

Female Awakening and Revolt in Taaw by Sembène Ousmane

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Abstract:

The feminine mentality that pain is inevitable while suffering is optional is never perennial when facing the demands of patriarchy. When women become conscious of the excessive limits of pain, even the devil becomes envious of their unequaled meanness. In other words, where rigorous, ritualized dominance and subordination prevails in women's lives, revolt without sufficient premeditation becomes the necessary consequence. This paper examines manifestations of such phenomena, clearly revealing patterns that occur even in today's partner interactions, making it a must-read article.

Keywords: Conscience, Revolt, Foundations, Incitements, Feelings, Individuality, Flaws, Optimism, Cruelty, Forces, Culmination.

1. Introduction

Feminism, briefly, is a movement that consists of advancing and protecting the diverse rights of women and girls, while respecting their various experiences, identities, knowledge, and their strength. It advocates for gender equality for all. Its vision is the liberation of women from subjection in all its aspects. In other terms, it constitutes an instrument or a tool for liberating women from the servitude in which they live. From the woman's part, it is first the awareness of her inferior situation and the means to get rid of it. In short, and generally, feminism relates to the female condition. It can be radical (taking patriarchy as the source of the specific oppression of women), liberal (demanding only legal equality between men and women), or socialist (linking feminism to class society). The mission of this presentation is to study *Les Trois Prétendants... Un Mari* by Guillaume Oyônô Mbia and then *Sous L'Orange* by Seydou Badian from the point of view of the feminist traits displayed above. Consequently, we should observe the women in the societies of the two literary works from the perspective of their behaviors: their words, their attitudes, their actions, and their reactions in their situational interactions. In other words, this present study aims to identify feminism first vis-à-vis the testimonies of women's subjection and secondly the impact of this subjection on them. Then, the study will address the attitudes or responses of women towards their subjection from the angle of the replies of those among them said to be submissive and those of others who appear to be standing or poorly chained. Lastly, the study will try to see what strategies women usually adopt to emancipate themselves so that their condition improves. On this, the study will be organized into two major parts. Each will study - in the respective work - women in the various perspectives of their subjugation and related impact, their submission, their protests, as well as their liberation strategies. Then, the analysis will end with an overview of approaches in the form of a Conclusion and will direct reference to the works used as a Bibliography that will allow going further regarding the subject. Sembène Ousmane's Taaw addresses various themes such as poverty, implicit criticism of the political and economic system, generational conflict, youth struggle, challenging paternal authority, juvenile delinquency, exploitation,

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corruption, women's condition, illiteracy, honesty, integrity, violence, female awakening and revolt, etc. The latter, female awakening and revolt, of primary importance, immediately demands analysis. Awakening is the process of becoming aware of the reality of a situation, event, or phenomenon. Revolt constitutes an intense feeling of disgust and its voluntary or involuntary effect of rebellion, insurrection, protest, or defiance. The adjective "female" qualifying awakening and revolt implies women's agency. Therefore, the expression female awakening and revolt refers to a situation in which certain real and disgusting circumstances cease to be beyond women's understanding, and from which subjugation women emerge through defiance or protest. Nevertheless, in the novel *Taaw* (where there exists a very rigorous order of dominance and subordination established and maintained by various more or less ritualized phenomena), despite the presence of several women, this agency is located primarily at the level of Yaye Dabo who revolts (without sufficient premeditation) following her inability to continue supporting the oppression of her husband Baye Tine, and secondarily at the level of Astou, whose perseverance prevents *Taaw* from being repudiated. This paper will strive to emphasize the revolt of Yaye Dabo by showing that her awakening, involuntary, is inseparable from this revolt and that this spirit of revolt exists but remains buried beneath various inhibitions. Thus, we will study the foundations of this revolt while analyzing both distant incitements and immediate incitements to its eruption as well as its effects in order to reach a concluding assessment and a bibliography that will encourage further exploration.

2. Revolt: Foundations

There are certain motivations underlying the revolt. In Yaye Dabo's case, we count both distant incitements to revolt as well as immediate incitements triggering this revolt's eruption.

2.1 Distant Incitements to Revolt

The female revolt in *Taaw* is provoked by various distant incitements, namely the presence of latent feelings of revolt, the full consciousness of individuality, Yaye Dabo's qualities and flaws, Baye Tine's cruelty, as well as the competition of certain external forces. Let us examine these incitements one after another.

