

---

# The Hail-Mary Pass of the Wretched of Emigration in Fatou Diome's *The Belly of the Atlantic*

Abib Sene

Department of Anglophone Studies, Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences, Cheikh Anta Diop University, Dakar, Senegal

**Email address:**

senabb2@yahoo.fr

**To cite this article:**

Abib Sene. The Hail-Mary Pass of the Wretched of Emigration in Fatou Diome's *The Belly of the Atlantic*. *International Journal of Literature and Arts*. Vol. 6, No. 1, 2018, pp. 7-13. doi: 10.11648/j.ijla.20180601.12

**Received:** January 16, 2018; **Accepted:** February 3, 2018; **Published:** April 10, 2018

---

**Abstract:** Mankind who has been looking forward finding back his *Lost Paradise*, has defined his life into an endless quest. A quest which has given ground to a topic of reflection among many African writers such as Fatou Diome, who in *The Belly of the Atlantic*, brings on surface the different aspects of African emigration in European countries. Thus, in this article, we drive, on the one hand, at exposing the misleading and *impaired* hope that attracts and motivates African young people to run away from their "miserable lives" to cross the Mediterranean and Atlantic oceans and, on the other hand, at highlighting the local solutions that do exist to stop such a social and topical phenomenon.

**Keywords:** Poverty, Migration, Starvation, Hope, Disillusion

---

## 1. Introduction

In his perpetual quest for an outstanding *There-ness*, mankind, in various socio-political and economic contexts, moves in time and space. Indeed, from the time of the logographers of ancient Greece to that of our day, human beings have been observing a high interest attachment to the conception and the meaning of the notion of *There-ness*. Such a mind-set finds ground on the impossibility of being satisfied with a day-to-day life and the desire to escape from oneself, from a society that carries the burden of pathological myseries. Thus, African thinkers such as Aminata Sow Fall, Mariama Bâ, Ama Ata Aidoo, and Fatou Diome, have realistically, in their literary productions, examined the issue of migration in a continent gangrened by evils of chronic unemployment, absence of effective health systems, and erosion of endogenous moral values. With the aim of caressing and achieving the dream of a social success, African young people find solutions to economic and social constraints, which are theirs, in canoes of fortunes that defy the deadly waves of the Atlantic and the Mediterranean with a heart cry: *to paddle into Europe or die trying*.

In *The Belly of the Atlantic*, Fatou Diome, in a thick handwriting, exposes the dream of young Senegalese who move towards a *There-ness* they cannot reach without undergoing the logic of social trials. And this quest for a

"Promised land" is often accompanied by psychological transformations that put on surferce a universe of itineraries in conjunction with the choice of those who dream of the gated entryway, indeed. To this end, it will be useful to study, through the aforementioned novel, the congenital relations between migrations, societies and cultures. It will, as well, be appropriate to establish a link between the local and the global to get the feel for life of what determines the social and cultural mind-set, along with the imaginary structures that shape candidates' mentalities for emigration. The latter, who consider Africa to be a land of *Here-ness* and the West the world of *There-ness*, fend for, *by all means necessary*, a wedged apart life in a land ashen in death. We will, therefore, be grateful to focus on the socio-economic aspects that underpin migration projects among young Senegalese; and then to ponder over possibilities that offer significant growth opportunities to the African descent youth to overcome the tricks of Sioux that they put forward before embarking on a highly dangerous adventure.

## 2. In the Mirage Gear

*Lost Paradise*, *Promised Land* are terms generously used by the Senegalese youth to designate the West; this mirror in larks, which dedeans the background of reality in European countries, projects among the young people an image of a

boudoir of wealth and happiness. This image, suspended behind the curtains of a colonial heritage, highlights the role played by the French school in the formatting of the Senegalese elite. Indeed, the French language, which is the official medium of communication in many African countries, reminds and remains, in the novel, a measure of a so-called Hellenistic Civilization and, all the same, becomes a sign of social elevation. A good understanding and proficiency of it confers a particular social status, a power of ancestry over others who do not or cannot speak it. From this point of view, the image of Europe is grafted onto the alphabets of the Western languages taught in Africa to vitalize a way of life, a myriad of monuments, exotic musics, fat cities that awaken men and women who beat the drums of their dreams through these words: "*Barça mba Barzakh*". [1]

