes a suitable mate for the personified Earth.

Reference to the primordial couple appears also in "Épitres à la Princesse" :" Retiens ce message Princesse, nous serons le Ciel et la Terre" (p. 144). Such images must be considered more than mythological ornamentation, for they imply a possibility for re-creation which is demanded by the dimensions of the poet's
mission: the rehabilitation of African culture and, through it, the revitalization of Western Civilization.

The images of Spring which are associated with woman in the lines we have been citing here and elsewhere must also be given value outside of literary convention. The regeneration associated with the season and similarly with woman also foretells the flowering of a new civilization. This is the message of "Chant de Printemps," where, in spite of the war, the poet predicts the dawning of a new era:

Écoute le message du printemps d'un autre âge d'un autre continent
Écoute le message de l'Afrique lointaine et le chant de ton sang!
J'écoute la sève d'Avril qui dans tes veines chante. (p. 85)

Woman, source of life, is a reflection of this promise:

Et ta bouche est comme un bourgeois qui se confie au soleil
Et comme une rose couleur de vin vieux qui va s'épanouir
au chant de tes lèvres.
Écoute le message, mon amie sombre au talon rose.
J'entends ton cœur d'ambre qui germe dans le silence et
le Printemps. (p. 87)

But this optimism fades in "La mort de la Princesse": "Je
n'atteindrai pas le Printemps, l'aurais-je atteint/
le feu du ciel ruinerà dans la minute les monuments des Hommes-blancs"
(p. 145). The reference to Spring is used here in a negative sense to envision not only the death of the princess but the destruction of her civilization as well.

Within the category of landscape imagery and universally characteristic of the woman in Senghor's poetry is the light image. Certainly a means of translating human warmth and sympathy, it is also a symbol of spirituality and purity. The sun, moon, and stars, as well as artificial light of candles and lamps, come to be associated with the beloved:

La verte lumière qui te fait d'or, qui te fait Soleil
de ma nuit splendide... (p. 152)

Quand j'ai senti sur ma joue tiède les rayons mordorés de
ton visage. (p. 175)
Et dans mon coeur veillait comme une lampe ton sourire. (p.140)

Hier à l’église à l’Angeau, ont brillé ses yeux claires mordorant (p. 189)

These are only four of the countless examples of a similar nature, and, to show the widespread use of the device, we have selected from all three of what can be termed love cycles: "Épitres à la Princesse," "Autres chants," and "Chants pour Signare."

Similar images occur with reference to divinities. The attributes of God are compared to sunlight: "Mon coeur, Seigneur, s’est fondu comme neige sur les toits de Paris/ Au soleil de votre douceur" (p. 22). The messages of the Ancestors appear in the stars:

Et tu m’expliques les signes que disent les Ancêtres dans la sérénité marine des constellations
Le Taureau le Scorpion le Léopard, l’Éléphant les Poissons familiers
Et la pomme lactée des Ésprits par le tann céleste qui ne finit point.
Mais voici l’intelligence de la déesse Lune et que tombent les voiles des ténèbres. (pp. 36–37)

The practice of animism, as a precursor of Christianity, is described as "La lampe au beurre clair qui permet d’attendre l’aube, les étoiles qui préfigurent le soleil" (p. 95).

The supernatural associations attached to light images are visible too in the description of the Senghorian woman, who, surrounded by this halo of pure light, takes on a distinctly religious aura. Despite the eroticism of certain passages, the poet’s attitude toward woman is elsewhere distant and respectful. In some cases, it is an attitude of worship, and he describes her in religious terms:

Toi Ange de l’Enfant Prodigue, Ange des solutions à la clarté de l’aube (p. 182)

En la claire douceur de ce printemps, croire qu’elle m’attend la Vierge de soie noire. (p. 181)

Je dis seulement son sourire qui chante l’Ave Maria Qui strike une complainte sans mémoire. Et c’était les printemps du monde. (p. 154)
These spiritual associations indicate the poet's reverence for the woman who, as the last line points out, in her very presence provides a door opening onto the lost paradise.

As a projection of the "primordial era," the woman shares something of the purity of precolonial Africa. In the poem which begins "Mais oublies tous ces mensonges...," the speaker is disillusioned and fatigued by war in Europe; in contrast, he imagines the woman who waits for him in Africa: "Ah! rêver de jeunes filles là-bas, comme on rêve de pures fleurs/Dans le vert horrible de la forêt..." (p. 130). She is untouched and waits for him alone:

Je vous salue fût lisse élancé, front hautain par-dessus la brousse
0 lèvres noires et pour les seuls Alizés, vos frères au soir du choeur aérien. (p. 130)

In her innocence, we see a trace of the pure state of childhood, the childhood which was left behind in Africa and to which the poet has never ceased striving to return.

Up to this point, we have been dealing chiefly with general characteristics of the Senghoraiwoman which serve directly or indirectly to associate her with the childhood paradise. This relationship can also be found in the structure and themes of the love poems. In "Chants pour Signare" and in "D'autre chants," where the heroine is apparently African, separation, nostalgia, and quest echo the poet's longing for Africa in Chants d'ombre. With "Epitres à la Princesse," the union of the black man and the white woman anticipates the possibility of a new civilization enriched by the values of Negritude. In both situations, Senghor projects aspects of his paradise complex into the format of a love story.

The Quest Theme in "Chants pour Signare"

"Chants pour Signare," published in 1961 as part of the collection entitled Nocturnes, is a revision of an earlier work entitled Chants pour Naëtt. The modifications include only minor
adjustments in style and content, the latter undoubtedly prompted by circumstances in Senghor's private life. As the poet himself evidently considers "Chant pour Signare" his more polished work and in order to be consistent, we shall concentrate on this second and more accessible edition. It is interesting, however, that in the process of transformation, the subject in the poems has undergone a certain degree of abstraction which further diminishes her identity as a flesh-and-blood woman and emphasizes the idealization which attaches her to the poet's dream world.

In its present form, this work is not merely a random selection of love songs bearing similar themes, for, however loosely defined, there exists an observable pattern, perhaps a plot, which unites them. The first three poems act as an introduction to the cycle, describing the couple and their separation. In the following stanzas, the poet writes principally from Europe, and there are references to a crisis, possibly the war years. The woman appears as a memory of the past or a dream of the future. Gradually, however, she becomes the object of the poet's attempts to regain her, a sister-soul whom he seeks across Time and Space and behind her many disguises. In the last poems, especially, his efforts to win her take on the characteristics of the traditional romantic quest.

We have previously pointed out the frequent appearance of light imagery in Senghor's description of woman; in "Chants pour Signare," these images are used as a cohesive structural device, a sign of the woman's real or imagined presence. The first poem opens the collection at dawn: "Une main de lumière a caressé mes paupières de nuit/ Et ton sourire s'est levé sur les brouillards qui flottaient monotones sur mon Congo" (p. 171). The parallel between the woman and the rising sun is emphasized through a variation of these introductory lines at the end of the poem: "Car ce matin une main de lumière a caressé mes paupières de nuit/ Et tout le long du jour, mon coeur a fait écho
au chant virginal des oiseaux" (p. 171). In the phrase, "toute long du jour," however, the poet foreshadows the closing of the day, the black night and the absence of the loved one; the parting of the two lovers becomes the subject of the next stanzas.

Let us pause for a moment, however, and look at the body of this first poem in order to examine its setting. The couple's surroundings are African, the images being drawn from Senghor's memory of his childhood:

Voici la fleur de brousse et l'étoile dans mes cheveux et le bandeau qui ceint le front du père-athlète,
J'emprunterai la flûte qui rythme la puix des troupeaux
Et tout le jour assis à l'ombre de tes cils, près de la Fontaine Pimla
Fidèle, je paîtrait les mugissements blonds de tes troupeaux.

The proximity of the fountain, the poet as shepherd, the sound of the flute—all of these are elements of the childhood Eden and imitate with surprising accuracy these lines from the initial stanza of "Que m'accompagnent kôras et balafons":

Et toi Fontaine de Kam-Dyamé, quand à midi je buvais ton eau mystique au creux de mes mains
Entouré de mes compagnons lisses et nus et parés des fleurs de brousse!
La flûte du père modulait la lenteur des troupeaux (pp. 26-29)

The flute, especially, holds mysterious powers for the poet. He heard its music as he stood on the threshold of his father's house in "Le retour de l'Enfant prodigue": "Me conduise la note d'or de la flûte du silence, me conduise le père mon frère de rêve jadis/Nu sous sa ceinture de lait, la fleur du flamboyant au front" (p. 47). Its notes can draw him magically into the golden era and bring him across the awesome barrier of Time: "Flûte d'ébène lumineuse et lisse, transpare les brouillards de ma mémoire/O flûte! les brouillards, pâmes sur son sommeil sur son visage original" (p. 192). The musical accompaniment which is indicated for this initial poem of "Chants pour Signare" is "pour flûtes," and we are once more in the childhood paradise.
The woman's presence in the garden and the constant theme of love are unaccustomed additions to the childhood memory but not unexplainable in terms of literary tradition. We find here all the necessary ingredients for a pastorale: a pair of chaste lovers in a rustic setting which becomes a tropical Arcadia, the traditional projection of man's dreams of a more harmonious society and a refuge from the complexities of the real world. As indicated by Frye, the pastorale sometimes occurs in the early stages of romance; having discussed the first stage, the birth of the hero, he then continues:

The second phase brings us to the innocent youth of the hero, a phase most familiar to us from the story of Adam and Eve in Eden before the Fall. In literature this phase presents a pastoral and Arcadian world, generally a pleasant wooded landscape, full of glades, shaded valleys, murmuring brooks, the moon, and other sexual imagery. . . . The archetype of erotic innocence is less commonly marriage than the "chaste" love that precedes marriage; the love of brother for sister, or of two boys for each other. Hence, though in later phases it is often recalled as a lost happy time or Golden Age, the sense of being close to a moral taboo is very frequent, as it is of course in the Eden story itself. 7

While the heroic adventure is less evident in this cycle than in Chants d'ombre, the poems can nevertheless be situated in the archetypal pattern. The relationship becomes stronger as the theme of quest becomes more prominent in the last poems of the group where the winning of the woman becomes the poet's obsession.

In the next two poems, the time for departure grows increasingly near, and the light of the woman's presence becomes dimmer and dimmer: "Et c'est dans la pénombre le nid des deux propos" (p. 172). As the sun sets, the woman merges gradually into the shadows as if into the land itself:

Un crépuscule bref tomba sur ton visage, un caprice divin.
Du haut de la colline refuge de lumière, j'ai vu s'étendre l'éclat de ton pagne
Et ton cimier tel un soleil plonger dans l'ombre des rizières

(p. 172)
At last the light and the woman disappear entirely, leaving the poet alone and prey to his fears of the night: "Je dormirai dans le silence de mes larmes/Jusqu'à ce qu'effleure mon front l'aube laiteuse de ta bouche" (p. 173).

It is not dawn, however, which rises to meet the poet in the next lines, but the painful image of the unfamiliar European night:

Mais ces routes de l'insomnie, ces routes méridiennes et ces longues routes nocturnes!
Depuis longtemps civilisé, je n'ai pas encore apaisé le Dieu blanc du Sommeil.
Je parle bien sa langue, mais si barbare mon accent! (p. 175)

Gone are the familiar beings of "Nuit de Sine" and the hypnotic rhythm of the drums. But this night has still one redeeming aspect; it brings heaven-sent visions of the loved one and Africa, not clothed in sunlight, but set against the stars:

Ton sourire de part en part traverse ce ciel mien, comme une voie lactée.
Et les abeilles d'or sur tes joues d'ombre bourdonnent comme des étoiles
Et la Croix-du-Sud étincelle à la pointe de ton menton
Et le Chariot flamboie à l'angle haut de ton front dextre.

The constellations which the poet imagines are those of the southern sky.

At the end of the poem, there appears a reversal of associations, the poet preferring to prolong the night with its dreams and dreading the daylight in an alien country:

Et je reposerai longtemps sous une paix bleu-noir
Longtemps je dormirai dans la paix joalième
Jusqu'à ce que l'Ange de l'Aube me rende à ta lumière
À ta réalité brutale et si cruelle, 8 Civilisation! (p. 174)

As the poet in Chants d'ombre longed for the place and time of his childhood, he projects, in "Chants pour Signare," his nostalgia for the person of the absent loved one who is herself a part of the paradise setting.

The six poems which follow continue the theme of absence.
Again, we perceive an element of the traditional romance, for the separation of the lovers by time and space serves as the symbolic sexual barrier which Frye identifies with this stage of development. The poet has already referred to himself as a warrior: "Tu as gardé longtemps, longtemps entre tes mains le visage noir du guerrier" (p. 171). The unhappy future which he foresees here comes to pass in the following lines which, in spite of their medieval embroidery, reveal the distinct form of war:

Peut-être demain mon amie, tomberai-je sur un sol inapaisé
En regrettenant tes yeux couchants et le tam-tam brumeux
des mortiers tout là-bas.
Et tu regretteras dans la pénombre la voix brûlante qui chantait ta beauté noire. (pp. 174-175)

With the war posing an additional barrier between the lovers, the poet must be content with his imagination:

J'étais assis sur la prose d'un banc, le soir.
Les heures de garde s'alignaient devant moi, comme sur une route la monotonie des yatéaux
Quand j'ai senti sur ma joue tiède les rayons mordorés
de ton visage. (p. 175)

Once again, light evokes the memory of the absent loved one.

The poet's nostalgia for Africa and his memory of the woman continue to provide the material for a group of poems reminiscent of the love sonnets of Ronsard or La Bellay. Certainly, the Petrarchist imagery is present, especially in the perpetual play of light and shadow, and there are also familiar echoes of the Platonic ideal in the constant association of the woman with Paradise. In spite of her ties with these Western literary traditions, she remains, nevertheless, African. She incarnates the rhythm of Negritude:

Ah! le balafong de ses pieds et le gazouillis des oiseaux de lait!
Les cordes hautes des kôras, la musique subtile de ses hanches!
C'est la mélodie du blanc Môhari, la démarche royale de l'Autoruche. (p. 177)
He pictures her in exotic African surroundings:

Et nous baignerons mon amie dans une présence africaine. 
Des meubles de Guinée et du Congo, graves et polis sombres et sereins. 
Des masques primordiaux et purs aux murs, distants mais si présents! (p. 177)

The masks here signify the spiritual presence of the ancestors.

In "Ton visage . . .," the poet appears to recall an incident from the lovers' past, seen against the luxuriant tropical backdrop:

Nous revenons de Dyònewar, nos pensées s'attardaient sur les bolongs 
Où luisaient, faible écho de soie, les ailes des âmes éveillées. 
Les bêtes des palétuviers les guettaient dans l'extase à leur passage 
Et les étoiles sur la mer concave étaient un autre écho divin 
Et les rames mélodieuses et lentes ruisselaient d'étoiles filantes. (p. 178)

The visual magic of this moment, reflected on the surface of the water, is rendered more elusive by its introductory lines and the obscurity of the poet's definition of the past: "Ton visage beauté des temps anciens! Sortons les pâmes parfumés aux tons passés. Mémoire des temps sans histoire! C'était avant notre naissance" (p. 178). The reference to antiquity or prehistory is not exactly new in conjunction with the poet's Eden; we have already pointed out the association between the pure state of precolonial Africa, uncorrupted by western civilization, and the innocence of childhood. Senghor refers to the woman elsewhere as "la porte radieuse à l'entrée du temps primordiale". In "D'autres chants," he introduces an account of a similar dream-like episode with the lines: "Je ne sais en quels temps c'était, je confonds toujours l'enfance et l'Eden/Comme je mêle la Mort et la Vie—un pont de douceur les relie" (p. 143). The temporal setting of childhood and the poet's idealized version of it must necessarily remain, as in myth, somewhat vague.
The expression "avant notre naissance," however, moves from the realm of myth to that of psychoanalysis. The memory of life in the womb suggested here is reiterated in a later poem in the cycle where we find the introduction: "Dans la nuit abyssale en notre mère, nous jouions aux noyés t'en souvient-il?/ La paix des fromagers planait sur son espoir et les sourcils de son Champion" (p. 182). The darkness and tranquility, the suggestion of water, and the maternal reference appear to describe the world of the foetus. As we have previously indicated, Africa in Senghor's poetry carries specific maternal associations. We have noted, for example, that the theme of exile can, in consequence, be likened to the birth trauma or, at least, the separation of a child from his mother's presence. This relationship has even been extended in our study to the poet's portrayal of his mistress, who does indeed share certain psychological characteristics with the poet's own mother as expressed in the poetry. The image of the womb used to denote a circumstance which the poet wishes identified with the Beginning or the childhood paradise would seem, therefore, to be an appropriate poetic device.

Not only does the poet insist on the beloved's presence in the Eden of pre-history, but, like the childhood paradise and like the ancestors who signify the continuity of the race, she is beyond temporality; she is Eternal. The poet describes her features fixed in his memory as "un masque de prove penché sur l'abîme" (p. 178), and like the masks of the ancestors, she defies the passage of time: "Lors ton visage d'aujourd'hui sous sa patine avait la beauté noire de l'Eternel" (p. 178). The image of the changeless mask is used again in the following poem with a slightly human variation:

Tes cils ont pris la position de l'Eternel sur le visage des statues
Mais il flotte autour de ton masque l'aile claire de la mouette
Et c'est ce sourire obsédant, comme le leitmotiv de ton visage méloodie. (p. 179)
Ignoring the expressionless countenance required of a ritual mask, he portrays the lady as softened by an enigmatic smile.

The still face of the sleeping woman in "Masque nègre" shows an early appearance of this analogy in Senghor's imagination:

Ce fin croissant, cette lèvre plus noire et lourde à peine
-- où le sourire de la femme complice?
Les patènes des joues, le dessin du menton chantent l'accord muet.

Visage de masque fermé à l'éphémère, sans yeux sans matière
Tête de bronze parfaite et sa patine de temps
Que ne souillent fards ni rougeur ni rides, ni traces de
larmes ni de baisers

O visage tel que Dieu t'a créé avant la mémoire même des
 Âges

Visage de l'aube du monde, ne t'ouvre pas comme un collègne

Je t'adore, ô Beauté, de mon oeil monocular! (pp. 17-18)

In this instance, he questions her lack of expression and the absence of her smile. She, too, is associated with the Beginning, and the poet names her "Koumba Tâm," the Black Venus, goddess of love and beauty, who becomes the object of the poet's search in "Chants pour Signare."

Returning to our analysis of that cycle, we find that the poet, obsessed by the memory of his mistress, arrives at a point where he is either forced by his own desires or merely permitted by circumstances to set out to regain the beloved; his efforts to find and win her dominate the remainder of the cycle. The first evidence of his resolve occurs in "Tu as donc dépourvu..." when he consults the sages of Africa in order unravel the mystery of her smile, but he concludes simply:

Ah! je n'ai oublié Princesse! que d'avoir consulté mon
coeur perce-murailles.

Ton rempart si mobile ne saurait résister à l'assaut subité
de mon coeur de dyâli. (p. 179)

The word "dyâli" signifies poet, and it is in this role that the writer can hope to gain the lady's interest:

Signare, je chanterai ta grâce ta beauté.
Des maîtres de Dyong j'ai appris l'art de tisser des paroles plaisantes
Paroles de pourpre à te parer, Princesse noire d'Elissa.
(p. 182)

The association with Elissa is again a link between the woman and the ancestors whose dwelling place is there.

For a moment, it appears as if the wanderer need only to return to Africa in order to regain that lost sunlight, the presence of the beloved, and, indeed, he imagines her standing on the dock awaiting his coming: "Croire qu'il y a la Jeune Fille, qui m'attend au port à chaque courrier/ Et qui espère mon visage dans la floraison des mouchoirs! " (p. 181). But the poet's quest is not to terminate so easily: the woman he seeks proves elusive.

The capital letters used here for "Jeune Fille"—not, incidently, in the original version—transform the waiting figure from a real woman to a poetic idealization. She is viewed as a sister-soul, known first in the primordial era of the poet's Eden, who must be pursued across Time and Space and recognized in spite of her manifold disguises:

Depuis, comme un qui cherche la fumée d'un songe, j'ai promené ma quête inquiète
Aux sables du Levant à la pointe-du-Sud, chez les Peuples-de-la-Mer-verte
Et chez les Peuples d'Outre-mer. Et la conquête au loin dans tes rêves, c'était moi. (p. 182)

She is Nyominka, Soyau, the poetess of Amboise; however she appears, she is the reflection of the poet's own spirit: "A nouveau je t'ai rencontrée, et je t'ai dit mon trouble et tu m'as dit: <Ani>/ Reconnais ton frère à ta voix qui tremble—mais bien passé le temps des cache-cache!" (p. 183).