2.2 Presence of Latent Feelings of Revolt

There is every indication that Yaye Dabo possesses a very strong will that could easily enable her to revolt against her husband's oppression. Note how she would "glance" (p. 138) at Aïda and how she "stamped on the ground" (p. 140) and spoke in an "imperative tone" (*ibid.*) when addressing her sisters-in-law and her little brother Sakhaly. Note also her way of responding to Aïda "in a neutral tone, containing her annoyance and anger" (p. 138). This presence of a strong but subdued will is expressed when she implies that she can "have Aïda repudiated" (p. 143) if she wants. Aïda attests to this will by seeing "that Yaye Dabo had the upper hand" (*ibid.*). Further, to prove that the feeling of revolt inhabits Yaye Dabo, we can cite the way she slapped *Taaw*, to the point of even being "stunned by the violence of her reaction" (p. 178) while asking *Taaw* to be a man (p. 178). Also, her "Nothing!... Nothing, Tine" (p. 179) signals the existence of a bomb absolutely ready to explode at any moment.

Note, however, that she voluntarily decides to stifle this will. Observe the way she "repressed her fearful impulses" (p. 64). These inner efforts to stifle the incitements to revolt are again noticeable through her mastery "through silences" (*ibid.*), a composure that proves very effective. All this means that it is she herself who decides to "remain cold on the surface" (p. 68). But do these efforts to remain cold stay absolutely voluntary?

There also appear to be certain phenomena inhibiting feelings of revolt despite Yaye Dabo's will. That is why, despite the "avalanche of rudeness" (p. 87) from her husband, Yaye Dabo sarcastically asks if this isn't a woman's lot. She herself, weary and with a tone of recrimination, laments that she no longer needs to "purify herself upon rising from bed" (p. 85), which immediately proves the existence of a heaviness residing in her soul. She submits, despite herself, to the oppression of her husband Baye Tine, primarily because Muslim doctrines doom her to act in this way. Doesn't the Quran prohibit, according to Soumaré, humiliating one's husband? (p. 169). And isn't Yaye Dabo ardently religious? We also note this lack of will requiring her repugnant conformity, a lack of will made possible by the pathological fear of Baye Tine. This phobia manifests to the point of making her unable "to express her intimate thoughts" (p. 110). Doesn't she save herself on a given occasion "to go join the women in the courtyard" (151)? This abnormal fear is modeled on the possibility of repudiation: "She had paid for everything with her body, stifling her rebellions, swallowing her reflections so as never to be sent away, never to be rejected like a worn-out rag" (p. 182). Moreover, she considers her children to restrain her spirit of revolt: "If not for herself as a wife, it would be for the children and the neighbors" (p. 82). We therefore realize that Yaye Dabo has her will to revolt restricted despite herself. So, even when her heart dictated it to her, "her will could not obey it" (p. 118) to use Cissé's expression. And that is why she sometimes conceives her condition with a petulant complaint.

2.3 Full Consciousness of Individuality

Like Nwapa's Efurú (1966), Yaye Dabo seems to be aware of her individuality, of her husband's weakness, and of her own ability to voluntarily exit any subjugation, but her voluntary and determined submission to traditional customs does not allow her to claim her freedom. In this context, she resembles Efurú who would ask Nwabata: "You must correct your husband; after all, what do they know?" (Nwapa 1966: 169). Yaye Dabo's individuality is manifested when she says that "only stumps of men remain" (p. 136). Besides, deep down, she knows that her son Taaw is innocent of his aggression towards his father: "You have never troubled my mother's heart" (p. 174) even when she always asks him never to touch his father (p. 181).

We realize that Yaye Dabo feels inwardly independent, which is why she conceives her condition sometimes with courageous acquiescence, sometimes with melancholic bitterness. Note that she is perfectly capable of dictating orders but submits purposely to her husband's authority. She displays a very strong will and unspeakable individuality when she "deliberately paused, then: 'You will stay with the second wife until Taaw recovers'" (p. 124). This phenomenon is manifested again when she dictates orders to Soumaré: "You can shelter this girl until tomorrow" (p. 179). Again, she orders her husband, in the form of imploration: "Don't repeat that" (180). This attitude of repressing individuality so as to voluntarily stifle revolt is inseparable from Yaye Dabo's qualities.