To cross the Mediterranean at any cost is the virtual idea that nourishes and justifies the young Senegalese's unique and own twist. In *The Belly of the Atlantic*, Fatou Diome sheds light on the stand of French-school in the seduction and attraction of the West over Niodior's school-children. The latter are "privileged" for having the opportunity to be in contact with a white civilization, and to have the prerogatives to penetrate the mystery of Western thoughts. Salie, one of the main characters, brings back a fagot of his memories about the village school. She recalls:

I owe him Descartes, I owe him Montesquieu, I owe him Victor Hugo, I owe him Molière, I owe him Balzac, I owe him Marx, I owe him Dostoevski, I owe him Hemingway, (...), I owe him Simone de Beauvoir, Marguerite Yourcenar, (...), because I pestered him endlessly, he gave me everything: letters, numbers, the keys to the world. (Diome 2006:40-41)

Through school, the mirage of Europe is embedded in the wending desire of young people to leave their native land. This myth of Europe is as well rooted in the *Modou Modou's* [2] ilkerday existence. The social reef life experienced by Yaltigué and the man from Barbès portrays them as emblematic characters and models who give strong impetus to a successful in-group mainstream. This country of the "Coca Cola, Miko ice" (Diome2006: 7) is the Eldorado, the crossroads of a network hub pegged to happiness and fullness. Madické, Salie's brother, is aware of that. He wants to go to France to cash in on his talent as a football player. To this end, he needs financial support from his sister. Like his icon, Maldini, Madické has the ambition to cross the lawns of mythical stadiums with the Senef (Senegalese football players in French clubs) and make a name in the golden pages of the world football register. His dream is shared by Garouwalé and his other comrades who read their destiny in a mirific future on the Western ground. Under their godasses, clings the unrelenting dream that gurgles the language of migration: To go! To go with these legs and turn them into merchandises at the price of gold. Thus "leaving becomes a Must" [3]; staying, a curse. And stories told by the man from Barbès only reinforce this mirage which goes crescendo among the young men of Niodior. Indeed, his social success, which bears the mark of the West, shapes the will of young

people and leads them to focus attention on the Atlantic. Barbès becomes the nodal point by which positive energies spring to shimmer, to the youth of the village, the brilliance of a possible glory in a foreign land. Besides, he tells them that in France

Everyone lives well. Nobody's poor, because even those with no work are paid a salary by the state: they call it benefit. You spend the day snoring in front of your TV, and you receive the same as one of our highest-paid engineers! (Diome 2006: 57)

This fairy-tale account of Barbès brings the youth of Niodior (a village name which also means who is constantly in wandering), to look at emigration as a lifetime adventure opportunity, a leitmotif endorsement for a people living rough. Europe is a lost paradise that maintains a relationship of causality with the Niodior's dwellers' dream of apnea. Everything that is good in the village bears the mark "Made in France". An idea illustrated by Madické's sister in these terms:

My brother was galloping towards his dreams, which centred more and more on France. He might have longed to go to Italy, but not a bit of it. The nation's sons who dine with the President play in France. Monsieur Ndétare, who was teaching him the language of success, had studied in France. The television he watched came from France, and its owner, the man from Barbès, a respectable, important man in the willage, was full of marvellous tales of his odyssey. (Diome 2006: 54)

These images of social success daily invade the Niodior island and trigger a sense of well-being that describes the West as a space of frisky happiness to explore. This cognitive competence acquired through Barbès' "fairy tales" legitimates a collective will which, with volubility, drinks in the words and images of the positive social sanction that all those who come from France seem to have undergone. The modality of will wards off the danger of the arachnid Mediterranean waves and portrays Barça, Paris, London, Munich as a telltale social code in which the *being* and the *will-be* intersect to fertilize a common standpoint for a common purpose.

