

The Value of a Child in Boubou Hama's *The Wonderful Adventure of Bi Kado an African Child (L'aventure extraordinaire de Bi Kado, fils de noir)*.

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ABSTRACT

The fact that the child occupies a prime importance in the African culture has driven some African writers like the Nigerian Buchi Emecheta (*The Joys of Motherhood*) and Flora Nwapa (*Efuru*) as like the Nigérienne Boubou Hama (*L'Aventure extraordinaire de Bi Kado Fils de Noir*), to discuss the impact of childlessness in traditional African household. This lack of child is seen as a misfortune, a tragedy or a calamity. The infertility (sterility) or barrenness leads, most of the time, to divorce and downgrades barren woman to the second class in her own community.

The aim of this paper is to discuss the prime importance of procreation in Boubou Hama's novel titled *The Wonderful Adventure of Bi Kado an African Child*. This autobiographical work makes the author's entire childhood genesis and puts into exergue the Zarma- Soñey people's cosmogony and religious beliefs of both Niger and Mali. This research paper, through a socio-historical and literary approach, will put an accent on four principal axes: (i) historical background of the Zarma- Soñey people; (ii) Cosmogony and religious beliefs among the Zarma- Soñey; (iii) value of a child among the Zarma- Soñey people.

Keywords: *cosmogony and religious beliefs, Zarma- Soñey people, value of a child.*

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Introduction:

The topic, "The Value of a child in West Africa: the case study of Boubou Hama's *The Wonderful Adventure of Bi Kado an African Child (L'aventure extraordinaire de Bi Kado, fils de noir)*", is a paper dedicated to revitalize or to give a new lease of life to the effort made by late Boubou Hama [4], the first Nigérienne primary school institutor (1929) who attended William Ponty (École normale William Ponty: 1926-1929), the famous colonial teachers' college based in Dakar, Senegal.

Apart from being a historian, a poet, philosopher, literary man, Boubou Hama was a politician who has played a major role in the cultural life of his country. Above all, he was the President of the Nigérienne National Assembly from 1958 to 1974.

Why do I want to insist on "the prime importance of a child" in Boubou Hama's writing? The answer will be given in the reviving of the author's childhood memory as he, himself has stated in the introduction of *The Wonderful Adventure of Bi Kado an African Child*: "The child, in Black Africa, was the Saint. Up to the year of puberty, he was considered as pure, in direct relation with the kind forces and spirits of nature." [L'Enfant, en Afrique noire, était le Saint. Jusqu'à l'âge de la puberté, il était considéré comme pur, en relation directe avec les forces et les esprits de Bien de la nature (11)].

The above statement summarizes both Boubou Hama's vision on the significance of a child in Africa and the kid's relationship with the cosmic world. Here, my aim is to develop, as I have said it in the abstract, the significance of a baby in traditional African religious beliefs. For a better understanding, I have planned the work into three sub-chapters. The first one deals with the historical background of Zarma- Soñey people; the second part is concerned with the cosmogony and religious beliefs among the Zarma- Soñey; and in the third section I will develop the importance of a child among the Zarma- Soñey people.

The historical background of Zarma- Soñey people:

Historically Zarma and Soñey (Songhay or Songhaï) are two different ethnical groups. Several sources relate their foundation. While one source stated that the Zarma are originated from Saham (in present day Oman sultanate), a second source mentioned that they are a West African population living mainly in Niger Republic where they represent 28% of the population. The same source indicates that a minority of them is present in Nigeria (around Kan-Giwa), Benin (Kandi area), Ghana and Burkina Faso (all along Nigérienne border). There is a third source which emphasizes on the fact that the Zarma have emigrated from Debo Lake, a region of the River Niger internal delta, between Mopti and Gundam, in the western edge of the Soñey Empire. And very likely, that is the reason of the link Zarma- Soñey especially in term of linguistic closeness, religious beliefs and political organization resemblance or identicalness.

Right from the 15th century, Zarma have left the Debo Lake sector in favor of Gao area. They keep on moving southwards in the middle of the 16th century to settle down in the Anzuru and the Zarmaganda in the north of Niamey, the present day Nigérienne capital. Due to political and economical problems, some Zarma, around the 17th and the 18th

centuries, jam from Zarmaganda to the Niger valley towards the south of Niamey, heading the south-east of Fakara and Zigui hills.

After the war with the Tamashek (1800) and the Fulani Jihad (1804), in the 19th century (between 1856 and 1866), the Zarma divided their region into three areas (Boboye, Zarmaganda, and Zarmatarey).

Like the Zarma, the Songhai are also said to be originated from Niger River valley. Right from the 7th century, these animists settled down in Koukia area, then later on in Gao. They constitute an important ethnical group living in three countries: Mali, Niger and Benin. These people located in West Africa, have got a famous Empire known as the *Sonje* Empire (end of 15th century to the beginning of the 16th century.).