2.4 Qualities of Yaye Dabo

Yaye Dabo's positive characteristics immediately stifle revolt and render it latent. First, we note her spirit of obedience, the intensity of which makes her "beg forgiveness on her knees to Baye Tine" (82). We don't forget her submission and social conscience that make her act despite herself. When Abdou was undergoing cruel punishment, Yaye Dabo intervened "more out of instinct of obedience than to respond, stifling in herself the feeling of revolt" (p. 64). She doesn't revolt, moreover, "so that her children may succeed in life" (p. 87), which reminds us of Sow Fall (1997: 27): "Obey your husband, let his happiness be your key concern; upon him rests your destiny and especially that of your children."

These doctrines, including her inner quality of respect for tradition and lack of violence as well as vengeance on her part, incite her to "make her son swear never to raise his hand against his father again, even if he saw him slitting her throat" (p. 67). Her composure thus stifles revolt.

She knows how to complement the husband's unsatisfactory efforts by rounding out the domestic economy "with her small business" (pp. 85-86), which makes her optimize the nauseating effects of his desires. That is why she manages to "balance" the days (p. 165) and "bury for conservation" (p. 184) "some fragments of embers" (ibid.). She tries to avoid violence by speaking "in a soothing voice" (p. 64) and by stifling feelings of revolt in her heart. Thus, despite her affliction, she tells herself inwardly "Taaw, don't answer him" (p. 66) so that peace may reign. It is thanks to her that Taaw "released his father's arm" (p. 181). It is again this love of peace that incites her to "make her son swear never to raise his hand against his father again, even if he saw him slitting her throat" (p. 67). This maternal love, stifling revolt, also has the advantage of preventing Taaw from carrying out "his thousand-times-planned escape" (p. 150). Her distance from violence enables her to accept "domestic scenes between husband and wife" and repudiate "open antagonism between father and son" (p. 82). She proves very compassionate through her "tender look" (p. 86). If she fails to bring about peace, she enlists the intervention of the imam instead of revolting (p. 82). She thinks only of caulking "the poorly adjusted joint" (p. 111) despite her cries of poverty. She is annoyed by "this innocuous beginning of a domestic quarrel" (p. 114). She never tires: "During the day, Yaye Dabo would occupy herself with laundry to wash, care to give to Taaw, cooking for Souleymane, Abdou and her husband, Baye Tine" (p. 124). By her availability, she appears "saintly" (p. 137), full of goodness. In short, she knows how to extinguish much smoke (p. 144). This is the main reason why "Soumare complimented her on her family spirit and her clemency towards Aïda" (p. 133). Religious (p. 170) and innocent, she "was disarmed by Astou's direct replies" (p. 176), which is why she doesn't hesitate to revolt when her son initially tries to repudiate the pregnancy, despite her resolution to marry "with a pure heart, thinking to fulfill the duty of her life as a woman, as a mother" (p. 182).

Let's understand that it is all the phenomena above that prevent revolt from erupting in time even when the seeds of revolt gradually germinate. Let's take a look at Yaye's flaws to determine if we can still detect signs of revolt.

2.5 Flaws of Yaye Dabo

Upon analyzing Yaye Dabo's overflowing self-sacrifice and sufferings, we realize that she slumbers by pushing, so as to stifle revolt, this sacrifice to the extreme and causing the decline of her sons and herself. One wonders how a living being could stifle revolt even when she feels "good only for the bedside rug" (p. 85), a feeling induced by the attitude of the husband who spends "on wedding nights with" his second wife Taaw's grant and squanders the money from their "house in the medina," the profits from moving (p. 106). Note that this drowsiness distances revolt. It is difficult to conceive how a human being would forget "the murderous domination" of her husband over her (pp. 141-142).

It is this same drowsiness that causes suppressions upon suppressions, oppressions upon oppressions, and sufferings upon sufferings to pile up. Thus, we see Yaye Dabo screaming, "calling for help" (p. 66); who suffers the "strap of blows" (ibid.); who makes "fat" for her young co-wife (p. 85); who constantly dies of "desire to confide in someone" (p. 86); who no longer needs to purify herself "upon rising from bed" (p. 85); who "wipes her tears with her long nightgown" (p. 87); who, overwhelmed by poverty, asks her son to sell her husband's pants to get work (ibid.); whose "little money she had set aside evaporated in medicine expenses" (p. 125); who becomes "truly aware of their lack of means, of what it is to be poor" (p. 152); whose husband continuously renders her unable to answer him but makes her shiver with cold and fear (p. 149) while making her fear "receiving blows" (p. 151); whose "sweet maternal tenderness turned into a mortal fear" (p. 127); whose "pride in the lineage of the great Dabos" has been deeply scratched by Baye Tine the husband (p. 130); and even inciting her to save herself "to go join the women in the courtyard" (p. 151); who is constantly "chased from the bed" matrimonial (p. 109); and whose "mother's heart

suffered" tirelessly (p. 152). As if these sufferings are never enough, we notice in studying Yaye's life that through her husband's schemes "life lacerated her with its claws, engraved marks in her existence day after day" (p. 151). What drowsiness to repress revolt when she is fully aware that she belongs only to the "female-meat" (p. 136) and that "wife, mother, she expected no miracle that would make her life paradisiacal" (p. 182)?