"The absolutely-true appearance" [4] of Barbès' and Yaltigué's successes arouse an interpretative doctrine that expresses a movement towards the source: the "*There-ness*"; a place of renaissance and well-being. Barbès' concrete house, his beautiful wives and his good food are 'branded goods' highlighted "with a representative range [5] ", that speaks volumes about life on the other side of the Atlantic; a life the waves of this maritime boundary between the north and the south cannot blot out. This coveted happiness "is a path, a chance that is not proved, but found (...) which cannot be explained, but expressed by those who seek it". [6] Madické and his peers are on the quest for their San graal to make quickly fortune. Salie's brother rebuts his sister's arguments, thinking that wealth is stored up in the north. And to become rich, one needs to reach out, by all possible means. In Niodior, granaries are often empty and the ocean generosity has become a shell of what it used to be. Madické

tells his sister that young people in Niodior cannot but leave their nook to find a life of *farniente* in Europe. They cannot any longer stand to carry the weight of what could have been, keeping tightly rigid the barriers of what is considered to be real and realistic. Indeed, Salie is regarded, by her brother, as an emigrant who experiences a life cushioned by so much conveniences and who makes her entire family proud. The holidays she is used to spend in her homeland, and which are always moments of feast and joy, create "a spirit of emulation and play a catalytic role within the community [7]"

Not having the consent of his sister to go to France, Madické turns to the *marabouts* and other fetishists. Mystical forces are sorted to cross the myth of the West. He summons their prayers and uses their talisman as a focus to break opened the belly of the Atlantic and "crown the entire migration process with success.[7] Enticed of his dream, Salie's brother questions all his sister's ideas illustrated with specific examples. He begins studying French with Mr. Ndétare to facilitate his integration once in France. Madiké and his comrades remain determined to take the road that will lead them to the universe of abundance, indeed. In other respects, their dream is shared by thousands of young African people who live in a society in which "travel is associated (...) with a positive act because it is supposed to forge the personality and allow the one who leaves to acquire material and even immaterial goods." [8] Madické and his comrades are consumed by "the modern trend that conceives immigration as the only worthwhile social means of promotion". [9]

However, in addition to this mirage, this seductive illusion that defines Europe as the focus of all covetousness among the Senegalese youth in general, remain socio-economic difficulties pegged to the grounds of young people who drive at emigrating.

### 3. Social and Economic Mainsprings

"Senegal is ranked 156th out of 177 countries in 2008 by the Human Development Report of the United Nations)" [10]. It is one of the nations listed under the Highly Indebted Poor Countries with 33.4% of the population living below the national poverty line, and 17% living on less than US \$ 1 a day [10]. This touch-and-go situation of impoverishment does correctly justify emigration movements from Africa in general, and Senegal in particular.

In *The Belly of the Atlantic*, Fatou Diome exposes the Niodior inhabitants' miseries and tremors; for they nourish the ever-present dream of emigration they deem necessary to find their panacea. To run away by hook or by crook! To leak out towards *l'obese West facing a third rickety third world*" is the only way to comply with the will of their own. Madické and his friends often signify their determination, with might and main, to go and accumulate capital in Europe before returning to spread out in this island of which prestigious face of a social identity bears the external motive of wealth: "made in France". Actually, for those young people who belong to the "IMF generation [and who] do not

have neither jobs, nor what to eat"[11] to escape from this dilatory daily life, in which grief, dejection, and disarray are combined into a social emergency, has become a moral imperative which has a strong rational basis. This necessary and useful need is, moreover, well emphasized by the man from Barbès, who points out:

Ah! Life, over there! A real life of luxury! Believe me, over there they're very rich. Every couple lives with their children in luxury apartments, with electricity and running water. It's not like her, where four generations live under the same roof. Everyone has his own car to drive to work and take the children to school, his own television with channels from all over the world; his fridge and freezer stuffed with good food. Their life is leisurely. (Diome 2003: 56-57)

These remarks seem to refer to the socio-economic reality of Senegal, where the rural community can barely make a living and meet their challenges successfully. Visibly stretched out of the programs against poverty, rural areas like Niodior are convulsing to resist the heady wave of despair. "This poverty is more widespread in rural areas where it affects 60.4% of households, against one in three households (about 33%) in the urban area"[12]. Niodior, where life is in wandering, is the place of needy masses whose social deprivation is evident in the divorce between the legitimate demands of the islanders and the economic reality that is no longer within their reach. It goes without saying that "in a world devoid of cause, existentialism invites man to be" Cause of himself [13]". Indeed, the ambition of young Niodorians bears the mark of a "will-to-be" in a *There-ness* where all actors emerge as "winners of social trials [14] ". In practice, the younger generation of the village shoulder the guilful burden of poverty which has mothballed away the beauty of living forms in the island. They spend time, from dusk to dawn, "drinking the tea of death" (Diome 2003: 173). Ant that makes them understand that "the absurdity of the finality given to life [becomes] a condition of action" [15].