We have spoken of the woman in "Chants pour Signare" as a sister-soul, for Jung's concept of the "anima" seems, in this case, applicable. The female ideal who serves here as an incarnation of Negritude is, in consequence, the representation of that part of the poet's being which he regards metaphorically as
"feminine," as we are reminded by Senghor's contrast between the mechanical and rational (masculine) viewpoint of western civilisation and the emotional and intuitive (feminine) qualities of Black culture. This feminine personification of Negritude can thus be viewed as the feminine personification of the self which is defined by the term "anima."

In "Dans la nuit abyssale . . .," the poet explicitly denotes a brother-sister relationship, and we find a similar situation in "D'autres chants."

--- Ma soeur exquise, garde donc ces grains d'or, qu'ils chantent l'éclat sombre de ta gorge.
Ils étaient pour ma fiancée belle, et je n'avais pas de fiancée.
---Mon frère eul, dis-moi ton nom. Il doit résonner haut comme un sorong
Rutiler comme le sabre au soleil. Oh! chante seulement ton nom. (p. 149)

The exchange is not strictly speaking within the realm of everyday reality. The time of day is noon, the moment favored for the appearance of spirits:

Or je revenais de Fa'oye, et l'horreur était au zénith
Et c'était l'heure où l'on voit les Esprits, quand la lumière est transparente
Et il fallait s'écarter des sentiers, pour éviter leur main fraternelle et mortelle.
L'âme d'un village battait à l'horizon. Etait-ce des vivants ou des Morts? (p. 149)

While the possibility of romantic love is excluded, the relationship carries a strangely emotional impact:

Ses mains polies me revêtirent d'un pagne de soie et d'estime
Son discours me charma de tout mets délectable—douceur du lait de la mi-nuit
Et son sourire était plus mélodieux que le khalam de son dijali.
L'étoile du matin vint s'asseoir parmi nous, et nous pleurames délicieusement. (p. 149)

The poet leaves us in doubt as to whether the woman here is real or merely the alluring vision of a jinn. Or perhaps, in this supernatural encounter, the poet experiences a privileged dialogue
with his other self.

This is not intended, however, as evidence that the love theme in either "Chants pour Signare" or "D'autres chants" is strictly platonic. The poem "Était-ce une nuit maghrébine? . . ." describes an unmistakably romantic interlude. Its setting, though, is a familiar one, Ïden disguised as Joal: "Était-ce une nuit maghrébine? C'était aussi la Nuit notre nuit joallienne / D'avant notre naissance l'ineffable nuit: tu te coiffais devant le miroir de mes yeux" (p. 186). The situation in time is again the Beginning, but the conclusion of the poem emphasizes that, while the object of the poet's quest is essentially unchanging, she may appear to the poet in many forms:

Nous aurons d'autres nuits Sopé: tu reviendras sur ce banc d'ombre
Tu seras la même tournois et tu ne seras pas la même.
Qu'i porte? A travers tes métamorphoses, j'adorerai le visage de Koumba Tém. (p. 187)

The obsessive presence of the woman continues to haunt the poet:
"Elle me force sans jamais répit, à travers les fourrés du Temps./
Elle poursuit mon sang noir à travers foule, jusqu'à la clairière où dort la nuit blanche" (p. 190). Across time, far from the timeless pastoral of his imagination, the poet continues to seek the woman whose image possesses him, who may, in fact, be a subtle component of his own inner being.

The quest assumed by the poet in "Chants pour Signare" cannot actually be considered accomplished. The last two poems emphasize that the situation is not resolved by the simple stylistic device of the unanswered question; in "Ce clair voyage ma Sopé . . .," the poet asks:

Cette lente lune de marne aux royaumes de notre enfance
Ce lumineux été sans nuit, cet éternel baiser des époux des fiancés
Qui le dirait? . . . (p. 190)

The last poem begins with a question of a similar nature: "Mais chanteront-ils les Amants, dans la lumière hyaline du futur?/"
Chantoront-ils au son des clarinettes les amours nocturnes des amants d'hier?" (p. 191). The remainder of the poem tries to answer that question, and while not actually completing the quest, it predicts the poet's success in lines suggesting an episode in a medieval romance or the exploits of an African warrior:

... Je hais les danses des prémices  
Si je ne te revis sur mon cheval turgui, serrant ton ivresse  
contre mon coeur  
Parmi les cris et les balles du Sang et les sifflements des  
couteaux de jet.  

(p. 191)

The tone of this passage is intriguing; for this one moment, the lover's quest, rhetorically at least, takes precedence over his greater mission. The poet's rashness becomes stronger as he promises: "Je romprai tous les liens du Sang, je dresserai une  
garde d'amour / Pour une seule nuit sans fin. . . . (p. 191). In  
the same tone, he adds: "Je romprai tous les liens d'Europe pour  
filer le poème sur cuisses de sable"(p. 191). The implications  
of such a promise are powerful and permit the collection to end  
on a note of supreme dedication to the beloved.

Is it coincidence that the last image of the poem is another  
reference to paradise? The poem and the cycle conclude: "Le  
Paradis sera vide pour moi, et ton absence la damnation de l'Amant"  
(p. 191). It is inconceivable to the poet that there might be any  
restoration of Eden without the presence of the being who has come  
to be indistinguishably identified with it.

The movement of "Chants pour Signare" can in many ways be  
seen as a reproduction of the pattern previously observed in Chants  
d'ombre. The cycle begins in an African setting in the presence  
of an African woman. This scene, however, is only a prelude to  
the lovers' separation just as the young Senghor was separated  
from his homeland. In the same way that Africa was remembered  
and romanticized in Chants d'ombre, the poet here evokes the image  
of his absent but idealized mistress who becomes the reflection
of his own negritude. Eventually, he sets out in hopes of finding her once more, just as, at the conclusion of the first collection, he returns again to the place of his origins. The parallel between the poet's search for the woman and his search for lost paradise can thereby be easily established.

The Concept of Negritude in "Épitres à la Princesse"

Less evident is the relationship between the drama of "Épitres à la Princesse" and the poet's memory of the childhood Eden. Here, the object of the poet's love is clearly European and representative of western civilization. To place her in the schema which we have established, it is first necessary to examine the definition of Negritude as viewed by Senghor.

In its most polished form, Senghor's Negritude is not a racist or even militant doctrine but rather a formula for racial harmony which restores the lost dignity of Black Culture and re-awakens the world to the values which the African can contribute to civilization. Rous cites the following dialogue with François Mauriac in 1960 at the Société Européenne de Culture:

Il n'est pas question de détruire les civilisations l'une par l'autre: il est question, en effet, d'intégration, d'assimilation active et réciproque, de symbiose. Il ne s'agit de corrompre ni la civilisation européenne ni les civilisations exotiques, de les faire dériver de leur ligne de force, mais de faire une greffe, pour obtenir des fruits succulents parce que mêlés: d'aboutir, selon l'expression de Frobenius, à un «accord conciliant» entre l'homme et la nature, et entre tous les hommes, entre le sujet et l'objet, le mythe et le réel, l'acte et la pensée, la vie et la morale. Il s'agit, pour le Blanc, de découvrir et de faire épanouir le Nègre qui est en lui, et, pour le Nègre, de réaliser l'œuvre inverse.

The accomplishment of the poet's dream then must involve the cooperation and the enlightenment of all peoples; the romance of the Black man and the White woman in his poetry carries with it the shadow of that dream.

"Épitres à la Princesse" was published in 1956 as part of
the volume of poetry entitled *Éthiopiques*. Told in the form of letters, this poem and its sequel "La mort de la Princesse" describe the courtship of a European Princess by an African envoy. There is no question about their love for one another, but mutual responsibilities retain them in their respective lands, and before she can join her suitor, the Princess perishes in what is described as the apocalyptic destruction of Europe.

Once again, the theme of absence predominates and the distance between two continents separates the lovers. The situation, however, is somewhat altered by the fact that the woman is neither African nor even identified with Africa, but a representative of European culture of whom the poet can say: "Mon désir est de mieux apprendre ton pays de t'apprendre" (p. 137), and reciprocally: "Tu m'ouvrès le visage de mes frères les hommes-blancs" (p. 139). The landscape imagery employed to describe her fixes her further in her northern setting:

Il y a ta bonté marine comme un fjord de douceur, et le sapin qui reste vert sous la mort blanche
Debout dans la tempête. Il veille quand tremblent les bouleaux
Tandis que hurlent loups et lynx. (p. 138)

As in "Chants pour Signare," the land remains a constant source of metaphors with which to describe woman.

It is the poet, in this instance, who represents Africa and who appears as its ambassador or as an administrator over its people: "J'ai la confiance de mon Peuple. On m'a nommé l'Itinérant" (p. 135). Certainly, we sense in this role the overtones of Senghor's own political career and in the courtship of the Princess, a glimpse of his private life. There develops, however, a broad gap between the events of the poem and any real-life inspiration for its material, for the tragic denouement of the drama transcends the biographical allusions and provides rather an illustration of the philosophy of Negritude. The proposed union of the lovers anticipates the new era of
Negritude. The proposed union of the lovers anticipates the new era of the Universal Banquet, and if, in the poem, the couple is thwarted, the message is nevertheless explicit: the cataclysm prophesied here is a warning to a materialistic civilization which might be tempted to ignore the spiritual offerings of Africa.

The last letter of "Spitres à la Princessse" foresees this impending catastrophe, the final destruction of western civilization in a fire kindled by the tools of man's own technology:


Et l'on entendra dans les airs la voix unique du Dieu just.
(p. 142)

Those who have not learned to live within the rhythm of nature are menaced by the total disruption of the natural order. The threat of sterility, especially, carries horrible implications for the African whose spiritual welfare depends entirely on the clan and its propagation.

The poet begs the Princess to flee the coming disaster and to join him:

Nous brûlerons nos campements de la Belle Saison, nous descendrons les fleuves
Au pays de ma mère, la Mésopotamie où le sol est bien noir et le sang sombre et l'huile épaisse.
Les hommes y sont de quatre coudées. Ils ne distinguent pas leur gauche de leur droite, ils ont neuf noms pour nommer le palmier mais le palmier n'est pas nommé.
Je te reverrai sur la rive adverse, monté sur un quadrige de pirogues et coiffé de la mitre double, ambassadeur de la Nuit et du Lion-levant. (p. 143)

The river is only representative of the enormous barriers which separate two individuals of such vastly different backgrounds; these lines are the poet's invitation to cross that barrier.

In this passage, the speaker is depicted as an emissary for Africa, the manifestation of the Negritude which he offers to the
Princess in the remaining lines of the poem where he romanticizes Africa and the attributes of Black Culture. He emphasizes the empathy, the "raison-toucher," which he regards as the African's response to the currents of his surroundings:

Ma noblesse est de vivre cette terre, Princesse selon cette terre
Comme le riz l'igname la palme et le palétuvier, l'ancêtre Lemanthin l'ancêtre Crocodile
Et Lilanga ma soeur. Elle danse elle vit.
Car comment vivre sinondans l'Autre au fil de l'Autre,
comme l'arbre déraciné par la tornade et les rêves des fles flottantes?
Et pourquoi vivre si l'on ne danse l'Autre? (p. 144)

He describes the rhythm which is the rhythm of dance, of work, of love, and of the drums which swell and engulf the poet's vision:

Princesse, nos épaules roulent sous les vagues, nos épaules de feuilles tremblent sous le cyclone
Nos lianes nagent dans l'onde, nos mains s'ouvrent nénuphars, et chantent los alizés dans nos doigts de filao

(p. 144)

Swept up in the beat of the primordial rhythm, the poet foresees the ultimate union of the lovers and the land fulfilling in this image the unity of man with the earth which is one of Senghor's first objectives and one of the principal tenants of Negritude. It is in this harmony that the poet hopes to see the salvation of what is salvageable of the technological culture of western civilization.

The rhythm and sensuality of this passage resemble the stanza in "A New York" in which Senghor describes an evening in Harlem, the intensity of the scene standing out in contrast to the artificiality and rigidity of the rest of the city:

J'ai vu se préparer la fête de la Nuit à la fuite du jour.
Je proclame la Nuit plus véridique que le jour.
C'est l'heure pure où dans les rues, Dieu fait germer la vie d'avant mémoire
Tous les éléments amphibies rayonnants comme des soleils.
Harlem! voici ce que j'ai vu Harlem!
Une brise verte de blés sourdre des pavés labourés par
les pieds nus de danseurs Dans
Croupes ondes de soie et seins de fers de lance, ballets de
néphrars et de masques fabuleux
Aux pieds des cheveux de police, les mangues de l'amour
rouler des maisons basses. (p. 116-117)

The message of the poem is again essentially a warning not to neglect
the gifts which the Black can contribute to the Civilization of the
Universal:

New York! je dis New York, laisse affluer le sang noir
dans ton sang
Qu'il dérouille tes articulations d'acier, comme une huile
de vie
Qu'il donne à tes ponts la courbe des croupes et la souplesse
des lianes.
Voici revenir les temps très anciens, l'unité retrouvée la
réconciliation du Lion du Taureau et de l'Arbre
L'idée liée à l'acte l'oreille au coeur le signe au sens.
(p. 117)

The rigidity of western civilization and the flexibility inherent
in the black personality is a contrast frequently established by
Senghor's poems: "... les longs rails étroits / Volonté inflex-
ible sur la langueur des sables " (p. 13).

The message which emanates from "Épitres à la Princesse" is
also a warning, but more fearful and more pessimistic, for in the
Princess' failure to join her African lover, she is yeilding
inevitable to death. In her answer to the poet, she accepts her
destiny: "Je n'atteindrai pas le Printemps, l'aurais-je atteint /
Le feu du ciel ruinera dans la minute les monuments des Hommes-blancs"
(p. 145).

Once, the poet found himself faces with a choice to make
between Europe and Africa, between Isabelle and Soukëna; he
chose his own people and his maternal soil. In this poem, the
initiative is placed on the European whose choice is to accept
the offerings of Negritude or to face the inborn consequences of
an over-materialistic culture which has learned to manipulate nature
without learning to exist with it and in it.

While the poem is a triumph for the values of African culture, it expresses the poet's despair concerning the ultimate fusion of the two cultures and his doubt as to the possibility of obtaining a perfect union of their respective values except as it has been accomplished in the life of the poet himself:

* Vieillirai-je comme mon père dans la solitude des larmes \n  Cependant qu'herbes et serpents devissent dans le gynécée? \n  Non non! Repose ma Belborg en ta robe paisible, au village \  bleu de tes morts mes morts. \n  Tu fleuriras au jardin de mon coeur. (p. 146) *

As the lover retains the memory of his European Princess, the poet himself carries the mark of his European experience; he is an interiorized version of his anticipated Eden, a blend of two cultures. The underlying theme of "métissage" projects the reader beyond the tragic love story, and once again, the poet has taken us effectively "par delà Êros."

The portrayal of the Princess can therefore be considered another consequence of the poetic obsession with the restoration of paradise. The association between a woman desired and Paradise is common enough to be considered a literary cliché. In Senghor's case, however, the originality lies principally in the character and importance which the term "paradise" implies. As we have established, the expression comprises both the idealization of the poet's childhood and the totality of his dreams of the future. In this chapter, we have enumerated the general attributes which identify Woman with Eden: her value as a symbol of Negritude, her maternal nature, her physical association with the landscape, her spirituality, her timelessness, her innocence. Secondly, we have analyzed the role which she is assigned in specific situations. In "Chants pour Signare" and "D'autres chants," the themes of separation and quest parallel the poet's search for the childhood paradise. In "Épitres à la Princesse," the love story is an allegory representing the inter-action of two cultures and indicating the
the contributions which black culture has to offer to the crisis of Civilization.

In Senghor's works, therefore, the theme of love and the image of woman continue to follow the pattern which was established in *Chante d'ombre*. The quest for Eden, either as an attempt to re-capture the past or in the building of a future society, is clearly manifested in the love relationships developed in the poems.
CHAPTER III

THE THEME OF SACRIFICE IN HOSTIES NOIRES

In our first chapter, we hypothesized that, in the concluding poems of Chante d'ombre, the poet's quest for his childhood paradise was being sublimated into two acceptable adult objectives. It could be accomplished through the pursuit of a woman who might be identified with his ideal, the subject dealt with in Chapter II; or it could be projected into the task of restoring African culture to a place of dignity and thereby reviving the traditions of the poet's Eden. The latter channel is by far the most evident in both the works of the poet and in the achievements of Léopold Sédar Senghor, and it will provide the focal point for the third and fourth chapters of this study.

In depicting the cultural and political developments of the new Africa, Senghor has consciously or unconsciously utilized the archetypal pattern of death and rebirth. This cyclical movement of creation, a reflection of the changes in Nature, stands as the basis of myth and ritual in Man's universal subconscious: to enter into a new life, one must first die to the old one. For Senghor, the future of Africa is equated with rebirth; his last collections, Ethiopiques and Nocturnes, abound with references to the dawning of a new era or to the triumph of the Initiate. The purging of the old ways and the rites of death which must precede rebirth, can be found in Hosties Noires, where, in the eyes of the poet, the sacrifices of his black brothers on the battlefield serve to prepare the renewal of Africa.
The Poet As The Voice Of The People

In 1948, Senghor published a collection of poems inspired by the events of World War II and his personal experiences during the war years. The approach which he takes to his material is evident in the title of the volume, Hosties Noires, for its lines contain vivid references to the sacrifices of the black soldiers and repeated indications of the poet's efforts to give meaning to that sacrifice. The introspective voice of Chants d'ombre has given place to the voice of the people; the poet has become the prophet who is able to see beyond present sufferings to tomorrow's victories. The mechanics of the writer's imagination are apparent as early as 1936 in a poem entitled "À l'appel de la race de Saba" which already shows the presence of the theme of sacrifice and its role as the link between the childhood Eden and the world of the future. The further toll in lives and suffering taken by the war provides the subject matter for expanding this idea. Moreover, the poet correctly envisions the post-war reconstruction as the threshold of a new era which will justify the sacrifices of his race.

Jean Rous, in his biography of the president, summarizes Senghor's wartime career as follows:

Le professeur Senghor est mobilisé en 1939, comme soldat de deuxième classe au 23ᵉ, puis au 3ᵉ Régiment d'Infanterie Coloniale. Il est fait prisonnier, le 20 juin 1940, à la Charité-sur-Loire et pendant deux années transféré de front-stalag en front-stalag. Durant sa captivité, il apprend l'allemand, lit les auteurs grecs et latins dans le texte et se lie à ses camarades d'fortune. Il participe à un réseau de résistance, ce qui lui vaut d'être expédié dans un camp de représailles. ¹

Released in 1942 for reasons of health, he could, nevertheless, because of these shared experiences, count himself among the Tirailleurs Sénégalais, a title which Towa tells us includes all of the soldiers originating from Black Africa. ² In spite of his personal involvement, however, the scope of the collection is much wider than in Chants d'ombre, and Senghor stands out far less as
the protagonist. The poems are concerned more generally with the fate of a people rather than the personal conflicts of an individual. The poet has assumed the responsibilities which were envisioned in "Le retour de l'Enfant prodigue": "Fais de moi ton Maître de Langue; mais non, nomme-moi son ambassadeur" (p. 51). In many respects, he has become the "Maître de Langue," the voice of the people.

There are direct references to this role within the collection, and they tend to give divine sanction to the speaker. In the introduction, "Poème liminaire," the poet again addresses the spirit world:

Notre noblesse nouvelle est non de dominer notre peuple,
mais d'être son rythme et son coeur
Non de paître les terres, mais comme le grain de millet de
porrir dans la terre
Non d'être la tête du peuple, mais bien sa bouche et sa
 trompette. (p. 56)

We saw the image of the sounding trumpet earlier in "Que m'accompagne kôras et balafong," where we noted its relationship both to the jazz instrument and to Gabriel's horn at the last judgment. The reference also occurs in "A l'appel de la race de Saba" to describe the poet's role: "... et moi ton fils, je médite je forge ma bouche vaste retentissante pour l'écho, et la trompette de libération" (p. 59). Elsewhere, the poet's voice is likened to a red-hot coal: "Ah! puissé-je un jour d'une voix couleur de braise, puissé-je chanter / L'amitié des camarades fervente comme des entrailles et délicate, forte comme des tendons" (p. 65). The image seems to indicate divine sanction or inspiration and recalls the spiritual election of Isaiah. These passages are significant in that they show the speaker's awareness of his function.