This drowsiness makes us aware of her unawareness of Yalom's (1980) four main awarenesses "that can help a person change and take more responsibility for their life," namely that she can change her world; that there is no danger in changing; that to have what she really wants, she must change; and that she has the power to change. She is so glued to her husband that she conceives that her most adverse enemy is revolt. After all, doesn't she explicitly or implicitly accept the preeminence of man's virility especially when she says "Taaw, be a man" (p. 178). This same awareness of man's superiority is manifested again when she says: "I will ask my husband. The last word must belong to men" (p. 143). Besides, her pride is "deeply scratched" (p. 130) when Baye tells her: "You know well that at your brother's, it's awa, Aida, who wears the pants" (ibid.). Perhaps she would never want to act like her sisters-in-law in whose hands Sakhaly her brother "was but a puppet" (p. 141). Her condition as a kneeling woman makes her condemn Aida's guardianship.

2.6 Pure Love For Taaw and Unshakeable Optimism

There is yet another phenomenon that distances or stifles revolt and makes it resurface late. This phenomenon is Yaye's unshakeable optimism including her pure love for her sons and for the generation of young people. In other words, the tomorrow of the young that preoccupies her (p. 169). This optimism breaks down as follows:

"Through her son, her inner gaze embraced all children of Taaw's age, and younger than Taaw, Taaws still on their mother's back, Taaws in the belly of all women. In the suburb, the squares and crossroads, she observed the young and found herself asking questions: 'What future awaits them? How will this future be?'"

Optimism is based on Taaw's stifled progress: "Taaw had a promising start to schooling" (p. 108) for which "Baye Tine framed the diploma to hang it in the living room with ostentation" (ibid.). Could Yaye Dabo have let Taaw decline when she "was full of praise" for him (ibid.)? When even her husband and she "already saw in Taaw the future family support, the guarantee of their old age" (ibid.)? After all, doesn't she seriously pray "that Yalla grant the children a life full of happiness and that they may assist us during the hard trials of old age" (p. 116)? Or should she have allowed her sons to exile themselves like Goor Yummbul's four sons? In this context, she would never be fooled and that is why "with the money offered by Sakhaly, she dressed Taaw anew" (p. 145). After all, hadn't she always thought "her son would be somebody" (p. 147)? It is this optimism and this intense love that invade with apprehension when Astou asks to see Taaw (p. 176). Besides, it is for this same love that she voluntarily sacrificed her sexual intimacy with her husband, due to which "Baye Tine made appearances and disappeared for several days in a row at his second wife's" (p. 127).

This optimism gives birth to love which translates into an uncontrollable desire to ensure the success of her son Taaw. It is again thanks to this love that during "her son's release, Yaye Dabo spent herself to regulate her home: available, docile, she sympathized with her man's lamentations" (p. 82). Would she therefore have the means to revolt despite her condition? Would she have revolted when, all her life, she only wants her husband to help her "to raise" her children "to make men of tomorrow out of them" (p. 111)? Wasn't Taaw himself full of optimism despite his condition as a disappointed child? Wasn't the

certainty of "finding a boat to exile himself to Europe and continue his studies" (p. 158) always being reborn in him? Had the ambition to become "a computer engineer" (ibid.) still dissipated? Doesn't this same optimism manifest itself in Sohna despite her condition: "She trembled at the blow received in her belly. Then, having made the observation, she sniffed, stood upright with pride and headed towards her father's house (p. 165)?

Optimism serves as a springboard, according to Yaye, for the success of her sons. And she fears that revolt would hinder this optimism. She truly believes that tomorrow "it is from these suburbs that the leader or leaders, the real ones, will be born" (p. 169). She thus agrees with Aminata: "The leader of tomorrow will come from the children of the suburbs" (p. 171). And among "among these heroes" (ibid.), she sees her son. One can even say that this optimism attenuates her sufferings, makes her "satisfied with herself" (p. 145) and also makes her "day satisfactory" (p. 165). She knows how to relieve herself. That is why the fact that Taaw impregnated Astou tells her nothing bad. According to her, "At least he has his virility" (p. 172). After all, doesn't she believe in "set-cat"? In the diviner who tells her about Taaw: "He is a child predestined for a great future... Fame awaits him" (p. 125)?