Madické, Garouwalé and the teacher, Ndétare sketch out a divisive debate with Salie. Salie and Ndétare who have experienced life in France resort to an *adpopulum* argument reinforced by an *ad hominem* dimension to bring their interlocutors to ditch their dream to migrate to Europe. To Salie's idea that the young people of the village should not emigrate to France, Garouwalé retorts with a *verdictive* which can be read as follows:

"Explain what you mean sis".

Salie: "you should not go there under any conditions."

Madické: "So how do you want us to go? Maybe we should wait for Chirac to come and meet us at the airport? "

Salie: "you must not go there with nothing, illegally, it's a suicide. It's not the good Lord's house. You don't parachute in as if it is a field of millet. (...) It's not the good Lord's house".

Grouwalé: "Hey guys! Just listen to big sis. Now she's there, now she's made a packet, she's closing the door. She's saying all that so she doesn't have to put us up. "

Ndétar: "Exactly (...). I know cows in Normandy are fat,

but that doesn't make it rich pasture for stray sheep! Look out for the thorns, boys. Be careful!" (Diome 2006: 122-124)

In this discursive sequence, Garouwalé and Madické resign themselves to accepting Salie's and Ndétare's descriptive arguments. The latter, indeed, try, as best as they can, to show the rigor of the social realities through which expatriates often go. "In Europe, my brothers, you are black first, citizen incidentally, outsiders permanently, and that's certainly not written in the constitution, but some can read it on your skin" (Diome 2006: 124).

In an island which faces multiple crises that are sounded out through the phrasing segments: "What are you offering in exchange for this dump?" "To wait patiently here until we starve to death?" (Diome 2006: 125), Europe is the only place where the young islanders want to abnegate their will to climb the echelons of "made in paradise" (Diome 2006: 124). The stake is high. The sun of hope shines forth upon Europe, and to find a place in that sunny continent, one must manage to leave and escape from the pitiful destiny of a village deserted by any possible good prospect. Far from it! To keep the incognito in an anonymous island forgotten by decision-makers would amount to a collective suicide. This life to risk in the waves of the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean sea is no longer worth of anything in this village of "salt marshes" (Diome 2006: 122). In order to go further afield "to find their "share of sugar cane elsewhere" (Diome 2006: 122), the youth of Niodior move along with courage to foul off the overpowering reek of death that the belly of the Atlantic blows: "we are going whatever the cost. Our parents will grow old without a pension, our little brothers are depending on us! Every scrap of life must serve to win dignity!" (Diome 2006: 125).

Held at the mercy of precariousness, the Niodiorian youth, who is a sample unit of the Senegalese workforce, buckles under the burden of weighty social responsibilities they seem to have too soon endured. Ndétare explains to Salie this understandable side of the young people's attitude:

You know, you have to try to understand them. Most of these boys inherit nothing but mouths to feed. Many of them are already heads of large families despite their young age, and they're expected to succeed where their father failed: in lifting their family out of poverty. They're burdened with responsibilities that are too much for them and drive them to the most desperate solutions. I try to reason with them, but I know all too well that their anxiety about the future makes them belligerent. All those children to raise, with so little money (Diome 2006:128).

Being economic based, the motives of the Niodior's youth to emigrate remain intrinsic to a dream: to go "where fetuses already have bank accounts in their name, and babies career plans. And cursed were those who took it upon themselves to thwart the wishes of the young islanders" (Diome 2006: 115).

#### 4. In the Umbilicus of Disillusion

The "*There-ness*", which is a space of happiness par

excellence, remains a social code that assumes various meanings in *The Belly of the Atlantic*. Indeed, Moussa, the young footballer, is one of the rare players of Niodior who managed to leave his country of origin to cash his talent in France. Following his meeting with a "young African talent hunter", Jean-Charles Sauveur, Moussa finds the opportunity to attain his short-term goal: to become a professional player in a professional championship. Jean le "Sauveur" finalizes an agreement with the son of Niodior and pre-finances visa, airfare and lodging fees. A financing that Moussa is required to repay once committed by a French club.