We should recall, in addition, that the mastery of language granted to the poet by his vocation carries with it, by virtue of African philosophy a certain degree of power over the things which are described or named, a tradition called "Nommo" by
Jahn and defined by him as follows:

According to African philosophy, man has, by the force of his word, dominion over 'things'; he can change them, make them work for him, and command them. But to command things with words is to practise 'magic'. And to practise word magic is to write poetry—that holds not only for Africa. Thus African philosophy ascribes to the word a significance which it has also in many other cultures, but there in poetry only. That is why African poetry made such a world-wide impression the moment it was heard beyond the bounds of Africa. African poetry is never a game, never l'art pour l'art, never irresponsible. 'To practise magic' is therefore a weak expression; the African poet is not 'an artist using magic', but a 'magician', a 'sorcerer' in the African sense.

Senghor must certainly be aware of this concept as it becomes the central device in at least two of his later poems, "L'absente" and "Élégie des eaux." In each case, the poet, using the magic of his poetry, causes an event to take place in reality. We see this characteristic also in the unusual emphasis given to names; for example, in "Méditerranée," the name of the man whom the poet wishes to honor is repeated at the beginning and the end of the poem: "Et je redis ton nom: Dyallo!" (p. 62). A similar usage appears also in "Taga de Mbaye Dyôb." The poem begins: "Mbaye Dyôb! je veux dire ton nom et ton honneur." The name "Dyôb" is then reiterated at the beginning of several versets throughout the poem.

This traditional and even religious significance which is attached to the Word gives dignity here to the poet; it also gives him power. In a broader sense, this power truly exists, for by telling the story as he has chosen to, Senghor has indeed given honor to those who sacrificed their lives. He has, through the medium of poetry, overlaid their death with a meaning and a sense of purpose far beyond any of which they could have been conscious, and the new day which he evokes for Africa shows every possibility of coming to pass, a future
molded to some extent by the ideas which he has expressed.

The Continuity of the Theme of Sacrifice

This theme of sacrifice runs throughout the entire collection; its earliest poem, "A l'appel de la race de Saba," shows clearly that the subject of sacrifice was already developing in the poet's mind at the outbreak of the war. The last poem of the volume is dated January, 1945, its title, "Prière de Paix," looking forward to the period of reconstruction. Analysis of the two works reveals, despite the lapse of time and difference in subject matter, a similar direction in the poet's thought and in the types of images which he employs.

"A l'appel de la race de Saba" carries the date 1936 and was inspired by the invasion of Ethiopia. It deserves its initial place in the collection first because it deals specifically with the opening of the war; in addition, it provides an excellent transition from Chants d'ombre. Chronologically, it predates some of the poems in Senghor's first volume of poetry and is related to them in its more personal orientation. By its very organization, it shows the bridge between the childhood paradise and the vision of the future.

The poem is addressed, at least rhetorically, to the poet's mother, whose portrayal here we discussed in the last chapter. The liturgical repetition of the line "Mère, sois bénie!" introduces each stanza, and the maternal figure serves to remind the poet of his African past:

Mère, sois bénie!
Je me rappelle les jours de mes pères, les soirs de Dyilôr
Cette lumière d'outre-ciel des nuits sur la terre douce au soir.
Je suis sur les marches de la demeure profonde obscurément.
Mes frères et mes sœurs serrent contre mon cœur leur chaleur nombreuse de poussins.
Je repose la tête sur les genoux de ma nourrice Ngâ, de
Ngâ la poëtesse
Ma tête bourdonnant au galop guerrier des dyoug-y dyoungs,
au grand galop de mon sang de pur sang.
Ma tête mélodieuse des chansons lointaines: de Koumba l'Orpheline. (pp. 57-58)
The components of this childhood memory are reflections of the spiritual qualities of Negritude; the rhythm, the sense of community and the African night hold special significance for the poet. He refers to these scenes in the next stanza as "pious images," and, to strengthen the bond with his African past, he invokes its spirit world to whom he offers sacrifice:

Qu'ils m'accordent, les génies protecteurs, que mon sang ne s'affadisse pas comme un assimilé comme un civilisé.
J'offre un poulet sans tache, debout près de l'Aîné, bien que tard venu, afin qu'avant l'eau crèmeuse et la bière de mil
Gicle jusqu'à moi et sur mes lèvres charnelles le sang chaud salé du taureau dans la force de l'âge, dans la plénitude de sa graisse. (p. 59)

The offering of the chicken is only a prelude to the greater ceremonial sacrifice of the bull: such rites might well describe an initiation, the spiritual preparation for the commitment set forth in the remaining lines.

While the image of animal sacrifice appears rarely in Senghor's poetry, he discusses its importance and meaning at length in his essays. In "Ce que l'homme noir apporte," he explains it as follows:

Je vois un triple but aux sacrifice: participer à la puissance des Esprits supérieurs, dont sont les Ancêtres; communier avec eux jusqu'en une sorte d'identification; enfin, être charitable aux Ancêtres. Car les Morts, tout puissants qu'ils soient, n'ont pas la vie, et ils ne peuvent se procurer ces nourritures terrestres qui font la douceur intense de vivre.5

Sacrifice, then, is a means of mutually strengthening both the living community and the spiritual beings, and it is precisely this aspect of the subject which Jahn emphasizes in his discussion of sacrifice. He further cites Senghor: "And this communion extends to identification, in such a way that, by an inverse movement, the force of the Ancestor flows into the sacrifices
and into the community which he embodies. Sacrifice is the most
typical illustration of the interaction of the vital forces of the
universe.\textsuperscript{6} What should be retained from this analysis for the
purpose of our present discussion is that the death of the sacrifici-
cial animal provides life or force for the community, and, in this
poem, as we have seen, the poet gains strength his sacrifice and
the subsequent communion with the spirits which it signifies.
The incident of the personal sacrifice becomes, however, only a
minor fragment of a far greater pattern involving the sufferings
of an entire race.

This principle can be seen behind the reference to death
in the next stanza where, however, it is not animals who are offered
up, but the precious donations of human lives:

\begin{verbatim}
Mère, sois bénie!
Nos aubes que saillent les jours proconsulaires, deux
générations d'hommes et bien plus, n'ont-elles pas coloré
tes yeux comme solennellement les hautes herbes dans
le carnage des hautes flammes? (p. 59)
\end{verbatim}

The image of destruction here is not completely despairing, for
the burning of the high grasses on the African savanna only serve
to prepare it for planting or to provide tender new shoots for
livestock. The poem, too, carries this hope of regeneration, and
as he imagines the future, the speaker foresees the end of tri-
bulations:

\begin{verbatim}
Mère, sois bénie!
J'ai vu—dans le sommeil léger de quelle aube gazouillée?
---le jour de libération.
C'était un jour pavoisé de lumière claquante, comme de
drapeaux et d'oriflam's aux hautes couleurs. (p. 60)
\end{verbatim}

The images of light and dawn signify hope and rebirth, but even
in his vision, the possibility of human sacrifice is present:
"La mort nous attend peut-être sur la colline; la vie y pousse
sur la mort dans le soleil chantant / Et la victoire ..." (p. 60)

Death, as always must precede renewal.

What, in this poem, constitutes the new order for which
the poet is ready to fight and die? Its defenders are characterized chiefly by their diversity; the notion is present here which will appear later as Senghor's political interest in Pan-Africanism:

Car nous sommes là tous réunis, divers de teint——il y en a qui sont couleur de café grillé, d'autres bananes d'or et d'autres terre des rizières
Divers de traits de costume de coutumes de langue; mais au fond des yeux la même mélodie de souffrances à l'ombre des longs cils fiévreux
Le Cafro le Kabyle le Somali le Maure, le Fén le Fôn le Bambâra le Bobo le Mandingo (p. 61)

Together with these various African ethnic groups, Senghor includes representative elements of the proletariat: "Le nomade le mineur le prêcheur, le paysan et l'artisan le boursier et le tirailleur/
Et tous les travailleurs blancs dans la lutte fraternelle" (p. 61). The conflict is not, therefore, uniquely racial or even colonial. While the attack is levelled against "les Conseils d'administration qui gouvernent les gouverneurs des colonies," a second enemy is also recognized, the capitalist: "... les banquiers bedonnants ont bâti leurs villas, blanches et roses / Loin des faubourgs, loin des misères des quartiers indigènes" (p. 60). The Socialist influence here is inescapable and predicts the tone of Senghor's poetry. Otherwise, as we have suggested, the poem carries with it the seed of Senghor's future political philosophy where both Pan-Africanism and Socialism are key-stones, and it serves to indicate the direction his work will take.

The final stanza of the poem emphasizes again the mother-son relationship: "Mère, sois bénie! / Reconnais ton fils à l'autenticité de son regard, qui est celle de son cœur et de son sang" (p. 61). It is an affirmation of fidelity to the speaker's African heritage, and the natural mother, because of the orientation of the poem, could easily be identified with Mother Africa. The reference to the past is then curiously juxtaposed with the vision of the future in the last emphatic lines:

Reconnais ses camarades reconnais les combattants, et salue dans le soir rouge de ta vieillesse
L'AUBE TRANSPARENTE D'UN JOUR NOUVEAU. (p. 62)
Displayed entirely in capital letters, this verse seems to invoke in reality the transformation which is brought about only in the medium of poetry. Jahn, in describing African literature, remarks:

Poetry does not describe, but arranges a series of images which alter reality in the direction of the future, which create, produce, invoke, and bring about the future. The present interpreted by the poetry is subordinated to the future. African poets take no delight in drawing the present for its own sake or for the pleasure of drawing.

Thus, we must see both prophecy and power in his final jubilant image of dawn, an image of light signifying hope and a universal symbol of the eternal return, of day following night, and of the new order triumphing over the old.

In order to demonstrate the consistency of the theme of sacrifice in *Hosties Noires*, let us pass to the final poem of the collection and the one which bears the latest date, "Prière de Paix." Separated from "A l'appel de la race de Saba" by the war years, this terminal poem must be approached with the understanding of what that world conflict signifies in the poet's mind. Certainly, Senghor does not view World War II in the same way that a European would. His poems portray Africa as something of an innocent bystander in the situation even though he cannot quite prevent himself a measure of sympathy for his adopted France:

Ah! ne dites pas que je n'aime pas la France—je ne suis pas la France, je le sais—
Je sais que ce peuple de feu, chaque fois qu'il a libéré ses mains
A écrit la fraternité sur la première page de ses monuments
Qu'il a distribué la faim de l'esprit comme de la liberté
A tous les peuples de la terre conviés solennellement au festin catholique. (p. 56)

These lines, taken from the introductory poem of the collection, suggest the speaker's personal conflict. But to die for France is not sufficient justification for the sacrifices of the black soldier. In fact, by pressing him into a war which is not his, the European has committed one more sin against the African:
after slavery and after colonial exploitation, the death of the Senegalese warriors in battle on foreign soil is only another form of oppression.

In "Prière de Paix," Senghor goes further than elsewhere in situating the sacrifices of the Tirailleur Sénégalais among the grievances of the black against the white. As we have previously indicated, this prayer for forgiveness disguises, as did "Neige sur Paris," an extensive and painful list of complaints. Its first line characterizes not only this one poem but the entire collection: "Seigneur Jésus, à la fin de ce livre que je T'offre comme un ciboire de souffrances . . . " (p. 92). This suffering is vividly manifested in the principal image of this initial stanza, the reference to Calvary which compares the oppression of the Negro—the poet does not limit himself to Africa—to the suffering of Christ on the cross:

Seigneur, au pied de cette croix—et ce n'est plus Toi
l'arbre de douleur, mais au-dessus de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Monde l'Afrique crucifiée
Et son bras droit s'étend sur mon pays, et son côté gauche ombre l'Amérique
Et son coeur est Haïti cher, Haïti qui osa proclamer l'Homme en face du Tyran
Au pied de mon Afrique crucifiée depuis quatre cents ans et pourtant respirante
Laisse-moi Te dire Seigneur, sa prière de paix et de pardon.

(p. 92)

The poet imitates the words of Jesus: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23: 34). The image is one of pathos, but we should also recall that the death of Christ is the prerequisite of salvation, the way by which the Christian may enter Paradise. It stands as a superb example of justified sacrifice.

The poet then describes specifically the torments to which his race has been submitted and begins with the indignities of colonization: "Seigneur, pardonne à ceux qui ont fait des Askia des maquisards, de mes princes des adjudants / De mes domestiques
des boys et de mes paysans des salariés, de mon peuple de prolétaires" (p. 93). He also includes slavery: "Car il faut bien que Tu oublies ceux qui ont exporté dix millions de mes fils dans les maladrerie de leurs navires / qui en ont supprimé deux cents millions" (p. 93). His prayer becomes directed to the crimes of France in particular, not only its colonial oppression but also its racial discrimination: "Oui Seigneur, pardonne à la France qui dit bien la voie droite et chemine par les sentiers obliques / qui m'invite à sa table et me dit d'apporter mon pain, qui me donne de la main droite et de la main gauche enlève la moitié" (p. 94). He arrives at last at a direct reference to the injustice which the black soldiers have endured in the war:

Oui Seigneur, pardonne à la France qui hait les occupants et m'impose l'occupation si gravement
qui ouvre des voies triomphales aux héros et traite ses Sénégalais en mercenaires, faisant d'eux des dogues noirs de l'Empire
qui est la République et livre les pays aux Grands-Concessionnaires
Et de ma Mésopotamie, de mon Congo, ils ont fait un grand cimetière sous le soleil blanc. (pp. 94-95)

The prayer for forgiveness takes on the appearance of an indictment in spite of the poet's repetition of the word "pardon." The theme of sacrifice, indicated in "A l'appel de la race de Saba," has undergone amplification in order to apply to the experiences of World War II.

The war not only signifies sacrifice; it is a form of purification, and, while Senghor is chiefly concerned with the suffering of his black comrades, he is equally aware of France's losses: "Et la fiancée pleure sa viduité, et le jeune homme voit sa jeunesse cambriolée / Et la femme lamente oh! l'oeil absent de son mari, et la mère cherche le rêve de son enfant dans les gravats" (p. 96). The war becomes here and elsewhere a form of divine punishment; in "Chant de Printemps," the speaker, referring to Africa:
Est-ce sa faute si Dieu lui a demandé les premières de ses moissons
Les plus beaux épis et les plus beaux corps élus patiemment parmi mille peuples?
Est-ce sa faute si Dieu fait de ses fils les verges à châtier la superbe des nations? (p. 87)

The sacrifice of Africa's sons is interpreted as the instrument of God's retribution against western civilization.

With this in mind, it is easy to see in the last line of "Frère de Paix" a reference to the biblical story of Noah. In that account, the Flood is sent as a manifestation of God's displeasure with his people, but afterward, the Lord provides the rainbow as a symbol of reconciliation. The same image is used by Senghor with respect to the end of World War II:

... Et au milieu de ces millions de vagues, voici les têtes houleuses de mon peuple,
Et donnée à leurs mains chaudes qu'elles enlacent la terre d'une ceinture de mains fraternelles
DESSOUS L'ARC-EN-CIEL DE TA PAIX. (p. 96)

This rainbow has yet another meaning in the poem: it is a representation of harmony among peoples of diverse races and was used earlier to describe the poet's awareness of those in other developing nations and the kinship which he felt with them. Referring once more to France, he says: "Il a ouvert mon cœur à la connaissance du monde, me montrant l'arc-en-ciel des visages neufs de mes frères" (p. 95). The rainbow and the unity which it signifies recalls the united force described in "A l'appel de la race de Saba," for fraternity is still an important component of the future order in Senghor's mind. As in "A l'appel de la race de Saba," this last image, too, is in capital letters and seems to indicate not merely a helpless plea but a powerful incantation whose magic may be wrought through the language of the poem. Once again, the poet predicts the transfusion of Negritude and its potential for reviving Civilization.
The Development Of The Theme Of Sacrifice In "Éthiopie"
And "Camp 1940": A Movement From Despair To Hope

"Prière de Paix" demonstrates something of the psychological impact of the war on the African's concept of the universe. Having ostensibly fought a war for freedom, his awareness of his own situation had been heightened, and such a climate must surely have contributed to the poet's outrage at what he considered the insufficient respect for his fellow soldiers and the stereotyped identity to which they seemed destined: "Mais je déchirerai les rires banania sur tous les murs de France" (p. 55). Hosties Noires is therefore his tribute to the nobility of the black soldier and a memorial to the African war dead. Senghor announces his subject in the first stanza of his introductory "Poème liminaire":

Qui pourra vous chanter si ce n'est votre frère d'armes,
votre frère de sang
Vous Tirailleurs Sénégalais, mes frères noirs à la main chaude, couchés sous la glace et la mort? (p. 56)

This refrain emphasizes the theme of death which permeates the collection and which we will analyse first as it occurs in the series of poems included under the heading "Éthiopie."

The treatment of the subject of death is clearly the most despairing in two of the earliest poems of the series which therefore define its bleakest moment; the tone of the later poems is lightened by the poet's faith in the future which becomes for him a justification for the dead whom he mourns. "Aux Tirailleurs sénégalais morts pour la France" is dated 1939, and, following it, "Luxembourg 1939" carries no date other than that which is indicated in the title and which would seem to refer to its inspiration. Both pieces lack the regenerative theme which appears later, a characteristic which implies an evolution in the poet's own state of mind or, at least, in the tone of the collection.

Because it predates the declaration of war, we must assume that the unremembered dead of "Aux Tirailleurs sénégalais morts pour la France" are those who fell in previous conflicts. The
Tirailleurs were first organized in 1857 in Senegal gradually to be enlarged so as to encompass soldiers from other of France's African colonies. They served valiantly in World War I where approximately 30,000 were killed. The events of the past, however, appear to anticipate the tragedy of the future as France prepares to move into a second world conflict:

On fleurit les tombes, on réchauffe le Soldat Inconnu. Vous mes frères obscurs, personne ne vous nomme. On promet cinq cent mille de vos enfants à la gloire des futurs morts, on les remercie d'avance futurs morts obscurs

Die Schwarze Schande!

The key to this entire poem is that the sacrifices of these soldiers have gone unrecorded and uncelebrated, that the poet alone recalls their names and their deeds.

Not only have the dead been forgotten by the French on whose soil they died, but, buried far from their homeland, they have become estranged as well from their loved ones. "Nous n'avons pas loué de pleureuses, pas même de vos femmes anciennes / —Elles ne se rappellent que vos grands coups de colère, préférant l'ardeur des vivants" (p. 64). We have only to recall the bonds which link the dead to the living community in African thought in order to realize the dire consequences of this total separation: the dead in this case would be completely cut off from all spiritual nourishment and therefore doomed to oblivion. The poet emphasizes their alienation: "Écoutez-moi, Tirailleurs sénégalais, dans la solitude de la terre noire et de la mort ... Écoutez-moi, Tirailleurs à la peau noire, bien que sans oreilles et sans yeux dans votre triple enceinte de nuit" (p. 64). Not only are these men physically dead and buried, but they have been denied the possibility of any spiritual after-life.

It falls then to the poet, whose elected role we have already established and to his comrades in arms to pay proper respect to those who have died:
Ecoutez-nous, Morts étendus dans l'eau au profond des plaines du Nord et de l'Est. 
Recevez ce sol rouge, sous le soleil d'été ce sol rougi du sang des blanches hosties 
Recevez le salut de vos camarades noirs, Tirailleurs sénégalais 
MORTS POUR LA RÉPUBLIQUE! (p. 65)

It is difficult not to attach a sense of irony to these last words, especially in the light of future developments, for France, seemingly oblivious to this sacrifice, continues a tradition of discrimination and exploitation which the poet depicts in "Prière de Paix."

In these lines and in "Luxembourg 1939," there is a feeling of futility attached to the subject of death and the tragic loss of life. The season in the latter poem is autumn with winter coming into view: "Ah! les fleurs de Septembre et les cris hâlés des enfants qui défiaient l'hiver prochain" (p. 65). The verb here is in the past tense, the poet stressing the absence of children, who are themselves a sign of the future and of hope in the poet's vocabulary.