2.7 Baye Tine's Cruelty

Another distant incitement to revolt presents itself: Baye Tine's cruelty, which often provokes Taaw's "unexpressed anger" (p. 65); which makes his body express "contempt" (p. 67); whose "resentment accumulated over the course of disputes, beatings" (p. 67) gave Yaye Dabo "enough strength to remain cold on the surface" (p. 68); whose dictatorial tendencies, especially the "brutal injunctions" tore the children from their sleep. Baye Tine has only on his lips "it's me who wears the pants" (p. 111). Perhaps it is this same awareness that makes Goor Yummbul capable of ironizing "Love the woman, but don't trust her" (p. 97). This ridicule of Baye Tine whose stomach is almost always forward displays hypocrisy through his religiosity on the surface: "finishing his rosary" (p. 61), despising pagans (ibid.) thanking "piously Yalla" (p. 62), etc. The entertainment generated by the scholarship and the moving money gives him the illusion that Yalla inspires him with moments of sublime. He claims to have "fed, raised" Taaw (p. 68), which should require sympathy towards him. Truly, he poses a problem to all his wives: "The real problem is our man" (p. 191). However, he is an odious man who lets "a torrent of tears" flow from Taaw's eyes (p. 150). He "continued his litany of insults and execrations" (p. 67) treating especially Taaw as "brat," "good-for-nothing," "son of nothing!," "bastard." His diabolism is expressed in "I will tan your hide"; and then "I will slit your throat" (p. 64). However, it is only his "Don't come back to this house" (p. 68) that troubles Yaye the most and makes her swallow her revolt. Her, he treats as "crazy" while threatening her and showing himself as ferocious as possible against her. Yaye "abhorred all men, except her father and her sons" (p. 66), which indicates that she laboriously stifled revolt against her husband. If she tolerates him, it is because she wants to prevent Taaw from leaving the house. Having twenty-eight children, Baye Tine figures among the "paters" who, "as soon as they have money, ... take a girl" (p. 71). His lack of responsibility is unspeakable. He allocates "only twelve thousand francs (Twelve thousand francs C.F.A.) per month for his three sons" (pp. 85-86); having "the reputation of being a profiteer, a man without his word" (p. 102), he categorically repudiated Astou's pregnancy by insinuating that she wants to pin on Taaw "a paternity that ..." (ibid.); he does not adequately satisfy the needs of his children. Taaw, for example, even takes his midday meals at his uncle's, which Baye Tine ignored. His irresponsibility is summarized in the following rhetorical question: "How do you want him to eat his fill? Baye Tine gives nothing to Yaye Dabo and her three children" (p. 122). Yaye Dabo's "It's earlier that you should have thought about your children" (p. 149) carries the stifled revolt against a husband who is never aware "of having acted wrongly" (p. 149) when he behaves badly. He claims to have worked so much "to ensure my father and mother a happy old

age" (p. 147) without indicating if his father had also wasted his scholarship. Goor Yummbul, for his part, acted as an irresponsible man when he asks Taaw "You think the hedgehog complex will work with me? (p. 156) instead of being patient with him. After all, it's not surprising when we learn his way of "venting his bile" (p. 146) or of roughing up, beating, and thrashing Yaye Dabo. A provocateur, he provokes Taaw so well that he "stifled revolt in him" (p. 67). Baye further incites Taaw to hit him, which leads to his incarceration. His violence towards his children has a bad reputation since the inhabitants of the compound are "accustomed to these morning corrections inflicted on the kids" (p. 62).

The effects of all his bad behaviors prove too heavy for Yaye. Sometimes she "took refuge in an obvious mutism" (ibid.), sometimes she feels abandoned especially when Baye "Baye Tine had deserted the house to live squarely at his second wife's" (p. 82). She sometimes sweats, especially when one night, Baye treats her "like a cat in heat" (p. 87) so well that he chases her from the bed. She even sometimes lies "on the floor, on a mat" (ibid.).

Baye Tine's behaviors prove frightening and alarming as Goor Yummbul torments his four wives with his mutism.