Moussa lands in France where he discovers, for the first time, a "a real football pitch with dressing rooms and proper green turf" (Diome 2006: 64). He is in another world that he can see as a definitive space of a state of mind, a "liga-sign raiser" that will turn his life into a *representamen* for all young people in his home country. Given that many of his family's members rely on him to make out a living, Moussa has to challenge, during the whole period he spends in France, the physical and technical tests of the club's trainees who are interested in examining closely his would-be talent. He gives himself the moral to ignore the racist lazzis uttered by his teammates, but lack "nerves of steel" (Diome 2006: 66) to resist the harshness of winter. As a result, his physical performances and technical qualities did not convince the host club's coaches: "Long after the end of the period of adaptation he was granted, his results were disappointing. The center no longer wanted him "(Diome 2003: 102). Moussa is thus freed. And what still needs to be done is to repay Sauveur's unprofitable investments. The latter looms to be observed through a capitalist impulse. He finds the appropriate formula for recovering his investments. He takes the "champion" aside to say:

Listen champ, (...) you owe me about a hundred thousand francs. You will have to work for it. As you know, your residency permit's expire. If you'd done well, the club would have settled it all straight away: my money, your papers, all of it. But now you don't have a club or any other income, don't even think about your permit being renewed. I have got a mate with a boat; we will go and see him. I'll get you a job down there. We won't ask for much; that way we won't blab. He will hand you a salary over to me, and when you've paid me back you can save enough to live it up back home. You have a strong lad, you'll be fine. But whatever happens, keep it quiet! don't forget you have no papers. So one word and the cops'll have you in cuffs and you'll be playing your jazz in a dark cell. (...) we've never met. Not a word to anyone! So long, champ. (Diome 2006: 68)

To his *Sauveur's* demands, the disappointed footballer fall into step. Moussa is thus, through no will of his own, engaged as a sailor who spends a great deal of his time in "the depths of hold" (Diome 2006: 71). His kingdom of dreams (working, saving, returning to the country, and being invited in the presidency of the Republic) "sinks into the unknown caves of this "*There-ness*", where ultimately everything is not just gemstone. Abandoned by his "savior", dismissed by his dreamt club, Moussa must, clandestinely,

"work, work and more work" (Diome 2006: 70) in the world of "3D jobs (Dirty, Demanding, and Dangerous)[16]"

Moussa, an undocumented foreigner, without a lawful and an ordinary residence, converts himself, in the "*There-ness*" of his dreams, into a social figure confined "to the reign of combine, clientelism (...) of corruption pushed to the frontiers of illegalism. [17] "In his eyes, concordance and discordance are conjugated in the generous constants of the French identity which is articulated around the Trinity: Unity, Equality and Fraternity; a trinity he finds, in the meantime, more in its most basic form of principle than in tangible facts that can be verified on the day-to-day living. He is a "knight-errant [18]" in the contingencies of a life that stands "in front of him, like a trunk of baobab impossible to embrace" (Diome 2003: 104).

Being a prey of a curiosity that he can no longer contain, Moussa leaves his hold to "see up close what there was in France besides stadium turf and the depths of the the hold " (Diome 2006: 71). He ventures to go and discover the hustle and bustle of city life in France. However, his playfulness will not last long. He crosses a batch of policemen and is caught off stride. They tell him off and roundly criticise him before ordering:

Policeman: "Show us your ID"

Policeman: "I said your ID, sunshine?"

Moussa: "The boss has it, he said confidently."

Policeman: "What boss might that be, and where is he?"

Moussa: "The boss of the boat, over there, in the port."