The setting is historically accurate, war having been officially declared on September 4, 1939, but it is also suitable to the subject matter and to the tone, for the poet's mood is one of despair and disillusionment. As he watches the falling leaves, he foresees the death of his fellow soldiers in battle:

Vaincus mes rêves désespérément mes camarades, se peut-il? 
Les voici qui tombent comme les feuilles avec les feuilles, vieillis blessés à mort piétinés, tout sanglants de sang 
Que l'on ramasse pour quelle fosse commune? (p. 65)

He succumbs momentarily to complete despair, for having based his hope for the future of civilization on the contributions of the African, the poet sees the war as a threat to the fulfillment of his dream:

Je vois tomber les feuilles dans les faux abris, dans les fosses dans les tranchées 
Où ruisselle le sang d'une génération 
L'Europe qui enterrera le levain des nations et l'espoir des races nouvelles. (p. 66)
This line sends us back to a much earlier poem, "Prière aux Masques," which contains the same image: "Que nous répondions présents à la renaissance du Monde / Ainsi le levain qui est nécessaire à la farine blanche" (p. 23). The Negro in both instances becomes the ingredient necessary to the future of mankind, but in "Luxembourg 1939," the poet sees that ingredient as being lost, buried with the young black soldiers who are Africa's hope for the future and in Senghor's mind the hope of civilization.

The same mood appears at first glance to characterize the next poem of the sequence: "Désespoir d'un volontaire libre." Based on an actual event, these lines describe the suicide of a Senegalese soldier. As the writer tries to imagine the boy's motives, however, he comes to terms with his own anguish.

Again the poet emphasizes the thankless task of the black soldier and the indignities which he faces:

Il est là depuis quinze jours, qui tourne en rond, ruminant la nouvelle Grande Bêtise
Et le nouvel affront—son front qui sue!—de son sacrifice payé en monnaie fausse.
Il ne demandait même pas les cinquante centimes—pas un centime

Seulement son identité d'homme, à titre posthume.
On lui a donné les vêtements de servitude, qu'il imaginait la robe cendide du martyr
O naïf! naïvement naïf! et la chéchia et les godillots pour ses pieds libres domestiqués. (p. 66)

Overlooking the battlefield, the young soldier gazes at the bodies of his dead comrades: "Il se penche, et la plaine apocalyptique est labourée de tranchées, où pourrissent les morts comme des semences infécondes / Il se penche sur de hauts tumulus de solitude" (p. 67). In the face of the legacy of western civilization—taxes, forced labor, whips—the sacrifice seems wasted. The poet uses the word "infertile" in a reiteration of the fears expressed in the previous poem that death would too soon cancel out the potential of the African for the betterment of civilization.
At this point in the poem, however, the poet's thoughts rise above those of the helpless young man whose needs are not satisfied by the "villages polytechniques"; for Senghor, the death of these men takes on a meaning which the soldier cannot see:

Il ne voit pas que les morts et les terres hautes des morts masquent les champs là-bas qui verdoyent dans l'ombre
D'or et d'étoiles constellés, comme arrosés du sang à leurs pieds et des cadavres gras bien nourris. (p. 67)
The bodies and blood of the slain are portrayed here as nourishing the fields where they lie. The image evokes the regenerative power of Nature and envisions the flowering of the new era through the sacrifice of the African soldiers. The light images serve as metaphors of hope.

Unmindful of this future, the boy leaps to his death. In his last thoughts, the poet conveys something of his own personal myth; he interprets the soldiers disillusionment and alienation as a nostalgia for paradise: "Peut-il voir le paradis perdu derrière l'horizon des temps fabuleux?" (p. 67). The last line of the poem is the boy's eulogy: "O faible trop faible enfant, si fidèlement trahi à ton génie!" (p. 68).

Senghor treats the question of suicide in his discussion of Black African culture:

Plus importants que les devoirs envers le prochain sont ceux envers soi-même. Il ne s'agit pas seulement d'exiger et de recevoir des marques de téfanga [honor, respect], mais encore et surtout d'affirmer et de protéger sa personne. Celle-ci s'affirme essentiellement par le courage et la générosité, qui sont vertus nobles. Mais la personne peut être offensée et, parfois, le Destin nous empêche toute riposte efficace. Nous n'avons alors qu'une solution: abandonner notre souffle vital pour sauver notre vie personnelle, notre âme. Le suicide est l'exigence dernière de la Susceptibilité, fille de l'Honneur.

Suicide is then not only a valid option under the circumstances, but the only way left, as far as this particular individual can see, in order to preserve his sense of honor. The poet is seeking to provide an alternative and finds it in the hope of the future.
Is the answer which he proposes merely for the young soldier or is it rather his own response to the issue, born of not entirely different anxieties?

The images of regeneration which appear only briefly in this poem assume more significant proportions in "Prière des Tirailleurs sénégalais," the last poem in the series "Éthiopie" and the one which most reveals the poet's optimism. The poem continues to focus on the subject of death, but death is interpreted specifically as sacrifice and as a prerequisite to a future, more harmonious society. In this respect, it represents an evolution in the poet's point of view, for while the three preceding poems are principally eulogies, this final poem gives meaning to what appeared formerly as incomprehensible.

Seasonal images occur throughout Hosties Noires and, in several instances, are used as structural devices. As in "Luxembourg 1939," the theme of death is associated with autumn; while the poem is dated April, 1940, it looks ahead to the fall which plays a dual role in that the harvest represents both death and fulfillment. As a metaphor for death, it is used to depict the sacrifice of the soldier:

Toi qui es l'oreille des souffles minimes, qui entends les chuchotements nocturnes au-dedans des cases
Que l'on a lancé la Sourde, la machine à recruter dans la moisson des hautes têtes
Tu le sais—et la plaine docile se fait jusqu'au non abrupt des volontaires libres
Qui offraient leurs corps de dieux, gloire des stades, pour l'honneur catholique de l'homme. (p. 68)

In this prayer, the agricultural idiom provides the poet with the essential nature images which are both the prototype and vehicle of expression for the poet's hope in the future. In the war and in death lies the transition between the present and the future just as decaying vegetation is necessary to the growth of the new plant:

Pour qu'ils poussent dru dessus nous les enfants nos cadets, dont nous sommes les pères maturiers
Maturation of the grain is paralleled here to the maturing of the child.

Harvest, when the grain is ripe, is therefore comparable to the rite of passage, the transition between childhood and manhood which signifies ritual rebirth, and it is this initiation ceremony which figures as the subject of the second stroche:

"Verrons-nous seulement mûrir les enfants nos cadets dont nous sommes les pères initiateurs? / Nous ne participerons plus à la joie sponsorale des moissons!" (p. 69). In this instance, harvest carries its second implication, that of fulfillment.

Although these words are represented as the prayer of simple soldiers facing the probability of death, they must be viewed not merely as a reference to familiar traditions, but to the poet’s faith in the rebirth of Africa: "Nous ne savons pas si nous respirerons à la moisson pour quelle juste cause nous aurons combattu" (p. 70). The child then becomes a symbol of the continuity of the race and of the future of mankind. The poet defines his vision of the post-war situation:

Que l’enfant blanc et l’enfant noir—c’est l’ordre alphabétique—, que les enfants de la France Confédérée aillent main dans la main
Tels que les prévoit le Poète, tel le couple Demba-Dupont sur les monuments aux morts
Que l’ivraie de la haine n’embarrasse pas leurs pas dépétrifiés
Qu’ils progressent et grandissent souriants, mais terribles à leurs ennemis comme l’éclair et la foudre ensemble. (p. 71)

Here as elsewhere the dominant theme is harmony.

Harvest serves in this poem, therefore, to indicate the death of the African soldiers, the coming-of-age of the next generation, and, through it, the new era built on the sacrifices demanded by the war. The image describes in classic terms the pattern of death and rebirth, the revitalizing energies of Nature
providing hope for the survival of mankind. The poet's dreams for the future, evident as early as "A l'appel de la race de Saba," and momentarily shattered by the outbreak of world conflict, rise anew in this final poem of the series and will remain constant in the next series of poems grouped under the title, "Camp 1940."

The first poem of this second series, "Au Guélowar," is also the earliest, bearing the date September, 1940, and indicates the prison camp of Amiens as the place of composition. The remainder of the selections treat the period of captivity through the closing years of the war, the last poem being dated December, 1944. In this group, there are two themes which relate directly to our study: the first continues the image of sacrifice and consequent regeneration; the second is the way in which Senghor has chosen to portray his imprisonment so that it becomes a further illustration of Negritude and a model for inter-racial harmony. While continuing to act as the voice of the people, the poet's personal involvement endows this segment of Hosties Noires with an element of lyricism, noticeably absent in the poem's which we have been discussing.

The theme of hope and the poet's vision of the future mark, in different ways, the concluding segments of the first two poems. "Au Guélowar," written in captivity, deals with the plight of his fellow prisoners and implies that their suffering also prepares the new order. Rous interprets these lines as being inspired by De Gaulle's declaration of government in exile and identifies the general with the figure of the guélowar in the poem, the literal meaning of the term defined by Senghor as a noble or descendant of Mandinka conquerors. The structure of the poem seems to support this historical explanation. The captive describes his helplessness in a series of images filled with despair: "Nous sommes des petits d'oiseaux tombés du nid, des corps privés d'espoir et qui se fruent / Des fleuves aux griffes rongées, des soldats désarmés, des hommes nus" (p. 72). The situation is further
aggravated by the absence of aid from those Europeans for whom he and his fellow prisoners have fought and others have even died:

Et nous ne reconnaissons plus la France.
Dans la nuit nous avons crié notre détresse. Pas une voix n'a répondu.
Les princes de l'Eglise se sont tus, les hommes d'Etat ont clamé la magnanimité des hyènes (p. 73)

Only the voice of the guélowâr provides hope in their distress:

Guélowâr!
Ta voix nous dit l'honneur l'esperoir et le combat, et ses ailes s'agitent dans notre poitrine
Ta voix nous dit la République, que nous dresserons la Cité dans le jour bleu
Dans l'égalité des peuples fraternels. Et nous nous répon-
dons: «Présents, ô Guélowâr!» (p. 73)

These lines, in their eventual optimism, provide the equilibrium necessary to counterbalance the otherwise somber mood of the poem. The new order which he describes here is consistent with the dreams of the future expressed in "Prière des Tirailleurs sénégalais."

It clearly involves more than the restoration of the previous status, the pronoun "we" accentuating the context in which the African views the terms equality and fraternity.

The second poem of the series, entitled "Au Gouverneur Éboué," is dated 1942 and was written after Senghor's liberation. It is dedicated to the governor of Chad in praise of his prompt response in support of the Free French. The last lines, however, contain again an allusion to the role of the black soldier in the preparation of the future: "L'Afrique s'est faite acier blanc, l'Afrique s'est faite hostie noire / Pour que vive l'espoir d'homme" (p. 74). As in the preceding poem, the word "hope" characterizes the mood in which the poem ends.

Hope is also the theme of the poem "Assassinats," and once again the poet opposes the theme of death to that of rebirth. He reaffirms his faith in the future in spite of the ravages of war: "En vain ont-ils couvé ton rire, en vain la fleur plus noire de ta chair" (p. 77). He continues to see the spirit of
Negritude as indispensable to the destiny of mankind:

Vous êtes le limon et le plasma du printemps viride du monde
Du couple primitif vous êtes la charnure, le ventre fécond
la laitance
Vous êtes la pullulance sacrée des clairs jardins paradisiaques
Et la forêt incocible, victorieuse du feu et de la foudre.

The reference to spring is another allusion to the new order, a
time of beginning again equated through the image of the first
couple with the primordial era. In this new cycle, however, the
"first couple" is an expression of racial harmony. The adjective
"paradisiac" takes us back to the concept of Eden as past time
and forward to the Eden of the future.

The image of the incorruptible forest implies the continuity
essential to the future, and it stands in strange contrast to the
opening lines of the poem in which the tree image first appears:

Ils sont là étendus par les routes captives, le long des routes
du désastre
Les sveltes peupliers, les statues des dieux sombres drapés
dans leurs longs manteaux d'or
Les prisonniers sénégalais tendreusement allongés sur la
terre de France.

Against this image of the felled poplar, the poet has placed that
of the ever-renewing forest. The concept of death and continuity
go hand in hand in Senghor's imagination as implicitly as the
regenerative processes of Nature. There is then no paradox in
the poem's last line: "O Martyrs noirs race immortelle, laissez-
moi dire les paroles qui pardonner" (p. 77). Sacrifice has become
as purposeful to the fulfillment of Senghor's visions as the death
which precedes rebirth in Nature.

The poet continues looking toward the future in "Chant de
Printemps," which is dated April, 1944, and whose overall structure
depends on the contrast between destruction and regeneration,
between despair and hope. The poem, inspired by the coming of
spring, is presented ostensibly in the form of a dialogue between
the poet and a young girl; it also suggests the opposing views
within the poet's own conscience. The female voice evokes the horrors of the war in Africa; the poet replies with an optimism inspired by the return of spring. The destruction of war described by the first speaker is compared to the noise and destruction of the bush fire:

Tu m'as dit:
—Ecoute mon ami, lointain et sourd, le grondement précocce de la tornade comme un feu roulant de brousse.

Et les cités superbes flambent, mais bien plus jaunes mais bien plus sèches qu'herbes de brousse en saison sèche.
Et voici que les hautes tours, orgueil des hommes, tombent comme les géants des forêts avec un bruit de plâtras.
Et voici que les édifices de ciment et d'acier fondent comme la cire molle aux pieds de Dieu. (p. 86)

The poem depends strongly on auditory imagery. Beyond the tumult of war, the poet hears the calmer voice of Africa proclaiming the greater reality of the eternal rebirth of nature: "Elle proclame l'attente amoureuse du renouveau dans la fièvre de ce printemps / La vie qui fait vaguez deux enfants nouveau-nés au bord d'un tombeau cave" (p. 87). With images of spring and, as elsewhere, with images of light, the poet affirms his faith in the never-ending cycles of nature. By doing so, he also affirms his faith in the future.

The bush fire image has a double symbolic function in the writer's poetic imagination: destruction and regeneration. "La brousse qui brûle et qui reverdit, c'est la Mort et la Vie." 10 The practice of burning the high grasses in order to prepare the ground for new crops or to provide tender grass for the herds is quite common in West Africa; it was a phenomenon undoubtedly familiar to Senghor. The fire not only clears the field for planting; the ashes act in addition as fertilizer for the soil. The technique is cited by Rachelard as a conceivable explanation for the association between fire and purification in the poetic imagination, a memory of man's more primitive past. 11

In this context, fire is chiefly an image of destruction; the poet may even refer to the spontaneous fires caused by lightning
during the dry season. In later poems, however, fire which is depicted by the bush fire image is an explicit symbol of rebirth, and the poet refers rather to the ashes than the roaring flames, but, in "Chant de Printemps," the regenerative aspect is only implied by the images of rebirth in the second part of the poem. The image appears to be in a state of evolution in the poet's mind but already carries an indication of its future development.

In "Chant de Printemps," the poet also associates fire and the destructive force of war with divine retribution. Because it has exploited Africa and because it is materialistic and lacks spirituality, Europe is guilty and deserving of punishment. The fire which represents divine wrath is a purifying fire which both chastises and cleanses. In "Aux soldats négro-américains," Senghor introduces this fire as the thunderbolt of Jove and refers to the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah: "Frères, je ne sais si c'est vous qui avez bombardé les cathédrales, orgueil de l'Europe / Si vous êtes la foudre dont la main de Dieu a brûlé Sodome et Gomorrah" (p. 99). Characteristically, the line which follows this indictment offers a note of optimism: "Non, vous êtes les messagers de sa merci, le souffle du Printemps après l'Hiver" (p. 99). The images of spring and hope are similar to those which appeared in "Chant de Printemps" and have replaced the use of autumn references of the earlier works of Hosties Noires. The capital letters used by the poet in this line emphasizes the full significance of the seasons here: Winter, of course, symbolizes the war, and Spring, as we have seen before, represents the beginning of a new cycle and the opening of a new era. "Aux soldats négro-américains" concludes: "—Oh! délice de vivre après l'Hiver—je vous salue comme des messagers de paix" (p. 99).

The last poem of "Camp 1940" is entitled "Tyroye" and dated December, 1944. It is an apt point on which to terminate our discussion of theme of sacrifice in Hosties Noires, in that it explicitly summarizes the poet's objectives for the collection as a whole. The first stanza is a series of questions which
become rather a statement of the symbolic role of the African in
the war as it is perceived by the poet; the black soldier is
described here as both a martyr to a cause and a purifying agent:
"Et votre sang n'a-t-il pas abludi la nation oubliuse de sa mission
d'hier? Dites, votre sang ne s'est-il mêlé au sang lustral de
ses martyrs?" (p. 90). The poet further asks the question to
which the entire collection has attempted to respond: "Vos
funérailles seront-elles celle de la Vierge-Espérance?" (p. 90).
The answer to this question can only be an emphatic repetition
of what has already been established as the justification for this
sacrifice:

Non, vous n'êtes pas morts gratuits ô Morts! Ce sang
n'est pas de l'eau tepide.
Il arrose épais notre espoir, qui fleurira au crépuscule.
Il est notre soif notre faim d'honneur, ces grandes reines
absolues
Non, vous n'êtes pas morts gratuits. Vous êtes les témoins
de l'Afrique immortelle
Vous êtes les témoins du monde nouveau qui sera demain.
(pp. 90-91)

Again, the poet expresses himself through references to Nature.
The word "crépuscule" must surely translate in this context as
dawn, the future which is itself the ultimate expression of justi-
fication.

The last line of the poem and of the series is addressed
directly to those who gave their lives in the struggle. It is
not a statement but a promise: "Dormez ô Morts! et que ma voix
vous berce, ma voix de courroux que berce l'espoir" (p. 91). The
line restates the poet's role as the voice of the people and termin-
ates the series of poems on the word which most characterizes
the entire collection: "hope."

The poems of Hosties Noires move as do the seasons from
the despair of autumn to the hope of spring. Death, in this cycle,
does not constitute finality, but merely a stage in the pattern
of regeneration. The sacrifice cited here merely assures that
those who come after will prospéer. The war is interpreted as a
period of sacrifice and purification destined to prepare the renaissance of civilization, a new era characterized by racial harmony and based on the full participation of African culture.

The War Years As An Illustration Of Negritude

To a certain extent, the structure of this future period of cooperation is already apparent in the lives of the soldiers and prisoners which Senghor describes in "Camp 1940," for, from his point of view, the situation provides an opportunity to illustrate the potential force of Negritude in civilization. The prison camps especially offer a glimpse of what Senghor has in mind for the future as well as a means by which the poet himself can recapture the African paradise of his childhood. Thus we move on to the second theme which we will discuss in this series, the manifestation of the principles of Negritude.

The poem "Pour un F.P.I. noir blessé" is merely a brief vignette, depicting the interaction of the two races: "Si noir le F.P.I. dans le ciel bleu! Si lourd son corps noir dans l'air libéré! / Si noir le F.P.I. sur deux épaules blanches! Si rouge son sang entre deux blancheurs! (p. 88). Mezu finds in these lines, however, a striking expression of the racial harmony and cooperation which, elsewhere, the poet develops more explicitly.11

In "Camp 1940," Senghor deals with life in a prison camp and describes the role of the black captives with respect to their white comrades as a paradigm of the relationship between the two cultures:

C'est un grand village qu'encercler l'immobile hargne des barbelés
Un grand village sous la tyrannie de quatre mitrailleuses ombrageuses.
Et les nobles guerriers mendient des bouts de cigarette
Ils disputent les os aux chiens, ils se disputent chiens et chats de son ore.
Mais seuls Ils ont gardé la candeur de leur rire, et seuls la liberté de leur âme de feu. (p. 75)

The emphasis on the word "They" indicates that it refers to the Africans whose function in this situation, as the poet explains it, is to humanize what can only be described as a dehumanizing
existence.