The *Sonje* are mixed people from several combinations: Soninke, Fulani, Tamashek and Gulmance. This mixture happens through centuries. Culturally, they are close to the Tamashek but mainly very close to the Zarma and the Dendi with whom they share approximatively the same language. Jean Rouch distinguishes four groups of *Sonje*: the masters of the earth (Kadoli); the masters of water (Sorko), the masters of the bush (hunters – Gow) and the descents of the Sonni and the Askia, to who are added several assimilate groups. Alain Froment, *Le Peuplement Humain de la Boucle du Niger*, Paris, Éditions de l'ORSTOM, coll. « Collection Travaux et Documents »[5].

These different groups of *Sonje* have developed bad social relations. In the 11th century, Berbers coming from the North, escaping Arabs persecutions, settled down among the *Sonje*, particularly the *Do*, “the masters of the earth”. They profoundly mixed up, up to the point where they cannot be identified from the original *Sonje* and they have founded the dynasty of the *Dia* (1009). These *Dia* check out the *Sonje Sorko* from Gao and get refuge towards the Debo Lake. After the *Dia*, Soni Ali Ber the *Si*, has got the power in 1464 and founded the dynasty of the *Si*. The third dynasty (*Askia*) has started with Mohamed Touré who is well known as Askia Mohamed and who made Islam as the State religion (<http://www.histoire-afrique.org/printarticle>).

Now that I briefly recall the Zarma- *Sonje* history, I can move to the cosmogony and religious beliefs among the Zarma- *Sonje*.

Cosmogony and religious beliefs among the Zarma- *Sonje*:

Boubou Hama, through his novel *The Wonderful Adventure of Bi Kado an African Child*, has discussed the theme of cosmogony and religious beliefs among the Zarma- *Sonje*. Cosmogony comes from the Greek *Kosmos* meaning universe and *gonos* meaning generation. The term has two significances: (i) either a mythical story dealing with the creation of the universe, sometimes dealing with the emergency of societies, or (ii) the science of celestial things creation like planets, stars and galaxies.

For the Zarma- *Sonje*'s religious beliefs, the writer put forward the traditions, customs and cultural practices of his people. But in this specific case, he insists on the value of a child as he has said in the introduction of his book, « L'aventure extraordinaire de Bi Kado, L'Enfant de noir »: ... Bi Kado will assess, in this book, inside which he voluntarily decides to type, as much as possible, the clear life of a black child from the ancient Africa, otherwise, the life of this kid at the dawn of colonization, this subjective life perhaps, nevertheless precise because told by an astonish memory that God, fortunately, has gifted Bi Kado. ... And, that one is I; this is the intimate dialogue with my memory, with that one, telling my life all along time, through successive images, logging in my soul, images which are far from being truded (Translation mine in the whole paper).

[... Bi Kado rendra compte dans ce livre dans lequel il se propose de faire saisir, autant que possible, la vie claire d'un enfant noir de l'ancienne Afrique, sinon la vie de celui-ci à l'aube de la colonisation, cette vie subjective peut-être, cependant précise parce que servie par l'étonnante mémoire dont Dieu, heureusement, a doté Bi Kado. Et, celui-ci, c'est moi-même, c'est le dialogue intime avec ma mémoire, avec celle-ci racontant ma vie au fil du temps, à travers des images successives, en moi, qui sont loin d'être estompées.] (12)

The above statement is that of the author who has attested that it is a pure and correct childhood memory in which he is telling his life all along episodes or time. It seems that he is preparing his readers to what they will discover while reading the book. Let us start with the Zarma- *Sonje*'s cosmogony.

Cosmogony of the Zarma- *Sonje*:

The main concern in this sub-part is the artistry way in which Boubou Hama succeeds to narrate the major components of the *Sonje* cosmogony in his regional novel *The Wonderful Adventure of Bi Kado an African Child*. Through a story teller's style and using a sacred formula: seniors, elders, wise old men and also illustrious scientists [des grands, des vieux, des vieillards sages, et aussi des savants illustres] (15), as a refrain, he does well to keep *Sonje* elders'

attention as to follow his narration. Another formula is also the traditional manner a child is supposed to sit among the elders: Bi Kado, the baby, is seated as the same as the Easterners, like the Songhay children... Nevertheless well behaved in the African way, he kept on fixing the floor, lowering the eyes to show his submission to tradition. [Bi Kado, le bébé, s'assit à l'orientale, à la façon des enfants Songhay... cependant sage, à l'africaine, il continua toujours de fixer le sol, de baisser les yeux sur la terre en signe de soumission à la tradition.] (27).

This comparison points out the authenticity and the duration of the *Soyey* traditions. The two examples stand for a warm up, in order to prepare both the elders and the readers to what will follow next; a kind of forthcoming events. Bi Kado says on pages 35-36: ... I am amazing you; I astonish you for sure... I am the shade of a light, immaterial, I am not less than a talking reality which walks, eats and that you have seen jumping or sitting,... If I bend downwards my head, if I keep on looking at the floor, that is the proof I respect you and I did not part with the tradition... But I am animating (or spurring) it by renewing and renovating it, to give it, its dynamism, a new identity and wings! [... je vous intrigue, je vous étonne sans doute... je suis l'ombre d'une lumière, immatériel, je n'en suis pas moins une réalité qui parle, qui marche, qui mange et que vous avez vu sauter ou assis, ... Si je baisse la tête, si je tiens les yeux toujours fixés sur le sol, c'est le signe que je vous respecte et que je n'ai pas rompu avec la tradition... Mais que je l'anime en la renouvelant, en la rénovant pour lui redonner son dynamisme, une nouvelle identité et des ailes !]