Well, what do you know? remarked the first kepi. Our friend's royalty; he needs someone to carry his paper for him. Come on, let's go and check it out. I suppose his mum still wipes his arse too. (Diome 2006:71)

At the port, Moussa's boss "had no idea who his sailor was. In fact, he'd never seen him before." (Diome 2006: 71). Moussa is arrested and deported to a prison where he feeds on "purée with snot" (Diome 2006: 72). This episode reinforces the dysphoric note of a turlupine presence in a "*There-ness*" that has inevitably turned into a "Bermuda triangle" (Diome 2006: 71) for the boy whose family call upon him through this sacramental incarnation: "spare us this shame among our people "(Diome 2006: 69). These words, which sound like a bombshell, produce an emotional charge which leaves the fallen "champion" unconquered. Moussa is lost in a soliloquy completely far-gone of "performative functions [19] ". He borrows a parasitic language and repeats his father's warnings in one of the letters he sends to him: "Every scrap of life must serve to win dignity", "You are turning into an individualist (...). You have been in France for over a year now and you have never sent so much as a penny home to help us (...). Spare us this shame among our people" (Diome 2006: 69).

This instrumental communication that the father resorts to, gets Moussa wet in the grisaille dunk tank of the shadows, which make his failure so unique and so uniquely tragic in an idyllic setting of projects, that "like demonic dancers, are performed for him" (Diome 2006: 72). A few days after his arrival in custody, Moussa, in his cell, receives an IQF (an

Invitation to quit France); and "twelve hours later an aeroplane spat him out on the tarmac at Dakar" 2006: 73).

In a way, Moussa returns to his island with a totality of dreams detotalized, a counter-finality of a crucified choice on the altar of a capitalism's laissez-faire. His idylls buried in the depths of his cell, Moussa joins Niodior clothed with the only blistered image of disappointment and bitterness. He ashams his family, who play close incomprehension toward him, a wholesal dismissal and a complete denial. He is rejected by everyone, including the village idiot, who has the gall to, scathingly, give him a telling-off in these terms: "Everybody who's worked over there built houses and shops, as soon as they came home. If you have not brought anything back, it's because you are a failure "(Diome 2006: 74). The idiot speaks loud what the whole village whispers.

Emigration being considered, by the islanders of Niodior, to be a movement towards the world of possibilities and bliss, Moussa's failure inspires both indignation and disenchantment. To put an end to his new status as a social waste in his own community, the crestfallen footballer commits suicide: "At the place where the island dips its tongue into the sea, the fishermen had caught Moussa's inert body in their nets. Even the Atlantic can't digest all that the earth throws up. *Allah Akbar!*" (Diome 2003: 77).

Moreover, through this tragic fate, Fatou Diome, with purpose and dedication, highlights the trapped side of the migrant's freedom. Taken between the inopportune genes of economic law in Europe and the strong expectations of his people in Africa, the emigrant has only the belly of the Atlantic as a refuge in case of failure. Thus, it should be said with Marie Rose Mow that "exile is a storm in a ship, courageous is the one who exposes himself to it, lucky the one who does not drown in it [20] ".

Like "*Here-nes*", the skyline of "*There-ness*" has its realities. It does not escape from the economic crisis, unemployment and therefore social injustice. It is a place where chances of succeeding easily seem more illusory than real. And that the transatlantic journey does not always lead imperatively to a prosperous, peaceful golden state. This brings a character in *Douceurs du bercail* to the following reflection: "Then why persist in wanting to cross prohibited barriers... when I get out of here, I will be more comfortable to tell my brothers, sisters, parents and friends that the Eldorado is not at the end of the exodus but in the bowels of our earth [21] ". This lost Eldorado, Madické will eventually find it at the feet of the coconut palms that border his Island caught between the teeth of the Atlantic.

## 5. The Other "Endogenous" Sloping Side of Possibilities

After having tried, by all possible means, to persuade his sister to give him a leg-up to join her in France, Madicke finally ends up putting a stop to his own plans. He highlights the substantial sum that Salie has sent him to start a small retail store and invest fully in trade. He profits from his income-generating activity to stamp out his his life of

nakedness, before burying definitively the idea of emigrating to France. He succeeds, in his capacity as a shopkeeper, in making savings and finding out a *There-ness* in the *Here-ness* of his own homeland. He informs his sister, Salie who lives in France on the telephone: "Who's talking about leaving? Maybe some of my friends still think about it, but I'm not interested anymore. I have got a lot of work in the shop; I'm always having to reorder stock. I think I'm going to build an extension; it is doing really well" (Diome 2006: 180). This reversal of perspectives, ambitions and projects, brings out the opportunities that can be detected by a vision focused on the local "absolute overvalue [22]"