Not unexpectedly, the scene of evening presented here is reminiscent of those describing the poet's childhood. The white soldiers are described as children, and Senghor employs the verbs "veiller" and "bercer," recalling perhaps the Africa which he knew best, the childhood Eden:

Et le soir tombe, sanglot de sang qui libère la nuit.
Ils veillent les grands enfants roses, leurs grands enfants blonds leurs grands enfants blancs
qui se tournent et se retournent dans leur sommeil, hanté
des puces du souci et des poux de captivité.
Les contes des veillées voires les bercent, et les voix
graves qui épousent les sentiers du silence
Et les berceuses doucement, berceuses sans tam-tam et
sans battements de mains noires (p. 75-76)

Dependency of the white upon the black, as it is implied above, is indeed the central thesis of the poem. The African will not desert the European in time of need: "Et la terre se fait humaine comme les sentinelles, les chemins les invitent à la liberté./Ils ne partiront pas. Ils ne désertent les corvées ni leur devoir de joie" (p. 76). It is a dramatic reversal of the old cliché concerning the "white man's burden," but it is characteristic of Senghor's concept of Negritude and of his vision of the future, for, as he repeats in "Épitres à la Princesse," for example, the transfusion of the virtues of Negritude is necessary for the survival of Civilization.

The evening activities depicted here made a strong impression on the captive poet, and he even misses them after his release.

In "Lettre à un prisonnier," he writes:

Je t'écris parce que mes livres sont blancs comme l'ennui,
comme la misère et comme la mort.
Faites-moi place autour du poêle, que je reprenne ma place
encore tiède.
Que nos mains se touchent en puisant dans le riz fumant de
l'amitié
Que les vieux mots sèrères de bouche en bouche passent
comme une pipe amicale.
Que Dargui nous partage ses fruits succulents—foin de
toute sécheresse parfumée! (pp. 83-84)
In the essay "L'Afrique noire: civilixation nègro-africaine," Senghor further describes such evenings, using them specifically as an illustration of the interdependence of art and daily life in traditional Africa:


The rhythm, spontaneity, and fellowship of those long evenings signify, for Senghor, the essence of African culture and a re-captured fragment of the lost paradise. Thus, even this experience of captivity serves to furnish the poet further affirmation of his identity and an illustration of the future role of Negritude. In it, he finds a testimony to the new era which will be established in justification of the sufferings of the living and the sacrifices of the dead.
CHAPTER IV

THE THEME OF REBIRTH IN ETHIOPIQUES AND NOCTURNES

Introduction

The new era which the poet looked forward to in Hosties Noires was not to materialize easily or quickly. The post-war period, while moving steadily toward political reorganization in colonial Africa, was fraught with obstacles. Senghor's poetry echoes this challenge, the theme of rebirth appearing against a background of struggle. In this chapter, we will discuss the use of that theme in Ethioiiques (1956) and in "Chant de l'initié" and the "Mélogies" published in Nocturnes (1961). Our purpose will be to show its relationship to the poet's search for Paradise as it is depicted in his previous works and also to show the evolution in his quest.

In Ethioiiques, the poems frequently recall the ordeals of initiation ceremonies in both their structure and imagery; they are, however, invariably, poems which end in the successful accomplishment of the task or in triumph over obstacles. Behind a mask of allegory, the poet is usually the protagonist, but in several instances the theme of rebirth is linked to the emergence of new Africa. The theme of rebirth and references to the rite of passage appear also in Nocturnes. The tone of these works is, however, markedly different from the preceding collection, and the poet tends to reveal himself more openly as a man laden with the responsibilities of leadership.

The Theme Of Rebirth In Ethioiiques

The political setting

With great frequency, the poems of Ethioiiques end on a note of triumph: the hero is victorious, the mission is successful. In this respect, the collection, published in 1956, is a reflection
of Senghor's career up to that point. The preceding years, while fast-moving and complex, were marked by successive accomplishments, both personal and political.

The years following World War II saw Europe's colonial empire heading toward independence at an ever escalating rate. This forward movement was so rapid that Senghor would later remark that he and other political figures often found it impossible to keep pace with the events as they occurred.\(^1\) Undoubtedly, the war itself had served to set off this reaction, for, as we saw in *Hosties Noires*, it had revealed weaknesses in European civilization and proven the fallibility of the white race. France recognized its colonies' growing desire for a greater voice in their own destiny with increased representation in the National Assembly, and it was there that Léopold Sédar Senghor, caught up in this atmosphere of change, came to serve as the voice of his people.

The decision to enter politics meant something of a transition for Senghor, and it involved abandoning a doctoral thesis on African languages already under way. He later admitted: "Mon ambition était de ... devenir professeur au Collège de France."\(^2\) The profound personal impact of Senghor's new commitment seems to be articulated in these lines from his dramatic poem, "Chaka": "Je devins une tête un bras sans tremblement, ni guerrier ni boucher / Un politique tu l'as dit—je tuaï le poète—un homme d'action seul" (p. 122). While the voice of Chaka views poetry and action as two irreconcilable entities, Senghor has subsequently shown that the gap is not insurmountable, for the philosophy which lies at the heart of his poetry is equally entrenched in his political objectives and expression. Negritude, which had provided the African student with identity and which had become a tool of cultural affirmation, would also be an effective tool in the movement for independence.

In order to understand the function of the philosophy of Negritude in the post-war period, it is necessary once again to
emphasize the relationship between France and her colonies, for Negritude is a phenomenon characteristic of Francophone Africa and carries little appeal for those areas of former English colonization. The reason for this lies to an extent in the French policy of assimilation whose objectives were to educate the African culturally and politically to behave as an integral member of the French system. The concept rested on the premise that French culture and French citizenship were the highest goals to which an African might aspire and conversely that his own culture was grossly inferior if it could even be called a culture.

The affirmation of an African culture which is inherent in Negritude had the effect of countering the implications of assimilation. Markowitz explains this development as follows:

In Senghor's hands, however, Negritude became above all an appeal to the French. Its success had little to do with any forceful revolutionary appeal. Rather, Negritude served as a type of "passive resistance." It "worked" because it contained a moral appeal to the French intelligentsia couched in terms of their own culture and tradition. Negritude attracted not only intellectuals of the Left, such as Jean-Paul Sartre, but also the more general French intellectual and political establishment.

This appeal succeeded because Negritude, from its origins, was conceived within the scope of the French colonial myth. French colonial policy had never maintained that the colonial peoples were racially inferior or inherently different in any manner. Like the Greeks, the French had always proclaimed to the peoples of the world that when they had achieved the level of French civilization, they would be equal. Negritude attempted to show that this level was attained. It was a demonstration in abstraction, erudition and sensitivity. Negritude may have been rebellion, but not revolution. In this context, Negritude is not merely a means of restoring the African's sense of dignity; it is also a highly rational concept, well-suited to the systematic French mind.

Senghor utilized Negritude as a well-forged weapon with which to combat the psychological implications of assimilation and to further his efforts to achieve autonomy. "Autonomy" was
the state which, in Senghor's mind seemed preferable at this time to independence, for he could see all too easily the problems which would be caused by a complete rupture with France were there no intermediate step. Perhaps also he was unable to free himself entirely from a life-long indoctrination which demanded that Africa's destiny be inevitably linked with that of France. At any rate, he pictured France's immediate role with respect to her colonies as similar to that of Russia within the USSR: "L'union française, dit récemment l'un de nos collègues, ne doit pas être une prime à la sécession. Le meilleur moyen qu'elle ne le soit pas est d'en faire une maison familiale où il y aura sans doute un aîné, mais où les frères et les sœurs vivront vraiment dans l'égalité." 4

Not only does this speech express Senghor's sentiments on Franco-African relations, but it also reveals his attitude concerning the colonies' future relationships among themselves. Senghor feared the balkanization of Africa and the creation of states which would be neither politically or economically viable and therefore advocated some form of federation. In the promotion of both autonomy and federation, the key-concept was interdependence. While there existed very practical grounds for this stand, it was also justifiable in terms of Senghor's concept of Negritude, a philosophy which emphasizes the bonds between cultures. This quality which continues to provide a foundation for his political objectives was further strengthened by Senghor's exposure to Pierre Teillhard de Chardin whose influence we discussed in Chapter II.

Having noted the basis of Senghor's political motivation and indicated its relation to both the movement and philosophy of Negritude, let us briefly examine the progress of his political career. Certainly, the decisive step into the political arena came when Senghor won a seat in the National Assembly in 1945. As deputy, he returned to Paris in the company of Lamine Guey, the mayor of Dakar with a long-history of political experience who
had sponsored Senghor's election. Like Lamine Gueye, Senghor
gave his support to the S.P.I.C. (Section Française de l'Inter-
nationale Ouvrière). In time, however, it became apparent to
the younger representative that the policies of the S.P.I.C. were
not in accord with the awakening needs of the colonies, and in
1948, he left the party.

In the 1951 elections, Senghor ran in opposition to Lamine
Gueye, a direct confrontation between the concept of assimilation
and the new ideals of Negritude. Senghor, drawing upon the recently
enfranchised citizens of the countryside, emerged triumphantly as
a man of the people and Senegal's legitimate leader.5

This success at home was complemented by Senghor's growing
prestige as a spokesman for Africa in general. Bilissant and Sordet
describe the conference of the I.O.N. (Indépendants d'Outre-Mer)
held at Bobo-Dioulasso in 1953 as a Senegalese festival: "Le
député du Sénégal qui est venu avec une imposante délégation ...
dirige les débats. Pour la premiere fois devant cet auditoire de
cinq cents délégués originaires de tous les pays d'A.C.F. et
même d'A.E.F., il apparaît comme leader africain et non plus
seulement sénégalais." 6 Further recognition of his influential
role was indicated when in 1955 Edgar Faure, believing it politi-
cally expedient to place an African in his administration,
appointed Senghor to a cabinet post.

What emerges from an overview of Senghor's political involve-
ment preceding the publication of Ethiopiques is a consistent
pattern of achievement. Chaotic and demanding as these years may
have been—indeed, as any radical change in global politics must
necessarily be—they were still marked by progress toward an inde-
pendent Africa and personal success for Léopold Sédar Senghor.
Both the sense of change and the sense of triumph which characterized
the political mood of the era appear in Senghor's poetry during that
period. The subject matter, imagery, and structure of the poems
become a suitable indicator of the poet's political involvement.
The Theme Of Rebirth Depicted Through The Rite Of Passage: The Structure And Imagery Of "Chant de l'initié" as model

Before looking at Éthiopiques, it will be useful to examine in detail "Chant de l'initié," a poem published first in 1947 and later included in Nocturnes (1961). Because of the early date of its first appearance, this poem which deals explicitly with the subject of the rite of passage can therefore be related to the paternal encounter evident in Chants d'Ombre and serve as well as a source of imagery and structural devices in the later poems.

The structure of "Chant de l'initié" is one that has already become familiar to us, that of the journey which is, in this case, considered a stage in an initiation ceremony. The setting is African and provides numerous obstacles to be overcome by the initiate. The poem ends in encounter with the totem animal and the mystic rebirth of the pilgrim.

The pattern of journey, encounter, and resultant transformation of the hero appeared previously in Chants d'Ombre, specifically, the last two poems of that collection: "Par delà Éros" and "Le retour de l'Enfant prodigue." Our discussion of the former included a reference to the mystic appearance of the lion's head which is described in similar terms and serves the same function as in "Chant de l'initié"; that is, to depict the hero's return to his sources and his personal reconciliation with his African past. (See p. 43.) Of significant interest, however, is that the lion figure in the first instance has feminine connotations while, in "Chant de l'initié," the lion is referred to in purely masculine terms as we shall demonstrate. This masculine aspect encountered in "Chant de l'initié" also relates the encounter to that in "Le retour de l'Enfant prodigue" which, as we have interpreted it, depicts the Son's reconciliation with the Father. In a sense, "Chant de l'initié" provides a predictable sequel to that poem, for in Campbell's analysis the initiation ceremony is a ritual enactment of the paternal encounter, and he describes its significance:
The traditional idea of initiation combines an introduction of the candidate into the techniques, duties, and prerogatives of his vocation with a radical readjustment of his emotional relationship to the parental images. The mystagogue (father or father substitute) is to entrust the symbols of office only to a son who has been effectually purged of all inappropriate infantile cathexes—for whom the just, impersonal exercise of the powers will not be rendered impossible by unconscious (or perhaps even conscious and rationalized) motives of self-aggrandizement, personal preference, or resentment. Ideally, the invested one has been divested of his mere humanity and is representative of an impersonal cosmic force. He is twice-born: he has become himself the father. And he is competent, consequently, now to enact himself the role of initiator, the guide, the sun door, through whom one may pass from infantile illusions of of "good" and "evil" to an experience of the majesty of cosmic law, purged of hope and fear, and at peace in the understanding of the revelation of being.

"Le retour de l'Enfant prodigue," as a confrontation of the ancestors (father substitute) and an imparting of tribal wisdom, has already suggested the concept of initiation. "Chant de l'initié," however, deals with the initiation as a ritual, a ceremony whose rites must symbolically show the transition from one life phase to another, the death of the former self and the consequent rebirth.

Eliade has discussed at some length the symbolism of rebirth which appears throughout the world in initiation ceremonies:

... in all these initiatory contexts, death has not the meaning that one is generally inclined to give it; what it means above all is that one liquidates the past, one puts an end to one existence, which like all profane existence is a failure, to begin again, regenerated, in another. Initiatory death is thus a recommencement, never an end. In no rite or myth do we find the initiatory death as something final, but always as the condition sine qua non of a transition to another mode of being, a trial indispensable to re-creation, that is to the beginning of a new life. Let us emphasize, too,
the fact that the symbolism of a return to the womb always has cosmological valency. It is the whole world which, symbolically, returns with the neophyte into cosmic Night, in order to be created anew; that is, to become capable of regeneration.8

This concept of regeneration is clearly evident in "Chant de l'initié" and has definite implications within the framework of the poet's search for lost paradise. The abolishment of time indicated in the initiation ceremony can return the pilgrim symbolically to the Beginning which is the objective of his search.

The poem is prefaced by a couplet in Wolof which is translated as simply: "Bonnet-de-circoncis au circoncis! / Robe-de-circoncis au circoncis!"(p. 192). The poet therefore denotes the characteristic garb of the initiate in Wolof circumcision ceremonies as David P. Gamble indicates in his study of that tribe: "The dress of a njuli consists of a white robe and a triangular-shaped hat of native cloth. He is never bareheaded."9 This introduction, with its unmistakable reference to the Wolof circumcision rites, prepares a frame of reference for the poem and defines the context in which it will be presented.

The first line of the poem announces the intended pilgrimage: "Pèlerinage par les routes migratrices, voyage aux sources ancestrales" (p. 192). This verse is a clue to the profound importance of the journey created from the writer's own emotional experience. Through the medium of poetry, he portrays here his personal return to the ancestral sources and indicates the powerful psychological impact of the revelation which carried with it an identity and rebirth.

The first of the four stanzas serves to situate the poem, ushering us once more into the mythical setting of the childhood paradise on the magic melody of the flute, an auditory image which the poet frequently associates with his early memories: "Flûte d'élève lumineuse et lisse, transperce les brouillards
de ma mémoire / O flûte! les brouillards, pâtes sur son sommeil
sur son visage original" (p. 192). The features of a woman are
again imposed on the landscape in the poet's description of his
surroundings:

Soleil de son sourire! et la rosée brillait sur l'herbe indigo
de ses lèvres,
Les colibris striquaient, fleurs aériennes, la grâce indicible
de son discours
Les martins-pêcheurs plongeaient dans ses yeux en fulgurances
bleu natif de foi
Par les rizières ruisselantes, ses cils bruissaient rythmiques
dans l'air transparent (pp. 192-193)

As we have seen before, the land becomes humanized, personified
as a woman. This characterization is necessary to the progress
of the poem, where the land is both an obstacle to be overcome
and, as well, a source of assistance to the pilgrim in his trials.

The first step of the poet's journey takes him into the
forest; this initial separation of the neophyte from the village
is common to initiation ceremonies the world over as Eliade in-
dicates in his description of their characteristic features:

(1) Everywhere the mystery begins with the separation
of the neophyte from his family, and a "retreat" into
the forest. In this there is already a symbolisation of
death; the forest, the jungle and the darkness symbolise
"the beyond", the Shades. In certain places it is be-
lieved that a tiger comes and carries the candidates
into the jungle on its back; the wild animal incarnates
the mythical Ancestor, the Master of the initiation
who conducts the adolescents to the Shades. In other
places the neophyte is supposed to be swallowed by a
monster... In the belly of the monster it is cosmic
Night; this is the embryonic mode of existence, both
upon the plane of the cosmos and on the plane of human
life.10

The description of the forest in Senghor's poem coincides with
Eliade's analysis, for it can be interpreted as both a symbol
of death, dark and threatening in its aspect, and an image
of the labyrinth or, by extension, the embryonic stage:
O trompe à mon secours! Je me suis égaré par la forêt
de ses cheveux
Trompe sous ta patine noire, ivoire patiemment mûri dans
la boue noire.
Je glisse sur les pas des puçydermes, sur le pont savonneux
de ses énigmes.
Comment d'ouvrir les ruses des lianes, apaiser les sifflements
des serpents?
Et de nouveau l'appel blessé, mais seule une sirène sinistre
répond
De nouveau l'appel qui lamente, mais seuls me répondent
des cris d'oiseaux muets
Comme d'enfants que l'on égorge dans la nuit, et la fuite
des singes rouges. (p. 193)

The situation of the poet in the forest and the darkness and
humidity of his surroundings, compounded by the female personifi-
cation of the land, contribute to the creation of a womb-like at-
mosphere which serves in this instance to prepare the initiate's
rebirth. The encounter with the totem animal, also mentioned by
Eliade, occurs in the poem but is displaced, appearing only in
the last stanza.

The personified Africa is a support for the pilgrim in his
distress. He is aided by his memories of her, he speaks of her
as his guide, and in the last line, he appeals to her directly
for assistance: "O Forêt ancienne pistes perdues, entendez le
chant blanc du Pèlerin" (p. 194). We are reminded here of Campbell's
contention: "It is in this ordeal that the hero may derive hope
and assurance from the helpful female figure, by whose magic
(pollen, charms or power of intercession) he is protected through
all the frightening experiences of the father's ego-shattering
initiation." 11

The experience in the forest represents an ordeal which
must be overcome by the initiate, and the terrain continues to
provide such obstacles in his path as his journey leads him, in
the third stanza, through the grassland and into the desert:

... Puis l'or blanc des sables sous la lumière
Ô consument mes aptitudes, dans la vibration pure et
l'espace fervent.
Kais chante à mes oreilles complaisantes le mirage des casis
Mais m'assaille la tentation des brumes sèches, qui veulent oppresser ma foi. (p. 194)
The poet finds strength to meet this challenge by virtue of being an initiate, and guidance comes again from the personified figure of the land: "Ne guidera de nouveau son parfum, l'odeur de la gomme dans l'Harmattan" (p. 195).

The experiences of this third stanza also signal the purification of the initiate as seen in the reflection of the images which surround him:

Par-delà les marais putrides des entrailles, la liberté de la savane
Savane noire comme moi, feu de la Mort qui prépare la re-naisance
Re-naisance du Sens et de l'Esprit... (p. 194)
The grasslands are depicted as black and burnt, preparing the ground for planting, or for the growth of tender shoots with which to feed the herds. The cycle of death and rebirth inherent in the process mirrors the symbolism of the initiation procedure, the neophyte being dead to his past life and therefore purified. The hyphenation of the word "renaissance" emphasizes the original meaning of the term and its consequent concept of being born again.
The adjective "pure" is used in the line which follows in connection with the hot desert air, and the references to the Harmattan, the drying East wind named at the end of the poem, appears elsewhere in Senghor's poetry as an image of purification: "Le Vent d'Est y mord toute chair, brulant toutes choses impures" (p. 135). The experiences of this stanza are then characterized by fire and intense heat capable of cleansing and purging the pilgrim in preparation for his final encounter, the appearance of the totem animal described in the last lines.

The vision of the Lion, the totem animal, comes to the pilgrim at dawn, metaphorically preparing the rebirth:

Voila qu'émerge de la Nuit, pur, l'autel vertical et son front de grout
Puis la ligne de ses sourcils, comme l'ombre frais d'un kori.
The lion has particular significance for Senghor which justifies its function as totem in this poem. The poet's father carried the name Diogoye, which literally translated means "lion," and Senghor at various times referred to this fact in his poems: "Je suis—je pas fils de Dyogoye? Je dis bien le Lion affamé" (p. 196). The lion has also served as Senghor's political symbol in election campaigns.