2.8 External Forces

We note that despite Baye Tine's contribution including Yaye Dabo's drowsiness, there are other situations that prove frustrating enough to trouble the family by sowing the seeds of female revolt so as to agree with Sonia Lee (1994: 182) that "happiness rarely belongs to the domain of lived experience." It is suffering consubstantial with human life and which is provoked only by external forces. We count especially the socio-economic situation: poverty, absence of school, unemployment, corruption, and generational conflict.

2.8.1 Socioeconomic Situation

2.8.1.1 Poverty

Baye Tine informs us of his difficult economic situation: "Look! I have six kids. With my retirement pension, I can't even maintain a single one of my wives and her children" (p. 149).

2.8.1.2 Absence of School

The fact that there is no school in the periphery increases the suffering of Taaw and his mother as well, invariably, as the revolt especially of Taaw against his father: "During the long vacation, Yaye Dabo inquired about a nearby school for Taaw. But there was no secondary school in the periphery" (p. 112). Besides, the distance worsens the situation: "Taaw and his younger brother, Souleymane, had to travel eleven kilometers between home and school, four times a day" (108). Yaye's frustration comes to light: "Don't misunderstand my words. You are concerned. We live far, very far from Taaw's school. Last year, he didn't work very well in class because of the long journey. The coming and going four times a day is too painful for a kid" (p. 117). Note that it is because of the long journey that Taaw is eventually expelled from school, which is why he bears a grudge against his father: "Over the years, growing, his rage against his father had developed to such an extent that the idea of killing him brushed his thoughts" (p. 106).

2.8.1.3 Unemployment

Gaston shows us the economic situation in the best possible way: "Little one, currently it is more difficult to get a job than a wife. Graduates in letters, engineers, doctors are unemployed. And I'm not talking about skilled workers who vegetate" (p. 104). As for finding work, there are only "vague promises" (p. 161) and thus tomorrow for Taaw never comes: "Tomorrow I will have an answer" (p. 163). Yaye Dabo herself pitied

her son since she knew that "The lack of work overwhelmed the son, made him taciturn" (p. 166). We also learn that Baye is "rejected from productive life" (p. 150) and he doesn't practice any profession, which worsens his socio-economic situation.

2.8.1.4 Corruption

Apart from unemployment, corruption was in full swing and the system itself was very seriously affected: "Three pen-pushers shared the narrow space. Dusty files piled up in wooden cabinets without shutters. An adjoining door opened onto a second room. A neon light fixture, lit, cast light on the edge of a red wooden table and on a worn greenish carpet" (p. 78). The system therefore provoked so many frustrations. Despite the fact that Baye Tine should have effectively prepared for his retirement and better planned his family, the frustration of the system imposes itself on his life: "Taaw and his brothers listened to their father vent his bile ... it was simply a way of masking the defeat of his life as a worker" (p. 149). Gaston says without effrontery to Taaw: "Find at least a thousand francs (One thousand francs C.F.A.). It will be aid to understanding." (p. 81). It is from this day that the conflict between Taaw and his father begins more intensely, which, in turn, intensifies Yaye Dabo's frustration so well that she gives Taaw her father's pants to go sell. Imagine the aftermath of this approach! Imagine also Bachirou's contribution towards the decline of Baye's family through his murderous request to Taaw: "I find you work, you will sign an acknowledgment of debt: a quarter of your monthly salary for five months. It's to help you" (p. 195).

2.8.2 Generational Conflict

Despite Baye Tine's schemes to frustrate Taaw, we also note ingratitude on the part of the children provoked by generational conflict. Young people struggle incessantly against the old whose parental authority is called into question. We learn this immediately: "Nowadays children have no respect for the honor of their parents. You wear yourself out to feed them, house them, clothe them, and they splash you with their meanness" (p. 100). Besides, we are made to understand the discretion of the boss who doesn't want "to be rushed" (p. 79). The director, in front of Baye Tine, "annoyed to hear this evidence, he ended the interview," to the abundant frustration of the latter (p. 161). It is this same conflict that prevents Taaw from tolerating his father and Goor Yumbul. Otherwise, despite everything, how could a child relieve and free himself by causing the collapse and fainting of his father (p. 66) while staring down the old man (p. 156)? If an elderly man inspires a child with fear or hatred at best, is it to assault him? Thus, Taaw finds himself involved; his father subsequently wants to repudiate him; Yaye's intense love prevents it; Baye Tine insists on it; revolt follows. But does Taaw really want, deep within himself, his father's death? He, Taaw, who asks despite everything in a calm voice to his mother after his bed rest to even surprise her: "Mother, I don't see my father?" (p. 126).