Madické finds a solution to the economic contradictions (poor people who live in an environment full of opportunities) that gangrene his village. He reveals to his sister "that there's so much to do here" (Diome 2006: 181). His conception of social success finds basis on the idea that the values of work and that of the entrepreneurial spirit naturally impose themselves by reason of the universality to which their nature refers. He discovers that by the strength of conviction, what appear, a priori, as a "negative pain [23] ", can be converted into a treasury of opportunities. He, ultimately, remains convinced that any inhabitant of his village can enjoy a social outcome and therefore convert the poverty vector into expediencies to exploit.

This impetus is shared by the teacher Ndétare, who never ceases to reveal a "messianic spirit of becoming [23]" to convince the youth of Niodior, underpinned by a clear desire to move the productive forces. He endeavors to make the happy-go-lucky younger generation understand that the discourse of progress that the man from Barbès and Elhadji Yaltigué hold on the Western "*There-ness*" is only the mirage tree that conceals the reality forest, where reigns the law of the economic jungle. And Madické's success stands as a U-turn that comes to settle the debate on social deprivation and emigration. The development of personal and collective happiness may not always be a gift exclusively present in the West. The ascending and general appearance of the curve of the "integral" of the desire to emigrate must, in no case, prevail over the differential (the accelerating effect) of the production of counterexamples, and hence counter-trends. As a result, Ndétare, Madické and Salie, individually and collectively, tend to resist the mirage and illusion of the *Deukeu Baa*.

Being conscious of the status of the image and of the merchandise value imposed by the logic of capitalism among all migrants who crossed the Mediterranean sea, Ndétare and Salie get the youth of Niodior understand that to expatriate means to clash constantly with the looks of the others which, from time to time, reminds you of your origin, the color of your skin and the diameter of the circle of your possibilities as a stranger. And that the equilibrium point of the dialectic of "*Here-ness*" and "*There-ness*" is found on the goodwill of becoming authoritative in the good right of the *conatus* (efforts) of the courage to attack the "bad side" of one's present in order to transform it and to wrest it from the determinism of the dialectic of "due and gift [24]"

Ndétare defines a program of actions related to objects of transformative values. It builds on sport and the day's debates to re-establish the bridge between the dream of young people and the potential of the environment. In addition, the teacher exhumes the dramatic side of emigration to reveal the failures of phenotypic accommodations and their far-reaching consequences on migrant subjects on the European soil. He argues in the sense that it is important to understand that the factors and motives of *get rich or die trying* are so crucial that the emigrants' fate is often overshadowed by the contingent force of the phenotype of illusion and disappointment.

He constantly reminds us that another model of endogenous success is possible. What good is it to venture into the unknown stalemate of a foreign land, while being able to obtain the minimum necessary at home is already a motive of satisfaction? Ndétare invites the youth of Niodior to a radical change in behavior and mentality to finally perceive "the enormity of this beam that blinds their eyes and that they do not want to see"

## 6. Conclusion

It all comes down to realize that many decades after independences, African countries, mainly those in the southern hemisphere, have been nourishing a form of economic dependence with the West, which is still regarded as the place of cremation of miserable lives. Thus, to emigrate to the countries of the north is the ideal that gives the chance to shine "with European light" (Diome 2006: 74). However, between the dream about a "*There-ness*" and the realities of a "*Here-ness*" are the sharp pitfalls of the redhibitory face of emigration.

Fatou Diome, in his book, makes a kind of fluoroscopy of the reasons that motivate young Africans to emigrate to the West. She raises a corner of the veil of mirages to reveal the financial acrobatics that the exiled performs in order to get the best of the game. A game of which dehiscence of the final fruit does not always benefit the economic emigrant.

The magical decoration that accompanies the dream of young Africans in their imagination of Europe in general is not deconstructed by the baptismal passage of Moussa in the Hexagon. Fatou, in fact, highlights the negative side of the life of Senegalese and African emigrants in France, exposing aloud the hardships, the alleviances to the racist tales, the deprivation and the exploitation they are often victim of. The Atlantic belly swells like a background wave that sounds the alarm and proposes a solution to the phenomenon of Africans' emigration to Europe. Southern countries, indeed, with strong migratory tendencies, must take upon themselves the youth employment and socio-economic inequalities by offering the same opportunities for success to urban and rural populations.