The function of the totem is described by Senghor in his article "L'Esthétique négro-africaine":

Mais qu'est-ce que la famille? C'est le clan, l'ensemble de toutes les personnes, vivantes ou défuntes, qui se reconnaissent un Ancêtre commun. Celui-ci est le chauffon qui unit Dieu aux hommes, génie lui-même et «semblable-à-Dieu». Sa vie se présente, souvent, sous la forme d'un mythe totémique, parfois relié à un mythe astral. D'où l'importance de l'animal dans la cosmogonie nègre. L'Ancêtre a reçu, de Dieu, une force vitale, et sa vocation est de l'accroître. On le voit, le but de la famille est de perpéter un patrimoine de force vitale, qui grandit et s'intensifie dans la mesure où elle se manifeste en des corps vivants, des existants de plus en plus nombreux et prospères.12

Situated at the apex of the clan structure, the totem animal is considered the source of life force and, by extension, symbolizes the poet's racial and cultural heritage as it did in "Le totem."

The confrontation with the lion in "Chant de l'initié" becomes then a dramatization of the poet's awakened awareness of his African identity. The ritual encounter with the totem animal also has strong connotations of rebirth. Eliade, as we have shown, points out that the totem animal appears frequently in initiation ceremonies, and furthermore, he emphasizes the ritual swallowing or dismembering of the initiate by the totem animal as a rebirth symbol:
We can understand, then, why being swallowed by a monster has played so important a part in the initiation rituals, as well as in heroic myths and the mythologies of Death. The mystery in question is one that involves the most terrible of initiatory ordeals, that of death, but which also constitutes the only possible way of abolishing temporal duration—in other words, of annulling historic existence—and re-entering into the primordial situation.13

The ritual rebirth symbolized in being swallowed by the monster is also a return to Paradise. Not surprisingly, then, the pilgrim in Senghor's poem fears the lion:

... Ah! que tu me fouvoies de tes éclairs jumeaux
—Formidable douceur de leur rugit! délice inexorable de leurs griffes!
Et que je meure soudain pour renaitre dans la révélation de la Beauté!
Silence silence sur l'ombre... Sourd tam-tam... tam-tam lent...
lourd tam-tam... tam-tam noir... (p. 195)

The poem ends in the explicit expectation of a new birth, which, referring to Eliade, we may also interpret as a return to the Beginning and the childhood Eden.

"Chant de l'initié" appears to take its inspiration from circumcision ceremonies with which Senghor was familiar. Recalling the introductory lines in Wolof, it is interesting to note the following account of a Wolof circumcision rite: "The first major ceremony in which the whole village is involved occurs with the appearance of a monster (man) who comes to "eat" the boys."14 The prospect of the initiates' being eaten by a monster seems to concur with Eliade's observations.

In discussing the meaning of the initiation rite, Senghor, like Eliade, emphasizes its symbolic function and the implied rebirth:

Dans le Royaume du Sine et, en général, chez les Sérères, les classes d'initiés ont remplacé les classes d'âge, conformément à l'évolution naturelle des sociétés négro-africaines. Ces classes se forment au moment de la circoncision, cérémonie qui a lieu autour de la
He includes here the social function of the ceremony which introduces the youth to his adult role, and we have analysed "Le retour de l'Enfant prodigue" from this viewpoint, showing how the Son assumes his adult mission and is granted the special wisdom to carry it out by the Ancestors. In this respect, "Le retour de l'Enfant prodigue" constitutes the social or practical aspect of initiation whereas, as we have shown, "Chant de l'initié" depicts the ritual of initiation with its accompanying symbolism. The whole constitutes the poetic expression of an individual's coming to terms with himself.

There is no explicit reference in "Chant de l'initié" to the mission of the poet; it is rather the ordeal of the initiate and the ceremony itself which attracts the poetic imagination in this instance. Senghor's preoccupation with the framework and symbolism of the rite of passage continues to be felt in the remainder of his poetry where he uses it repeatedly as a symbol of rebirth. In Éthiopiques, for example, we find several poems which, in spite of their diversity of subject matter, draw upon the rite of passage in their structural presentation and in their use of imagery. As a result, distinct patterns can be discerned relating these poems to each other and to "Chant de l'initié" which appears to serve as a model.

Variations on the Rite of Passage in "L'Homme et la Bête," "Congo" and "Teddungal"

While each of these three poems carries its distinct mark of individuality, there remain strong similarities in the poet's stylistic presentation of his material. Structurally, each poem represents an ordeal with the eventual triumph of the protagonist.
The transition is reflected in the accompanying imagery typical of new beginnings.

The ordeal in "L'Homme et la Bête" is a struggle, as the title suggests, between a man and a beast. The poem is reminiscent of "Chant de l'initié" both in its setting and in the confrontation between the protagonist and an animal. The forest situation is again dark, muddy, and foreboding. As in "Chant de l'initié," we are reminded of the custom of carrying out initiation ceremonies in the forest and of the death-rebirth symbolism which Eliade attaches to the procedure. The poem opens at nightfall:

Je te nomme Soir 6 Soir ambigu, feuille mobile je te nomme.  
Et c'est l'heure des peurs primaires, souris des entrailles d'ancêtres.  
Arrière inanimé faces de ténèbre à souffle et mufle maléfiques!  
Arrière par la palme et l'eau, par le Disseur-des-chosestrès-cachées!  
Mais informe la Bête dans la boue féconde qui nourrit  
tsétsé stégomyas  
Crapauds et trigonocéphales, araignées à poison caïmans à  
poignards.

In addition to the real physical dangers to the Man, there is an unseen presence lurking in the shadows of the night, a moment for supernatural occurrences in African thought.

The second, third, and fourth stanzas describe the struggle between the Man and the Beast in which both are wounded:

Des griffes paraphent d'éclairs son dos de nuages houleux  
La tornade rase ses reins et couche les graminées de son  
sexe  
Les kaicôdrats sont âmus dans leurs racines douloureuses  
Mais l'Homme enfonce son épée de foudre dans les entrailles  
de lune dorées très tard.

The symbolic wounds of initiation rites are well known, especially circumcision, and Eliade interprets them as symbolic of death:

The initiates' mutilations, too, are charged with a symbolism of death. The majority of those mutilations come under the lunar deities. Now, the Moon disappears—that is, dies—
periodically, to be born again three nights later: and this lunar symbolism stresses the idea that death is the first condition of all mystical regeneration. 10

Senghor confers such a lunar association on the beast in the image "entrailles de lune," and the length of the struggle continues the symbolic duration of three nights: "La lutte est longue trop! dans l'ombre, longue des trois époques de nuit millésime" (p. 100).

In addition, the man must struggle against the environment which carries connotations suggestive of the womb and consequently of a difficult birth:

Force de l'Homme lourd les pieds dans le potopoto fécond
Force de l'Homme les roseaux qui embarrassent son effort.
Sa chaleur la chaleur des entrailles primaires, force de l'Homme dans l'ivresse
Le vin chaud du sang de la Bête, et la mousse pétille dans son coeur
Hé! vive la bière de mil à l'Initié! (p. 100)

The swamp is a muddy matrix, and Man is caught in the reeds like an infant entangled in the umbilical cord. The last line portrays the Man expressly as an initiate thereby strengthening the allusion to the rite of passage.

The Man in the end is triumphant:

Un long cri de comète traverse la nuit, une large clameur rythmée d'une voix juste
Et l'Homme terrasse la Bête de la glossolalie du chant dansé.
Il la terrasse dans un vaste éclat de rire, dans une danse rutilant dansée
Sous l'arc-en-ciel des sept voyelles. . . . (p. 100)

Language, in the form of the song and laughter, not only accompanies the victory but appears to contribute to it. In "Élégie des circonois," the poet also recalls the songs of initiation danses in order to show their power and their importance for the initiate:

"Le rythme chasse cette angoisse qui nous tient à la gorge. La vie tient la mort à distance. / Dansons au refrain de l'angoisse, que se lève la nuit du sexe dessus notre ignorance dessus notre innocence" (p. 201). We see here another illustration of the Word
as magic functioning in "L'Homme et la Bête" as an expression of thought and an example of the rationality which makes the Man superior to the animal.

While we have been comparing the role of the Beast with that of the totem in "Chant de l'initié," this last stanza clearly defines the distinction between the two situations, for in the lines following the victory, the man is celebrated: "... Salut Soleil-levant Lion au-regard-qui-tue / Donc salut Dompteur de la brousse, Toi Mbarodi! seigneur des forces imbéciles" (pp. 100-101). He is associated with the totem animal as opposed to being attacked by it. This distinction, however, does not destroy the functional similarity between two cases and the rebirth symbolism which is indicated in each encounter. In "L'Homme et la Bête," this symbolism is further emphasized by the isolated last line of the poem: "Le lac fleurit de nénuphars, aurore du rire divin" (p. 101). The impure water of the swamp give place to the clear lake; the water-lily and the dawn, both classic symbols of regeneration, become the emblems of the Man's victory.

The structure and imagery of the rite of passage which gives form to "L'Homme et la Bête" appear also in the poem "Congo," an allegory in which the river represents Africa and the central figure of the poem compares himself to a pirogue. The poem opens with an invocation of the river, personified as a woman and addressed variously as Mother, Beloved, and Goddess:

Nère de toutes choses qui ont marines, des crocodiles des hippopotames
Lamantins iguanes poissons oiseaux, mère des crues nourrice des moissons.
Femme grande! eau tant ouverte à la rame et à l'étrave des pirogues
Ma Sâf mon amante aux cuisses furieuses, aux longs bras de nénuphars calmes
Femme précieuse d'ouzougou, corps d'huile impudrèscible à la peau de nuit diamantine.
Toi calme Déesse au sourire étale sur l'élan vertigineux de ton sang
O toi l'Impaludée de ton lignage, délivre-moi de la surrection de mon sang. (pp. 101-102)
By fastening these diverse identities on a single subject, the poet is in a sense confirming our previous assertions concerning the multiple character of the Senegalese woman who is also depicted as a maternal figure, mistress, and deity of place.

As in "Chant de l'initié," the river thus humanized is asked for assistance. The different obstacles which the poet enumerates are defined again against the landscape; it is possible here, however, to translate these dangers beyond the allegory in terms of the poet's actual experiences:

Tamtam toi toi tamtam des bonds de la panthère, de la stra-téie des fourmis
Des haines visqueuses au jour troisième surgies du potopoto des marais
Hâ! sur toute chose, du sol spongieux et des chants savon-neux de l'Homme-blanc
Mais délivre-moi de la nuit sans joie, et guette le silence des forêts.
Donc que je sois le fût splendide et le bond de vingt-six cuvées
Dans l'alizé, sois la fuite de la pirogue sur l'élan lisse de ton ventre. (p. 102)

The dangers from animals and insects which inhabit the hidden places of the forests and swamps become human antagonists and emotions. The swamp itself in these lines takes on a meaning which has appeared before: it is an image representing the debilitating influence of western civilization. In the first lines of "C'est le temps de partir," the poet laments: "C'est le temps de partir, que je n'enforce plus avant mes racines de fous dans cette terre grasse et molle" (p. 38). In "Le retour de l'Enfant prodigue," there is also a reference to "la boue de la Civilisation" (p. 43).

In contrast, there are more favorable images, those of childhood: "Tarms d'enfance tuns de Joal, et ceux de Dylôr en Septembre" (p. 102). As always the memory of paradise is the poet's guide and moves before him as a vision of inspiration.

The plea "délivre-moi de la surnourison de mon sang" becomes, at the end of the stanza, "délivre-moi de la nuit de mon sang." The poet's present trials are compared to the ordeals of the initiation rites—the terrors of the night which precede the
In preceding lines, the poet describes himself as a pirogue skimming along the surface of the water, the image which dominates the second half of the poem:

Mon amant à mon flanc, dont l'huile fait docile mes mains mon âme
Ma force s'érigé dans l'abandon, mon honneur dans la soumission
Et ma science dans l'instinct de ton rythme. . . . (pp. 102-103)

Continuing the comparison of the river to a woman, the man moves, like a pirogue, in complete harmony with the natural force, the relationship between Man and Nature illustrating the African's instinctive adaption to the rhythm of nature which is a fundamental principle of Negritude. The rhythm of the flowing water is superseded by a more fundamental movement, that of life and death, the eternal cycles of nature, and the end of the ordeal:

Rythmez, créceiles des cauris, les bruissements des Grandes Baux
Et la mort sur la crête de l'exultation, à l'appel irré- cusable du gouffre.

Mais la pirogue renaîtra par les nénuphars de l'écume
Surnagera la douceur des bambous au matin transparent du monde. (p. 103)

The dangers of the river and of the night culminate in a crisis which is met once more with the image of a new dry, water-lilies, and a specific reference to rebirth.

The perilous journey of the boat in "Congo" is paralleled by another journey in "Teddungal," the latter more closely associated with the imagery of "Chant de l'initié." The poem opens with the land in the grip of the dry season:

Et soufflaient les passions une tornade fauve aux piquants des gommiers. Où la tendresse du vert au Printemps?
Yeux et narines rompus par Vent d'Est, nos gorges comme des citermes sonnaient creux à l'appel immense de la poitrine. C'était grande pitié. (p. 108)

The suffering described here carries, in the image of the East wind,
implications of purification.

The allegory in "Teddungal" is, in contrast to the two preceding poems, easily explainable in terms of Senghor's political involvement. Perjorative allusions to "les Maîtres-de-Saint-Louis" would seem to indicate the depuy's opponent in the 1951 elections. The animals and insects which represent the dangers of the trek are metaphors for the obstacles standing in the path to political victory: "Or les scorpions furent de sable, les caméléons de toutes couleurs. Or les rires de singes secouèrent l'arbre des palabres, comme peau de panthère les embûches zébraient la nuit" (p. 108).

The poet refers to his subjects in this poem as initiates: "Or nous avons marché tels de blancs initiés. Pour toute nourriture le lait clair, et pour toute parole la ruminatión du mot essentiel" (p. 109). Perhaps indicating their lack of political experience, he extends the image to the description of the victory which follows.

The rite of circumcision takes place traditionally in the period just before dawn, the rising sun becoming a symbol of the initiate's new life. The poem places its moment of tension at this point and the new day rises on a new political era: "Et lorsque le temps fut venu, je tendis un cou dur gonflé de veines comme une pile formidable. / C'était l'heure de la rosée, le premier chant du coq avait percé la brume, fût retourner les hommes des milices dans leur quatrième sommeil" (p. 109). The rebirth connotations of dawn are paralleled by new fertility in the land itself:

... Ce fut un grand déchirement des apparences, et les hommes restitués à leur noblesse, les choses à leur vérité.
Vert et vert Fâlo et Fouta, pagne fleuri de laçs et de moissons.
De longs troupeaux coulaient, ruisseaux de lait dans la vallée.
Honneur au Fouta rédémé! Honneur au Royaume d'enfance!
(p. 109)

The celebration of success is, for the poet, the celebration of
the kingdom of childhood, a means of restoring the lost paradise. In juxtaposing the two, Senghor provides an explicit link between the birth of the new era and a return to Eden. The rebirth motif signifies a return to the Beginning, an abolition of Time.

The color green indicates the end of the dry season and provides a metaphor for victory. It is also the color of Senghor's party and later of Senegal's flag. The double meaning of the political emblem and the seasonal transition appears also in the poem "L'Absente": "Vert et vert le Printemps au clair mitan de Mai, d'un vert si tendre hâ! que c'est ravissement" (p. 112).

In each of these poems, the same fundamental transformation is depicted and accompanied by similar images of regeneration, many of which have appeared previously in "Chant de l'initié." The pattern of the initiation ceremony is repeated and varied in poems which differ, however, in their subject matter. The model, "Chant de l'initié," which we have interpreted as an expression of a personal crisis, is adapted to express other experiences, including the description of the political evolution.

This last variation provides an interesting example of the close parallel which exists between Senghor's personal evolution and the evolution of a nation and people. The concept of rebirth is equally applicable in both cases, and in this respect, the symbols representing the poet and those referring to the nation tend to converge.

The Theme Of Rebirth And Emerging Africa

In "Chaka," the same basic pattern of death and rebirth recurs together with similar images of regeneration, especially the familiar movement from darkness to dawn. What distinguishes this poem from the others, however, is that through the ordeal and suffering of one man, his people achieve salvation and rebirth.

"Chaka" is described as a dramatic poem for several voices and is divided into various speaking parts with store directions provided. The poem is based on the exploits of the
the Zulu leader, Chaka, who led a bloody reaction against the white intruder in South Africa during the 19th century. The legend, related by Thomas Nqofolo, describes a man who sacrificed his own fiancée in order to obtain power from the sorcerer Issanoussi. The Zulu's lust for blood becomes an obsession, and he is finally killed by his brother. Senghor deals with Chaka in his death agony and the poem becomes a justification of the warrior's atrocities by making him an early martyr to African liberation and unity.

Senghor has been criticized for attributing such sophisticated motives to Chaka in fu lý obvivous defiance of legend or historical fact. Guibert, for one, makes the following remark: "Sans méconnaître le droit du poète à l'invention, on peut estimer qu'il valait mieux créer le mythe de toutes pièces plutôt que de travestir Gillier de Rais en Vercingétorix." It is easy to lament Senghor's choice of martyrs, but structurally, the legend provides the poet with the elements necessary to his story of salvation. Beyond this structure, the historical personality of Chaka is obliterated and what remains is a spokesman for Negritude who shares certain obvious traits with the poet himself and who animates the death-rebirth cycle similar to that of other poems included in the collection.

In explaining Chaka's reaction, Senghor endows even his description of the invader with his own concepts, and Chaka's account of his people's oppression carries distinct cultural as well as economic overtones:

Je voyais dans un songe tous les pays aux quatre coins de l'horizon soumis à la règle, à l'équerre et au compas
Les forêts fauchées les colline anéanti es, vallons et fleuves dans les fers.
Je voyais les pays aux quatre coins de l'horizon sous la grille tracée par les doubles routes de fer
Je voyais les peuples du Sud comme une fourmillière de silence
Au travail. Le travail est saint, mais le travail n'est plus le geste
Le tam-tam ni la voix ne rythment plus les gestes des saisons. Peuples du Sud dans les chantiers, les ports les mines les manufactures Et le soir ségrégés dans les kraals de la nuitre. (p. 12)

The tools of geometry are the tools of techniciens, and their rigid lines contrast with the natural, fluid movement of forests, hills, and rivers, all of which would be destroyed or submitted to the march of technical progress. The old rhythm, too, would be destroyed by labor which was not born of a harmony with nature or linked with the fundamental rhythms of the universe. These contrasts are easily recognizable illustrations of the distinctions which Senghor places between African and Western Civilization.

He defines this difference in "L'Apport de la poésie nègre au demi-siècle," an essay published in 1952:


Chaka's vision of the future is based on the assumption of this fundamental cultural distinction, and the horror he expresses at the prospect of seeing his own culture destroyed is, in fact Senghor's defense of his Negritude.

Not only does Chaka become a spokesman for Senghor's ideology, but he also reflects certain personal elements of the poet's own experience. His memories are the poet's memories:

O ma fiancée, j'ai longtemps attendu cette heure
Longtemps erré dans les steppes de la jeunesse, et à d'autres
la flûte et les mugissements de miel
Longtemps loin visité les retraites des sœurs.
J'ai longtemps parlé dans la solitude des palabres
Et beaucoup combattu dans la solitude de la mort
Contre ma vocation. Telle fut l'épreuve, et le purgatoire
du Poète. (p. 129)

Chaka's longing here for the sound of flutes, an image usually associated by Senghor with the childhood Paradise, is supported by several references in the poem to the Royaume d'enfance. The conflict between the vocation of the poet and that of leader which troubles Chaka in the poem can only be a reflection of Senghor's personal dilemma.

The poem further attaches itself to preceding works in which the poet is the protagonist by its repetition of the death-rebirth cycle, but in this case, the new birth is linked with the emergence of new Africa. Chaka explains his violence as a sacrifice preparing the new order, and his own death is depicted as having similar significance.

In the poem, Chaka is confronted with the murders for which he is responsible:

On cherchait un guerrier, tu ne fus qu'un boucher.
Les ravins sont torrents de sang, la fontaine source de sang
Les chiens sauvages hurlent à la mort dans les plaines où
plane l'aigle de la mort
O Chaka toi Zoulou, toi plus que-pestè et feu roulant de
brousse! (p. 120)

He acknowledges his role in the slaughter but describes his actions as purifying and changes the bush fire image which was hurled against him from a metaphor of destruction to one of regeneration: "J'ai porté la cagnée dans ce bois mort, allumé l'incendie dans la
brousse stérile / En propriétaire prudent. C'étaient cendres
pour les semaines d'hivernage" (p. 120). The burning of the bushland serves to prepare the ground for new crops.