We have studied the distant incitements to Yaye Dabo's revolt, namely the presence of latent feelings of revolt, the full consciousness of individuality, Yaye Dabo's qualities and flaws, Baye Tine's cruelty as well as the competition of external forces. Let's take a look at the incitements directly causing the eruption of revolt.

3. Immediate Incitements

The eruption of revolt is directly provoked by the attitudes of Yaye Dabo's sisters-in-law, the culmination of Baye Tine's ferocity, the effects of ferocity, the exceeding of the boundary of Yaye Dabo's freedom, the support of Baye's other wives, including superstition.

3.1 Attitudes of Sisters-in-Law

Yaye is well convinced that Aida Kane Mbaye and Anta Cissé wanted to kill her son or to distance him from his uncle. She summarizes these attitudes: "Food was refused to my son. He was given leftovers that a pig would refuse. Taaw fell ill from it for two moons. Two moons! He resumed the path to school... Neither you, my brother of same father and mother, nor any of your wives was concerned about what became of him" (p. 140). Note the direct effects of attitudes on her: "Yaye Dabo had a heavy heart. Her nights were very dark, agitated. In her reflections, nothing justified the conduct of the two women towards her son" (p. 130). Morose, downcast, heart "invaded by consoling thoughts" (p. 146) and haunted by "cruel images" (p. 146), she therefore asks Baye to find a private school for Taaw, which triggers Baye's lack of compassion: "Are you crazy? Where am I going to get this money?" (p. 151). All this directly conditions her for imminent revolt.

3.2 Climax of Baye Tine's Spite Decision to Disown Taaw and Astou and Issue Threats

This climax of Baye Tine's spite already triggers inner conflict in Yaye, who is full of consoling thoughts about her eldest son and future daughter-in-law, Astou, who was thrown out by her father—something that tests the limits of Yaye's tolerance. Could she forget her "tenderness mixed with pity" for the young single mother (p. 176-177)? To compound Yaye's grief, her optimism for Taaw seems on the verge of collapse. Baye Tine, extremely "proud to be recognized as the master" (p. 111), becomes increasingly spiteful and threatening. His remarks like "You'll deal with me" (p. 181) and "I'm kicking you out of my house with your bastard" (ibid.) are utterly unbearable. He even blames the pregnancy on "that thug" Taaw (p. 180), which deeply inflames Yaye. One cannot ignore the effect of the fear of losing Taaw and Astou on Yaye Dabo. Her cry, "Taaw! Taaw, where are you going?" (p. 181), immediately expresses this fear. Let's not forget she had already vehemently accused her husband of being the cause of Taaw's downfall: "The future of children? Ask the men" (p. 169). And, regarding Taaw, wasn't she aware that "The sorrow he felt was accompanied by a feeling of loathing for his father" (p. 150)?

3.3 Determination to Never Be Rejected

She was resolved never to be repudiated, which is why she always suppressed her rebellion—but could this rejection signal the loss of Taaw? After all, doesn't she know that "everything that still stands" is thanks to her (p. 183)? She becomes aware she has nothing left to lose, hence her repeated question, "Repudiate me?" (p. 181), expressing the shock of the situation. Fully convinced that Baye has "no right to destroy this child's life" (p. 181), she likely disregards her own longing to "someday enjoy the fruits of her work as a mother, to laugh from time to time with her husband" (p. 182).

3.4 Usual Support of Co-Wives

Another immediate encouragement is the usual support, especially from Safiétou, Houdia, and the Soumaré. Recall they were part of the group of women deliberating "on the behavior to adopt" (p. 129) regarding Yaye's conflict with her sisters-in-law. Also remember the "knowing glance" (p. 179) exchanged between the women, which constantly bolsters Yaye, albeit unconsciously. Truly, the support of co-wives is surprising, reminiscent of that shown by Sohna's co-wives. For example, the Soumaré telling Astou "You, come over here" to give Baye the impression Astou is just a visitor significantly adds to their solidarity. Furthermore, when Aminata "quickly grabs" (p. 181) the pants Baye wants to use to curse Taaw, it reinforces this solidarity. Perhaps if all the co-wives had unanimously condemned Yaye Dabo, Taaw, and Astou, Yaye would never have had the strength to carry out her ultimate action.