Madické's success appears as a path traced to set a prime example to the young people of Niodior who, in driving at sleeping on the "*mat of the others*" risk to experience a difficult sleep and a brutal awakening. Africans must invest

to transform their "Here-ness" into a prosperous "There-ness" where life will bear the approval mark of: "Made in Paradise".

---

## References

- [1] Barça is the affectionate diminutive used by young Senegalese people to address the Spanish province Barcelona. *Barzakh* is a Wolof word which refers to the Hereafter world. *Barça mba Barzakh* is a Wolof expression that literally means: "I shall provide myself with all the legal or illegal necessary means to emigrate to Spain (Barcelona) or die (in the Atlantic Ocean) while trying to get there.
- [2] Those who leave for the West and who, in general, come back rich.
- [3] Aminata Sow FALL. *Douceurs du bercail*. Abidjan: Nouvelles Editions ivoirienne, 1998, p. 36.
- [4] A. J. GREIMAS. *Du Sens II: Essai de sémiotique*. Paris: Karthala, 2003, p 143.
- [5] Louis BALANDIER. *Le Récit*. Paris: Editions STH, 1991, p. 164.
- [6] Abib SENE. *Sémiotique de l'espace et sémantique du discours littéraire dans les œuvres de Ngui wa Thiong'o, George Lamming et William Boyd*. Paris: Edilivres, 2015, p. 179.
- [7] Lanfia DIANE. *Migration au Sénégal, migration régulière et irrégulières: défis, retombées et implication au Sénégal*. Genève: OIM, 2009, p. 12.
- [8] Aly TANJAN. "Migrations internationales des Sénégalais: nouveaux profils des migrants et insertions professionnelles en Espagne", *In Les migrations africaines vers l'Europe. Entre mutations et adaptation des acteurs sénégalais*. Dakar: AVTECH Impression, 2012, p. 210.
- [9] Cathy THIOYE Diagne. "L' Immigration dans la littérature africaine à travers *Douceurs du bercail* D'Aminata Sow Fall et *Le Ventre de l'Atlantique* de Fatou Diome". Résultats de recherche sur l'immigration, 2005, p. 89.
- [10] Narodar Aymar SOME. *Migration au Sénégal: profil national*. Genève: OIM, 2009, p. 30.
- [11] Aminata Sow Fall. *Douceur du bercail*. *Op.cit.*, p. 48.
- [12] Narodar Aymar SOME. *Migration au Sénégal: profil national, op.cit.*, p. 35.
- [13] Pierre, BRUNEL. «L'Absurde» *In Encyclopedia Universalis*. Paris: Corpus I, 1989, p. 60.
- [14] A. J. Greimas. *Du sens II. Op.cit.*, p. 152.
- [15] André MALRAUX. *La Vie royale*. Paris: Crasset, 1930, p. 37.
- [16] Meny Rea Andrea TRIPIER. *Sociologie de l'immigration*. Paris: La Découverte, 2008, p. 37.
- [17] Meny Rea Andrea TRIPIER. *Sociologie de l'immigration.op.cit.*, p. 38.
- [18] Johanna SIMEAUT. *La Cause des sans-papiers*. Paris: Presse de Sciences Po, 1998, p. 1.
- [19] Jannie BAUDICHON. *La Communication: processus, formes et applications*. Paris: Armand colin, 1999, p. 62.
- [20] Rose Marie MOW. *Enfant d'ici venu d'ailleurs: naitre et grandir en France*. Paris: La Découverte, 2002, pp. 11-12.
- [21] Aminata Sow Fall. *Douceur du bercail*. *Op.cit.*, p. 87.
- [22] Etienne BALIBAR. *La Philosophie de Marx*. Paris: Edition Découverte, 1993, p. 94.
- [23] Etienne BALIBAR. *La Philosophie de Marx. Op.cit.*, p. 96.
- [24] Claire KEBERS. *La Vie in extremis: mieux comprendre pour mieux accompagner*. Bruxelles: Editions Lumen Vitae, 1995, p. 39.