Even when asked to explain the murder of his fiancée, Nolivé, he justifies it in terms of the future:

Pour l'amour de ma Nolivé. Pourquoi le répéter?
Chaque mort fut ma mort. Il fallait préparer les moissos
à venir
Et la meule à broyer la farine si blanche des tendresses
noires. (p. 126)
Death merely prepares the rebirth.

The most important use of the death-rebirth theme in the poem is with respect to Chaka himself who is, in the end, depicted as a martyr for the cause of his people. The leader of the chorus describes Chaka: "Tu es Zoulou par qui nous croisons dru, les marines par quoi nous buvons la vie forte / Et tu es le Doué-d'un-large-dos, tu portes tous les peuples à peau noire" (p. 129). He is regarded as a savior, and in his last breath, he consents to die in order that the new era might dawn:

Mais non, je vais mourir d'attente...
Que de cette nuit blonde--§ ma Nuit § ma Noire ma
Nolivé--
Que du tam-tam surjisse le soleil du monde nouveau. (p. 132)
The last lines of the poem are images of light signifying the rising of the sun on the New World: "Aube blanche aurore nouvelle qui ouvres les yeux de mon peuple... Rosée § rosée qui réveille les racines soudaines de mon peuple... Là-bas le soleil au zénith sur tous les peuples de la terre" (p. 133). The images depicting the new era justify the martyr's sacrifice.

The dawn which rises over Chaka's death and which promises an awakening of the people is the recognizable fulfillment of the poet's own dreams of the future. Unlike preceding poems in the collection, however, the theme has implications for civilization as a whole, not merely the poet as an individual. The concept of renaissance is thus expanded in the writer's imagination, and Chaka belongs not only to Senghor's personal mythology but to the mythology of Negritude.

Similar to "Chaka" in its dramatic format and in its creation of a martyr is the "Elégie pour Aynina Fall." Chiefly because its hero is more suited than the bloody Chaka to his symbolic role and because of the uncluttered lines of the poem, "Elégie" is more immediately effective. It is based on an actual event, the assassination of an African trade union leader who was a proponent of African unity. To those who lament his death, the
poet interprets the meaning of the sacrifice:

Têtes courtes et sourdes, têtes aveugles, tels les brigands du Nord, qui se croient malins et ne comprennent rien à rien! Quand lirez-vous les signes?
Voyez le laurier rose qui grandit sur les cendres. L'herbe repousse, tendre, pour les antilopes après les incendies de Novembre. Il a versé son sang, qui féconde la terre d'Afrique; il a racheté nos fautes; il a donné sa vie sans rupture pour l'UNITÉ DES PEUPLES NOIRS.

Aynina Fall est mort, Aynina Fall est vivant parmi nous. (p. 212)

The passage is a series of rebirth images which are by now a familiar characteristic of the poet's idiom: the regenerative use of the bush fire for grazing purposes, the concept of blood as fertilizer which occurred so frequently in Hosties Noires, and the assigning of redemptive powers to the hero in imitation of the saving grace of Christ. Aynina Fall becomes, like Chaka, a martyr to the cause of Negritude.

Unlike Chaka, however, he is a personality distinct from the poet himself. In an introduction to their translation of Nocturnes, in which "Élégie pour Aynina Fall" appears, Reed and Wake note this absence of the writer's person: "It is perhaps not entirely without design that the 'Elegy for Aynina Fall' is placed last, for it suddenly releases Senghor's poetry from its creator and expands the notion of leadership to include all men."\[9

The heroes of Ethiciques, however, are as a rule, associated with the poet to some extent, even when, like Chaka, they carry implications relating them to the broader subject of emerging Africa. Such is the case with "Le Kaya Magan" where the androgynous king upon whom the poet bases a new creation myth for emerging Africa and for Negritude remains still a facet of the poet's own being.

Sylvia Washington has discovered a possible historical source for Kaya-Magan in a ruler of the ancient kingdom of Ghana.\[20 As in "Chaka," the actual figure only serves to provide inspiration for the poetic imagination, and Miss Washington cites Senghor's
own explanation of the function of the king in the poem: "The extension of his empire is interpreted as a civilizing, creative force culminating in the harmonious and beneficial merging of peoples and races." It should be added that the civilization which he creates is the African civilization, the culture of Negritude; the harmony he represents is African unity.

Both the creative and unifying aspects of Kaya-Magan are expressed in his androgynous nature which carries cosmological implications. Eliade describes the character of the androgyn in creation myths as follows:

But the phenomenon of divine androgyny is very complex; it signifies more than the coexistence—or rather coalescence—of the sexes in the divine being. Androgyny is an archaic and universal formula for the expression of wholeness, the co-existence of the contraries, coincidencia oppositorum. More than a state of sexual completeness and autarchy, androgyny symbolizes the perfection of a primordial, non-conditioned state. It is for this reason that androgyny is not attributed to supreme Beings only. Cosmic Giants, or mythical ancestors of humanity are also androgynous. Adam, for example, was regarded as an androgyn. . . . A mythical ancestor symbolizes the commencement of a new mode of existence; and every beginning is made in the wholeness of being.22

In previous descriptions of the new era, Senghor has used the image of a primordial couple: in "Épitres à la Princesse," for example, the African envoy says to his European Princess: "Retiens ce message Princesse, nous serons le Ciel et la Terre" (p. 144). Kaya-Magan, however, draws his effectiveness as a symbol of regeneration rather from his integral nature.

As a creator, he is depicted as a Cosmic Giant such as Eliade describes, the Ancestor from which the entire race has sprung and who provides it with continual nourishment:

KAYA-MAGAN je suis! la personne première
Roi de la nuit noire de la nuit d'argent, Roi de la nuit de verre.
Paisez mes antilopes à l'abri des lions, distants au charme de ma voix.
Le ravissement de vous émaillant les plaines du silence!
Vous voici matidiennes mes fleurs mes étoiles, vous voici à la joie de mon festin.
Donc paisez mes mamelles d'abondance, et je ne mange pas qui suis source de joie,
Paisez mes seins forts d'homme, l'herbe de lait qui luit sur ma poitrine. (pp. 103-104)

There is no question, however, about the masculinity of the androgyne, and Eliade assures us that "androgyne extends even to divinities who are pro-eminently masculine, or feminine." 23 The personifications of Africa are usually, in Senghor's poetry, feminine, as in "Congo." The use of the first person pronoun and the masculine character of Kaya-Magan give us reason to suspect that the poet identifies himself with this figure and in the creative and unifying role which he attributes to it.

The wholeness or unifying aspect of "Le Kaya-Magan" is represented by the convergence of opposites:

Je dis KAYA-MAGAN je suis! Roi de la lune, j'unis la nuit et le jour
Je suis Prince du Nord du Sud, du Soleil-levant Prince du Soleil-couchant
La plaine ouverte à mille ruts, la matrice où se fondent les métaux précieux. (pp. 104-105)

It is also shown by the diversity of races who are joined in his being: "les blancs du Septentrion," "les nègres du Midi d'un bleu si doux," and "les rouges du Ponant."

In the last lines of the poem, the voice of Kaya-Magan identifies him with the rythme of Africa and with the future of the continent:

Car je suis les deux battants de la porte, rythme binaire de l'espace, et le troisième temps
Car je suis le mouvement du tam-tam, force de l'Afrique future.
Dormez faons de mon flanc sous mon croissant de lune. (p. 105).

In seeking to express the coming of change for Africa, Senghor has reached back to the myths of origin and described it as a new beginning. His imitation of stories of creation in order to describe the new era, whether in the myth of the androgyne or that of the primordial couple, illustrates the equation of the
new order with the Eden of Beginnings and a cosmological rebirth.

In the examination of *Ethiopiques*, we have found the repeated occurrence of the death-rebirth pattern often related to the rite of passage. On a personal level, as it appeared in the earlier poem, "Chant de l'initié," the theme translates into symbols of the poet's own identity struggle and his reawakened confidence in his African heritage. It is repeated in the context of other experiences, and, while never completely separated from the individual, is applied to the crisis of emerging Africa. Repeatedly, the image of the childhood paradise is recalled as a sign of inspiration and a promise of a new beginning.

**The Theme of Rebirth in Nocturnes**

The same elements of regeneration appear in the "Élégies," published in the collection entitled *Nocturnes* (1961), thematically related therefore to *Ethiopiques*. There are, however, significant differences in the mood and form of the later poems which require that they be treated separately. The poems of *Ethiopiques*, characterized by their images, are dawn or spring poems; their tone is marked by the elation typical of Beginnings. Almost invariably, the obstacles are overcome and the poems end on a note of triumph and hope. As we have suggested, this pattern may to a large extent be attributed to the repeated political achievement of Léopold Sédar Senghor during the period preceding the publication of *Ethiopiques*.

By contrast the "Élégies" are marked by images of midday and summer. There is less tendency on the part of the poet to hide himself behind allegory; he reveals rather the human side of the political leader and statesman, his fatigue, and his responsibilities. The "Élégies" are meditations and, in general, lack the closed form and the sense of completion which was continually repeated in *Ethiopiques*. One no longer has the sense of the successfully completed task: the problem remains when the poem
is finished. In spite of the absence of that sonorous note of triumph, however, the poet still contrives to end each piece with hope and an optimistic outlook for the future.

The Political Background

To some extent, this change in attitude may be attributed to a more realistic awareness of the problems facing the statesman. Certainly, a contributing factor must have been the changing temper of Senghor's political role. While the movement toward independence was continuing to accelerate, the rapidity of its progress and the way in which it was to be achieved proved a persistent source of difficulty and frustration for the Senegalese representative.

As we have previously attempted to show, Senghor's vision of the future of French West Africa was predicated upon strong ties with France and federal unity among the individual African nations. At the conference of the P.R.A. at Cotonou in 1958, he found his desire for retaining ties with France opposed by the vast majority of his fellow delegates; the mood of the convention proclaimed liberation as the goal and without condition. The event ended as a personal defeat for Senghor. The period from 1958 to 1959 also saw the drafting of a new constitution, one which would redefine the relationship between France and her colonies; it was an issue of utmost importance to Senghor that the document offer an alternative to outright secession. Being satisfied on this point, Senghor helped to win acceptance of the proposed constitution in Senegal and moved to join the French Community. His fears of balkanization of French West Africa, however, were not without foundation, and his efforts to promote federation—especially the short-lived Federation of Mali—were ill-fated from the beginning. While the year 1960 brought nationhood and independence to Senegal, with Léopold Sédar Senghor as its first president, his two greatest fears were all to certain
realities: premature independence and a disunified Africa.

"Elégie de Minuit": The Theme Of Rebirth And The Poet

The first of the "Elégies" reflects, more than the others, the tribulations of this period and their effect on the poet's state of mind. In his depression, he turns from the treatment of symbolic death to the contemplation of his own physical death whose horrors are diminished only when the poet discovers there a solution to his quest for the lost paradise of his childhood.

The poem begins with an image of light, but unlike the symbol of hope which we have seen so frequently, it is an artificial light whose glare is painful to the poet:

Été splendide Été, qui nourris le Poète du lait de ta lumière
Koi qui puissais comme blé de Printemps, qui m'envirais
de la verveur de l'eau, du ruisseauvert vert dans l'or
du Temps
Ah! plus ne peux supporter ta lumière, ta lumière des lampes, ta lumière atomique qui désintègre tout mon être
Plus ne peux supporter la lumière de minuit... (p. 198)
The harsh light of the present contrasts with the soft light of childhood, the real world in contrast with the ideal, and denotes the man's disillusionment and depression.

The poet's insomnia leads to thoughts of suicide:

Contre le désespoir Seigneur, j'ai besoin de toutes mes forces
---Douceur du poignard en plein cœur, jusqu'à la garde
Comme un records. Je ne suis pas sûr de mourir.
Et si c'était cela l'Enfer, l'absence de sommeil ce désert du Poète
Cette douleur de vivre, ce mourir de ne pas mourir
L'angoisse des ténèbres, cette passion de mort et de lumière
Comme les phalènes la nuit sur les lampes-tempêtes, dans
l'horrible pourrissement des forêts vierges. (p. 199)

He fears, however, that death may be only a reflection of his worst conscious anxieties. The image of the desert and the forest are both familiar from the ordeal of the initiate in "Chant de l'initié."
In desperation, he turns in prayer to the God of both light and shadow and asks to be reborn to the childhood paradise:

Toi seigneur du Cosmos, fais que je repose sous Joal-l'Om-breuse
Que je renaissie au Royaume d'enfance bruissant de rêves
Que je sois le berger de ma bergère par les tannes de Dyilôr
Où fleurissent les Morts
Que je clémente en applaudissements quand entrent dans le cercle Têning-Ndyaré et Tyagoum-Ndyaré
Que je danse comme l'Athlète au tantan des Morts de l'année. (p. 200)

For the poet, the lost kingdom of childhood can always be won again, hopefully in life, but, if not, in the world of the Dead or in some blue village of the after-life. This variation of the theme of rebirth, inspired apparently by the poet's state of mind, is an uncharacteristic solution, for he has normally sought his lost paradise in the love of a woman or in the rebuilding of Africa.

"Elégie des circoncis"
The Theme Of Rebirth And The Nation

The concept of rebirth appears in "Elégie des circoncis" depicted again as a rite of passage. The childhood paradise provides a model for the emerging nation, for Senghor compares his role with respect to Senegal to that of the Master of Initiates; his own poems are equated with the initiation chants, and attention is centered on the poem itself, its creation and its function.

The voice is unmistakably that of the poet, as he recalls again the memories of childhood:

Nuit d'enfance, Nuit bleue Nuit blonde ô Lune!
Combien de fois t'ai-je invoquée ô Nuit! pleurant au bord des routes
Au bord des douleurs de mon âge d'homme? Solitude!
et c'est les dunes alentour. (p. 200)

Night, modified by the adjective "blue" and the soft moonlight, becomes equated here with childhood. The poet's longing is touched with sadness.

The word "night" evokes the description of an initiation ceremony with images similar to that of "Chant de l'initiate":

"Or c'était nuit d'enfance extrême, dense comme la poix. La peur courbait les dos sous les rugissements des lions / Courbait les hautes herbes le silence sournois de cette nuit" (p. 201).
The term "enfance extrême" can only mean the end of childhood; the initiate's fear is heightened by the unseen presence of the totem animal, and the expectation of death followed by a new birth repeats the ritual symbolism of the initiation mystery:
"... Je portais la main à mon cou, comme la vierge qui frissonne à l'horreur de la mort. / Il me fallait mourir à la beauté du chant toutes choses dérivent au fil de la mort" (p. 201). The ordeal ends again at sunrise.

These lines are written in the first person singular and contain a summation of images with which we are already familiar. Published first in 1958, over ten years after the appearance of "Chant de l'initié," it describes the experience in the past tense and situates it at the outer limit of the childhood mythology. The next stanza is written in the first person plural and denotes a sense of community. It describes, in the present tense, the dance of the initiates, emphasizing the importance of the rhythm and the chants:

Le tam-tam labour woi! le silence sacré. Dansons, le chant fouette le sang
Le rythme chasse cette angoisse qui nous tient à la gorge.
La vie tient la mort à distance. (p. 201)

Again the stanza closes at sunrise: "Surfisse le Soleil de la mer des ténèbres / Sang! Les flots son couleur d'aurore" (p. 201).

The metaphor depicts emerging Africa in a coming-of-age ceremony. The poet even relates himself to the Master of Initiates:

Maître des Initiés, j'ai besoin je le sais de ton savoir pour percer le chiffre des choses
Prendre connaissance de mes fonctions de père et de l'amarrage
Mesurer exactement le champ de mes charges, répartir la moisson sans oublier un ouvrier ni orphelin. (p. 202)

Here he is employing not only the symbolism of rebirth, as it was
used repeatedly in *Éthiopiques*, but the instructions, function of the initiation rite as well. This new emphasis is typical of the realism in the "Élégies," evidence of an awareness of the problems to be resolved and a certain disillusionment. As in "Élégie de Minuit," the poet can, in the bright light, see all too clearly the outline of things:

Mais Dieu, tant de fois ai-je lamenté—combien de fois?
—les nuits d’enfance transparents.
Midi-le-Mâle est l’heure des Esprits, où toute forme se dénoue de sa chair
Comme les arbres en Europe sous le soleil d’hiver.
Voilà, les os sont abstraits, ils ne se prêtent qu’aux calculs de la règle du corps du sextant. (pp. 201-202)

The light of noon, an indication perhaps of the poet’s own maturity, not only clarifies illusions but it also has a weakening effect:
"Le poème se fane au soleil de midi, il se nourrit de la rosée du soir / Et rythme le tam-tam le battement de la sève sous le parfum des fruits mûrs" (p. 202). The poem is strengthened by the rhythms of the night, the rhythms of Negritude.

The poem is important in that, like the chant of the initiate, it is inspiration: "Le chant n’est pas une charme, il nourrit les têtes laineuses de mon troupeau" (p. 202). The function of the chant in the initiation ceremony is indeed more than form; it is a part of the initiate’s instruction, as Senghor indicates in discussing the initiation ceremony: "Il y est question d’une initiation aux mythes cosmogoniques, aux légendes et coutumes de la tribu; plus précisément, d’une connaissance, par le poème, le chant, le drame, la danse masquée, au rythme primordial du tam-tam." 24

Also originating in African thought is the concept of the poem as power based on the creative force of the Word:

La Parole nous apparaît comme l’instrument majeur de la pensée, de l’émotion et de l’action. Pas de pensée ni d’émotion sans image verbale, pas d’acte libre sans projet pensé. Et le fait est encore plus vrai chez des
The poem then is not only prophecy, but it is the promise of fulfillment: "Le poème est oiseau-serpent, les noces de l'ombre et de la lumière à l'aube / Il monte Phénix! il chante les ailes déployées, sur le carnage des paroles" (p. 202).

"Élégie des Eaux": The Universal Rebirth

This power granted to the word provides the movement for "Élégie des Eaux," where, by virtue of his poetic vocation, the poet himself claims the ability to call forth the waters which will restore life to the land, flaming under the wrath of God. The poem begins with a contrast between the childhood Eden and the present:

Été toi toi encore Été, Été du Royaume d'Enfance
Eden des matins trempés d'aube et splendeur des midis,
comme le vol de l'aigle étales.
Été de silence aujourd'hui, si lourd de courroux sous le regard du Dieu jaloux
Te voilà sur notre destin, durement inscrit au cadran du siècle.
Les villes orgueilleuses gisent et geignent sous un ciel sans espoir
Transpercées de poisons d'éclairs, les fleuves n'ont plus source ni ressource. (pp. 206-207)

The time again is summer, utilized for its heat and aridity. Perhaps the writer has in mind the end of the dry season in Senegal, when the farmer anxiously awaits the coming of the first rains on which the crops depend.

The fire referred to in the poem is not the bush fire of the prudent land owner, it is the spontaneous fire caused by lightning, by the hand of God himself, and his anger encompasses the globe:
Feu! Feu! murs ardents de Chicago, Feu! Feu! murs ardents de Sodom
Feu sur Moscou. Dieu est égal pour les peuples sans dieu,
qui ne mâchent pas la Parole (p. 207)
The implication of divine retribution is strengthened by the reference to the biblical city destroyed for its wickedness by fire from heaven. The image recalls several poems in Hosties Noires which attributed the war to punishment from God.
To quench the flames, the poet calls forth the waters of the earth:
Je vous invoque, Baux du Troisième Jour
Baux murmures des sources, eaux si pures des altitudes,
neiges! eaux des torrents et des cascades
Baux justes, mais vous Eaux de miséricorde, je vous invoque d'un cri rythmé et sans cédit (p. 207)
Significant are the qualities assigned to the water: justice, mercy, and, above all, purity. Even the impure waters are rendered pure under the magic of the poet's voice. The function of the water is not merely to put out the flames, but to purify as well and to prepare a new birth, referred to by images of dawn and the rite of circumcision: 
"Que la nuit se résolve en son contraire,
que la mort renaissan Vie, comme un diamant d'aurore / Comme le Circoncis quand, dévoilée la nuit, se lève le Male, Soleil!" (p. 208).
The poet's prayer is heard, and power is assigned to his poem:
Vous m'avez accordé puissance de parole en votre justice inégalé
Seigneur, entendez bien ma voix. PLEUVE! il pleut
Et vous avez ouvert de votre bras de foudre les cataractes du pardon. (p. 208)
The capitalized imperative takes on magic attributes. Rain falls throughout the world in a global inundation, and the poem concludes: 
"Et renaît la Vie couleur de présence" (p. 208). The last line refers again to the new birth. It is not merely a personal rebirth nor even the emergence of a people, but the complete
renaissance of civilization such as Senghor envisions in his concept of Negritude. The extension of the symbol serves to illustrate the cosmological significance implied in the rite of passage and in the ritual of rebirth which characterizes the totality of Senghor's works. This thematic continuity can be found to have its origins in the poet's search for the lost paradise of his childhood and his efforts to restore it in spite of the inevitable barrier of Time, for the rebirth in itself signifies a return to the pure state of beginnings.