3.5 Curse Pronouncement

The repeated casting of curses deserves attention. As if his previous "barrage of curses" (p. 67) wasn't enough—wishing that Taaw "be the laughingstock of all his friends" (ibid.)—Baye again declares: "I will shake my pants. You will be cursed forever, you will be the last of your generation" (p. 180). Being superstitious, Yaye fully believes in the power of this traditional practice, which strengthens her resolve to never allow Taaw to be cursed. Here, the immediate cause of her revolt seems to be fear of the curse more than fear of rejection, prompting the ultimate act: "With force, she pushed Baye Tine, who fell on his backside. Yaye Dabo swiftly snatched the pants from Aminata's hands" (p. 182).

3.6 Crossing the Line

Yaye realizes she has reached the end of her patience—a boundary that cannot be crossed, neither intentionally nor unintentionally. That's why she says the unspeakable: "In front of others, you play the role of husband. But when it's just the two of us, you're no more assertive than that piece of fabric" (p. 183). This is reminiscent of Anowa revealing her husband's sexual impotence. Because of this boundary being crossed, Yaye also does the unthinkable. As a sign of dominance, "she stood over the man sitting on the floor" (p. 183), and to seal the act, "She stepped over Baye Tine with insolence" (p. 183), giving free rein to all the suppressed feelings of rebellion, even shouting at the Soumaré not to touch her. A true witness to the fact that "within her lay an unbounded will" (p. 182); that within them resided "strength, suicidal fervor" (ibid.) and "a patience, a restraint in her impulses that it was dangerous to release" (ibid.).

4. Effects

The effects of the revolt are both positive and negative.

4.1 Negative Effects

The negative effects manifest through all the exhortations to Yaye to restrain herself and never act like that again. For example, the Soumaré reminds her what the Quran says about such actions: "Dabo, one does not humiliate their husband in front of the children" (p. 169). Moreover, she defied everything, including her religion, since she is no longer willing to explicitly and unequivocally obey the Quran. Her act also draws all the women suddenly to the scene, where they remain "speechless" (p. 183).

4.2 Positive Effects: True Awakening

The positive effects are, to some extent, a true awakening. When the Soumaré informs her that one should not treat their husband like that, Yaye responds with newfound awareness: "And he, is he allowed to do that in front of my children?" (p. 183). This suggests her emancipation, or at least a sense of regained equality. Moreover, she becomes aware of her husband's uselessness: "A husband who gives you neither food nor clothes and curses your children—what good is he?" Perhaps she also realizes she had been wasting her time up until her revolt. That her life until now, in Whitehead's words via Theodosius Dobzhansky (1969: 77), was nothing but "fleeting scents of insignificance." Thus, she feels no regret: "Tine is no longer my husband, neither in front of people nor in front of my children." From that moment on, she can change and take full control of her life—now capable of changing her world since she has broken through the barrier that had previously threatened any such change. And perhaps this same awareness is what renders the other women silent, instinctively sensing their own potential for emancipation?

Therefore, this revolt frees Yaye from the chains of religion (defying Muslim doctrines), from her mindset (various fears—of repudiation, of Taaw and Astou being expelled, etc.), and from her futile dependence on

her husband. Another benefit is that from the moment of the revolt, she can assert her self-determination more effectively, especially since she has broken the yoke of her oppression. There is no more intimidation. In fact, optimism peaks: "Soon will come the awaited times, when beauty and goodness will be internal. And we will learn to appreciate them through a second look within ourselves" (p. 183).

5. Conclusion

This study has aimed primarily to highlight the distant and immediate incitements of the revolt, including both its negative and positive effects, which led to genuine self-awareness. Distant incitements include latent feelings of rebellion, full awareness of individuality, Yaye Dabo's qualities and flaws, external forces such as the economic situation (poverty, lack of education, unemployment, corruption), and the generational conflict. Immediate incitements include the attitudes of the sisters-in-law, Baye Tine's climax of anger, the decision to repudiate Taaw, Yaye's resolution to never be repudiated, the usual support of co-wives, the casting of curses, and the crossing of the line.

Our conclusion: only a woman can bring about her own emancipation, and no one can be forever enslaved, because as oppression intensifies, it inevitably hits a wall beyond which it cannot go—hence the involuntary outbreak of revolt. But this order of things opens up a dilemma: should we allow young, unprepared lovers to ruin their lives by entering parenthood unconsciously, or should we support them without worrying too much about encouraging others to do the same? And, one might ask, does Yaye Dabo emerge from her condition with enough dignity?

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