We have, therefore, in this chapter, established the repeated occurrence of the theme of rebirth in *Ethiopiques* and *Nocturnes*. Furthermore, we have shown a connection between the theme of rebirth, as it appears in Senghor's poetry, and the universal myth of lost paradise. On one level, it is an expression of the poet's identity crisis, of his "return to sources," which, in *Chants d'ombre*, took the form of a paternal encounter and, consequently, of the initiation rite which Campbell defines as characteristic of the hero's experience. On a more fundamental level, the rebirth symbolism is, according to Eliade, a universal ritual expression of man's desire to return to the primordial era, to erase Time and to reclaim his lost purity. Thus, whether it is effected on a personal, national, or cosmic plane, the rebirth motif in Senghor's poetry can be considered an expression of his longing for the paradise defined by his personal myth pattern.
CONCLUSION

Élégie des Alizés And The Myth Of The Eternal Return
Éthiopiques and Nocturnes both bear the marks of the
birth trauma. It is only in Élégie des Alizés, a poem published
in the years following nationhood, that the poet expresses the
feeling that the lost paradise has truly been restore. This
later work therefore provides a suitable conclusion for our
study of Senghor's search for the childhood Eden.

In the period between the publication of Nocturnes (1961)
and the formal publication of Élégie des Alizés (1969), Léopold
Sédar Senghor was occupied with the problems of constructing a new
nation. In his efforts, the philosophy of Negritude, which had been
a weapon in the struggle for nationhood, was further put to use
as a cornerstone of the president's policy in the process of poli-
tical decision-making, both at home and in international affairs.

The subject of Negritude in Senegalese politics is beyond the scope
of this study but has received extensive attention in Markowitz's
Léopold Sédar Senghor and the Politics of Negritude. For our
purposes, however, it is sufficient to note a few examples illustrat-
ing Senghor's philosophy in action. In the structure of the
government, he has, for instance, allowed for the functioning
of the "palabre," a traditional deliberative procedure which
Senghor considers indicative of the African's sense of equality
and dignity.1 He has stressed repeatedly that the socialist system
adopted in Senegal and in other African countries draws its
effectiveness from the essentially communal nature of African
society, and that it is a uniquely African brand of socialism:
"Les hommes d'État de l'Afrique noire, comme des Antilles et
de l'Amérique latine, ont opté, dans leur majorité, pour un État
socialiste, je ne dis pas communiste. J'ai essayé de montrer . . .
que la Civilisation nègre-africaine est une civilisation col-

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lectiviste et communaute: socialiste. Miloet and Soret also note the function of the Negritude ideals in external affairs:

Mais c'est peut-être dans la politique extérieure de son pays, que, politiquement, il a le mieux concrétisé l'esprit de la négritude rectifiée ainsi qu'il la nomme dans l'essai sur Teilhard de Chardin. Notamment dans l'attention apportée à la réalisation du panafrikanisme, comme dans la recherche constante d'une coopération internationale, dont la francophonie est l'un des aspects.

Negritude has in this way been transformed from an abstract philosophy of cultural identity to a working model for an actual society. The life of Léopold Sédar Senghor has therefore followed with exactitude the pattern of the heroic adventure as defined by Campbell, for in the individual's discovery of his own identity, in his return to the mystic center of the universe, he has brought back the singular wisdom with which to lead his people: "the hero blessed by the father returns to represent the father." Since Negritude is, in Senghor's mind, a function of the "Royaume d'enfance," the new nation also appears as a materialization of the lost paradise. Has the poet's quest then been fulfilled and what can be expected from the later poem?

In certain aspects, Elégie des Alizés resembles the previous "Elégies." There are distinct similarities of style and of tone: we continue to be aware of the poet as an individual and of the heavy burden of responsibilities which weighs on him. There is, however, in Elégie des Alizés, a complete structural pattern somewhat different from preceding poems in that it is not composed of a crisis and resolution, but a repetition of the seasonal cycle, recurring indefinitely. While each season brings its various challenges, the poet, too, appears to be caught up in the rhythm of nature and to have found harmony within that rhythm. The Alizés, the trade-winds, are associated with images which have previously been identified with the childhood paradise, but this new metaphor is enhanced by its cyclic behavior and its consequent ability to return year after year to comfort and inspire the poet.
As the understanding of the imagery in this poem requires some background knowledge of Senegal's climate, let us keep in mind the following outline prepared by David P. Gamble in his study of Senegambia:

Feb.–May: The hot season. No rain. A hot east wind blowing, drying the soil, and withering the vegetation.

June: First rains. Characterized by tornadoes due to the meeting of the monsoons, and the east wind, causing whirlwinds and storms. Considerable dust storms may be raised before the rain, which often comes in short, violent thunderstorms.

July–Sept.: The rainy season

October: End of the rains. Very humid conditions. Rains terminate with further violent storms.

Nov.–Jan.: The temperature falls gradually. The north wind begins to blow, while a dry sea breeze is felt in the coastal zone. Sometimes high clouds give little rain. The sky becomes dull and hazy.5

The poem begins in the month of July, and the first stanza characterizes the poet as leader and also metaphorically as pastor, one whose living depends upon the cycles of nature: "Ce Juillet, cinq ans de silence, depuis les trompettes d'argent. / Il fallait bien conduire le troupeau par tams et harmattan. Car la liberté est désert." 6 These initial lines also introduce the Alizés and the poet's purpose: "Je chanterai le mufle humide et robe blanche et croissant d'or de ma génisse / À Toussaint d'Enfance, chanterai le retour des Alizés" (Élégie, p. 9). The question of a return prepares by implication the theme of absence which recurs in the poem.

Gamble describes the period immediately preceding the rainy season as "characterized by tornadoes due to the meeting of the monsoons and east winds." The image of the tornado in Senghor's poem becomes a reflection of his personal anxieties:
Et point de sommeil, ô tornade! lorsque tout dort à l'abri des éclairs
Bercé par la houle et le vent, je hurle hulule, gecko face reverse
Et comme lion nocturne, sur les hautes terrasses tristes
Je tourne autour de quelle absence? . . . (Élégie, p. 11)
The poet is further disturbed by the absence of a loved one, the themes of love and separation appearing together as they do so often in Seinghor's poetry:

Absente absente, toi seule absente ma Présence ma Sopé
Toi, laisse de sable et de tendresse, rivière de délices
Et collines du Nord, collines bleues du rêve cette nuit.
(Élégie, p. 11)
The poem bears the dedication: "à Colette, ma femme." It therefore appears likely that she is the woman associated here with the Alizés.

The third stanza describes the rainy season, not a blessed rain as in "Élégie des Baux," but an excess of water which threatens to break the dams:

Il pleut à cataractes sur Dakar sur les pylônes du Cap-Vert:
je suis gorgé d'eau fade comme papaye d'hivernage.
La crue est annoncée aux Échelles de Bakel: rouge, toutes digues tendues et les calculs des ingénieurs.
Je suis gorgé d'eau trouble, qui inonde mon maestrichtien.
(Élégie, p. 13)

In his difficulties, the poet remembers his mother and the loves of other years, the two expressly paired in this instance in their mutual role of comforter.

The end of October brings the expectation of the trade-winds: "Alizés de l'enfance mon enfance, ah! qu'arrive Octobre à sa fin, quand bombent les tombes les cimetières" (Élégie, p. 15). Their first appearance is symbolically the day before All Saints' Day; they are associated with the benificent Dead, the Ancestors who are the symbol of the poet's heritage:

Et puis un jour, était-ce veille de Toussaint? à midi les premières hirondelles
Comme des Morts propices, les premiers vents alizés caressent
- les collines des Mamelles
Dédaignant la piste des longs courriers, les premiers Alizés.  
(Elégie, p. 15)

They disappear only to return again in the company of Isabelle and Soudeïna; in spite of their link with the childhood paradise the Alizés are also characterized by their ability to blend the diverse aspects of the poet's personality, a symbol of the integrated self. The European and African influences represented by the two allegorical figures:  "Un matin donc, arrivaient en courant Isabelle la belle aux yeux de transparence bleu, Soukeïna de soie noire, sourire de soleil sur les lèvres de mer! / Mes amis oh! voici les Alizés, les vrais Alizés sur leurs ailes, mer et ciel" (Elégie, pp. 15-16).

In an unfinished edition of this poem published as a postface for Léopold Sédar Senghor: L'Africain by Hubert de Lusse, Senghor terminated the work at this point with the arrival of the Alizés. De Lusse commented on the poem at that time:

Mais, comme les Alizés, ce poème nous apporte aussi la fraîcheur d'un espoir.

L'heure n'est plus à la nostalgie d'un passé si beau fut-il! L'heure est encore moins au découragement d'un présent difficile, dans la forêt vierge pourrissante et ses lianes inextricables.

L'heure est à la certitude de lendemains merveilleux, musique des machines et concorde des coeurs! L'heure est au chant, à la Poésie. 7

The change of perspective which he notes here is even more clearly defined in the light of the further development of the poem.

The poet revels in the spell of the trade-winds but remembers the duty which he has toward his people:

Ma négritude n'est sommeil de la race mais soleil de l'âme, ma négritude est truelle à la main, est lance au poing
Récade... . . . (Elégie, p. 17)

Again we have the scepter symbol of the father and the awareness of the mission.

Night is the time for work and preparation, but in his task the poet is comforted by the Alizés:
Nuit allégée étonnante Nuit joyeuse, Nuit qui me rendez à
la caresse de mon enfance
Nuit, Nuit, tu as été en les nuits sombres l'Amie qui cause
avec l'Ami et peuple l'insomnie
L'Amie qui trouve la solution, qui s'incline et console.
Nuit amie en ces nuits, je dis ma Blonde qui console,
soutiens le combatant à plus bas de la pente
O Nuit ma Nuit et Nuit non nuit! . . . (Elégie, p. 20)

The Alizés become linked with another emblem of the poet's Negritude,
the Night.

In this association, they become another source of inspiration
against the rigors of nature: "Nuit Alizés du Royaume d'Enfance,
qui chantiez à Joal . . . J'ai besoin de vos palmes pour continuer
mon chant, refroidir ma poitrine la gorge" (Elégie, p. 21). The
east wind, the Harmattan, has arrived and with it, the dry season:

Ecoutez regardez! Alizés se sont tus, s'est levé l'Harmattan
Et la dent du désert sur le pays, et la soif des cailloux et
des khakhams
Les marines qui rompent lèvres qui séchent, et la peau
pleine de crevasses comme le souvenir des sources. (Elégie, p. 21)

The Harmattan is defeated by the Alizés which the poet rediscovers
in the eyes of the woman:

Et s'en allait soudain l'Harmattan sous la pression de nos
muscles
Et soudain sur la terrasse de Popenguine, tu retournais vers
moi tes yeux de mer
Et rechantaient les Alizés à la floraison de nos joies.

(Elégie, p. 22)

The woman again becomes a reflection of the landscape.

With the arrival of Spring, the cycle is complete, and both
man and nature celebrate the renewal:

Partout l'odeur du Printemps, et pas une goutte d'eau, dans
l'alizé pascal
L'odeur du Printemps vert blanc, or, odeur de l'albizia-zyga
Je dis odeur de citron, et l'on y a embaumé les coeurs les
passions.
Et je salue leur surréction dans l'alizé de l'allégresse
Que meure le vieux nègre et vive le Nègre nouveau!

(Elégie, p. 26)

The end of the cycle is also a new beginning. The last two stanzas
of the poem repeat the cycle; the woman leaves, and the tornadoes
reappear. The poet is left with only the memory of her eyes which remind him of the gentle winds: "Mais chante sur mon absence tes yeux de brise alizés, et que l'Absente soit présence" (Elégie, p. 26). He looks forward to her return and imagines the end of the rainy season in the future tense of hope and expectation:

Les dernières tornades, Octobre ses Morts ses cortèges—
c'est mon anniversaire
La hantise des Masques, minuit! et il faut construire sous
la rosée de l'aube.
Nous aurons moissonné parmi la pluie des mangues
Avant la rentrée, moissonné les cris neufs des enfants parmi
les frondes
Offert au Dieu les prépuces de l'âge, mangé le miel hâtif
Et moi, tes yeux de miel longuement bu, pesé brut le poids
de l'athlète
En attendant, parmi les vents, légères les ailes des Alizés
L'esprit ouvert comme une voile, mobile comme une palme
Fervente comme une flamme. (Elégie, p. 27)

The Alizés are linked in the poem with Woman, the Night, and the Dead—a wide range of images previously associated with the childhood paradise and with the poet's Negritude. The quality which sets the trade-winds apart, however is their recurrent nature; as an element of the seasonal cycle, they carry the promise of eternal return.

In *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, Mircea Eliade contends that in traditional civilizations there is constant imitation of the archetypes which he interprets as an attempt to abolish time and to return to the primordial era. This is accomplished either by the repetition of the paradigmatic gestures and periodic ceremonies or through a single regeneration anticipated in the future. Throughout the first works of Senghor, there is a conscious attempt to create a myth with the implications of the second method: the poet continually looks forward to the restoration of the "Royaume d'enfance," symbolized by dawn and spring. In this last poem, however, the poet perceives time as cyclic rather than linear with the return of the Alizés being
a point of special focus.

**Conclusion**

In summarizing the progress of this study, let us first restate our ultimate intent: to show the ramifications of the myth of lost paradise in Senghor's poetry. To do this, we began, in Chapter I, by demonstrating an analogy between the poet's childhood, as it is presented in his poems, and the universal myth of paradise. This relationship is present even in the physical description of the "Royaume d'enfance" which is depicted, at one point, as the biblical Garden of Eden. This period is always considered as beyond Time or before Time and is associated with purity and innocence. Because he identifies his childhood with traditional Africa and consequently with the virtues of Negritude, Senghor finds in the idealized memory of his early years a model for social behavior such as exists the world over in traditional societies whose actions are prescribed by the acts of gods or ancestors in the primordial era. Because of the psychological interpretation of the universal myth of lost paradise as a longing for the womb or the simpler time of childhood, it is not surprising that the poet's portrayal of his own Eden carries with it a number of maternal connotations. These attributes which were first discussed with respect to *Chants d'ombre*, Senghor's first collection of poetry, and which link his vision of childhood to the paradise myth have continued to be indicated and examined as they have occurred throughout the remaining poems.

The principle focus of our study, beyond the first collection, has been the poet's efforts to regain the paradise of his youth, the outline of this quest having been established in the last two poems of *Chants d'ombre*. Here, the poet, whose life in Europe is presented as an exile from paradise, seeks to return across Space and Time to that paradise. Because his search
takes on the characteristics of a hero's journey, both in form and in implication, we have depended greatly on Campbell's work *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* in our analysis of these poems, and our conclusion is that they contain the evidence of an identity crisis and that the poet's return to paradise can be interpreted as his reconciliation with his racial heritage. His journey results in the realization that the actual state of paradise can never be regained, and his quest is henceforth realistically redirected into two acceptable adult objectives: the love of a woman and the restoration of Africa's dignity, both of which represent a sublimation of the poet's search for the lost paradise of his personal myth.

Our second chapter groups together Senghor's love poems in order to examine his portrayal of woman and her association with the myth of lost paradise. We enumerated certain general characteristics of the Senghorian woman and showed her to be, in many instances, an ideal symbol of Negritude. Psychologically, she, like the images of childhood, manifests maternal attributes, and, physically, she is depicted in terms of the landscape, often subordinating her identity as a person to her identification with her setting. She is associated with the supernatural and often considered as timeless and unchangeable. The poet praises her innocence and purity. The relationship is strengthened by the structure of the individual love cycles: in "Chants pour Signare," the predominance of the quest theme echoes the poet's search for paradise in *Chants d'ombre*; in "Épitres à la Princesse," we see a glimpse of the racial harmony of the future which is contained in Senghor's concept of Negritude.

Chapters III and IV centered on the themes of death and rebirth which characterize much of Senghor's works. This pattern is directly related to the search for paradise, for, as Mircea Eliade explains so fully in his book *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*, the persistence of symbolic death and rebirth in ritual can be interpreted as man's effort to abolish Time and to return to the pure state of the primordial era. The examination of
Hosties Noires demonstrated how Senghor, acting as the voice of the people, interpreted the agony of World War II as a sacrifice preparing the new political era. In discussing *Ethiopiques* and *Nocturnes*, we discussed the poet's frequent use of the theme of rebirth depicted through the images and structure of an initiation rite with its accompanying rebirth symbolism. This theme, as we indicated, appears both in conjunction with the poet's personal experiences and with the emergence of new Africa.

Throughout the first four collections, the poet views the restoration of paradise, when it is associated with the revival of African culture, as a possible period of future regeneration. His concept of time is linear, with the lost paradise of childhood at the Beginning and its eventual restoration at the opposite pole of Time. With nationhood, however, Senghor was able to see the realization of his dreams for a new Africa. In *Élégie des Alizés*, a major poem published after independence, it is no wonder that we find a new concept of time, a cyclical concept based on the eternal return of paradise.

We have, then, in the course of this study, demonstrated the presence of a universal myth pattern as an essential component of Senghor's poetic work. Previous emphasis on the function of the poems as an illustration of the concept of Negritude have already established the poet's contemporaneity. The result of this analysis is to show the universal appeal of Senghor's poetry in as much as the quest for lost paradise is a familiar theme to all men.
FOOTNOTES

INTRODUCTION


5. Mircea Eliade, Myths, Dreams, and Mysteries, p. 70.

CHAPTER I

1. Joal, founded in the 16th century by the Portuguese, later came under French Protection and was, at the time of Senghor's birth, part of French West Africa.


3. Léopold Sédar Senghor, *Poèmes*, pp. 30-31. All further quotations from Senghor's poems will be taken from this edition unless otherwise stated and will be referred to only by page numbers given in the text.


10. Jean Rous, p. 16.


18. Léopold Sédar Senghor, "Comme l'homme noir apporte," Liberté I, p. 22. Further references to this article will be indicated by page number in the text accompanies by the abbreviation "N.H."

19. While Senghor does not precisely define the term "black" biologically, he seems to indicate those peoples originating in sub-Saharan Africa.


23. Marcien Towa, p. 69.


32. Joseph Campbell, p. 136


34. Mircea Eliade, Myths, Dreams and Mysteries, pp. 59-60.
CHAPTER II


5. Léopold Sédar Senghor, "Ce que l'homme noir apporte," Liberté I, p. 36.


8. Léopold Sédar Senghor quoted in Jean Rous, p. 96. It is interesting to note the influence of Teilhard de Chardin in the development of Senghor's thought, especially in what Senghor terms "rectified Negritude." Certainly Teilhard's concept of a panhuman convergence is compatible with Senghor's own insistence on a Universal Civilization. Equally significant is Teilhard's notion of differentiation which permits Senghor to retain his theory of a racial personality as an attribute of that convergence.
CHAPTER III


2. Marcien Towa, p. 49.

3. The source for this image is Isaiah 6, the entire chapter indicating an interesting parallel between the role of the poet and that of the prophet.


CHAPTER IV


2. Léopold Sédar Senghor's comments in a private conversation Milcent and Sordet, pp. 85-86.


4. Léopold Sédar Senghor, from a speech to the National Assembly, Sept. 18, 1946, quoted in Milcent and Sordet, p. 97.

5. Michael Crowder referred to in Milcent and Sordet, p. 117.


23. Mircea Eliade, Myths, Dreams and Mysterries, p. 175.


CONCLUSION

1. Léopold Sédar Senghor, "Ce que l'homme noir apporte," Liberté I, p. 32.


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