The above statement has a link with the Zarma- *Soyey* spirituality like in the Ghanaian writer, Ayi Kwei Armah's [6] *Fragments* with the character of Naana, Baako's grandmother, the old lady representing the ancestors. She has insisted on the cyclicity of the birth and death: "My spirit is straining for another beginning in a place where there will be new eyes and where the farewells that will remain unsaid here will turn to a glad welcome and my ghost will find the beginning that will be known here as my end" (196). At the end of the novel, Naana concludes with the idea of mysticism, mainly the endless world: "... you are the end, the beginning, you who have no end, I am coming" (201).

Both Ayi Kwei Armah and Boubou Hama have the same viewpoint in terms of representing the values of the old Africa. Boubou Hama asserts on page 46 of *Bi Kado*... that "Black Africa, wherever you go, aren't they different varieties that tolerate each other by growing rich from their multiple variable experiences?" [L'Afrique noire, partout, n'est-elle pas variétés différentes qui se tolèrent en s'enrichissant de leurs expériences valables multiples ?] While the Ghanaian novelist is complaining about the collapse of traditions, the Nigerienne writer is thinking about how to promote and protect African values. Through the character of Bi Kado, Boubou Hama succeeds, in a childhood memory, to introduce and identify the different chief priests of the Zarma- *Soyey* in these words: They are all around, in their great number: Farka Bera the dean; Gantangaran, the Sonianke, (*Soyey* ethnical group); Boundi, the blacksmith; Kadana, the Zîma; Kanga Tandake, the chief; and among them are also present, the hunters, the Sorko (*Soyey* fishermen), the *Do* (pagans-Sorko- masters of Niger river water spirits), seers, dibias, people from Korte (pagans, masters of universe cosmic energy), venerated marabouts, weavers, bricklayers, cobblers... [Ils étaient tous là, au grand complet: Farka Béra le doyen; Gantangaran, le Sonianké ; Boundi, le forgeron ; Kadana, le Zîma ; Kanga Tandake, le chef ; et il y avait parmi eux: des chasseurs, des Sorko, des Do, des géomanciens, des Voyants, des Gens de Korté, des Marabouts vénérés, des tisserands, des maçons, des cordonniers...] (43).

The author depicts the representatives of Zarma- *Soyey* intermediaries of the gods (invisible spirits), one after the other, after listing them up, by precisising their roles in the cosmic world. Kanga Tandake, the chief of the village starts to speak first, as it is recommended by the traditions: in an eloquent proverb that I will translate in these words: Since ears have been created stuck to the head [depuis que l'oreille a été créée sur la tête - *za i na hanga taka bon ga*], who has ever seen such mysterious appearances that Bi Kado is showing us every evening, with teasing and joking verve? (43)

Mysterious appearances stand for the film that Bi Kado has projected to the elders of Foneko. At this point, there is a *quid pro quo*. The villagers think that Bi Kado wants to equal them whereas the hero wants to prove that sciences can be used to save and protect traditions. The author mixes his characters to point out the elders viewpoints. Gantangaran says: ...One has to see... if that reality is compatible with ours... No matter how Bi Kado is powerful, he will never compete the powerfulness of our magic, never, that of the tradition... Telling this with certain bitterness, Gantangaran takes out from a deer's horn a red and black powder. After grinding it, the Soninke... changes into a gigantic vulture... the scene lasts a certain time so that everybody may quite see it... Then calmed down at last, Gantangaran becomes the man whom he used to be. [... Il s'agit de voir... si cette réalité est compatible avec la nôtre... quelque soit son pouvoir Bi Kado n'églera jamais la puissance de notre magie, jamais, celle de la tradition... disant cela, avec une certaine amertume, Gantangaran sortit, d'une corne d'antilope, une poudre rouge et noir. Après l'avoir prise, le Soninké... se transforma en un vautour gigantesque... la scène dura un bon moment pour que tout le monde le vit bien... Puis apaisé enfin, Gantangaran redevint l'homme qu'il n'avait pas cessé d'être.] (44).

After Gantangaran's show, Kadana the Zîma shows also his *Soyey* cosmic power after a saying: "Though a torrent is transforming into waterfall, rumbling, it always drains its water into the river which drains them also in the great river"-

[Si cascadeur et grondant qu'est le torrent, il conduit toujours ses eaux dans la rivière qui les emporte au grand fleuve] (ibid). To prove his mystical power, Kadana the Zîma holds pebbles... press them... then avalanche of red and white kola nuts starts to fall.[... pour prouver ce qu'il venait de dire, Kadana saisit des cailloux... les pressa entre ses mains. Alors de celles-ci s'échappèrent une avalanche de noix de colas... rouges ou blanches.]

Boundi the blacksmith, in his side, dissolves with bare hands a big iron rod. The hunters transform themselves into lions, hyenas, and all sort of wild animals (44). The *Sorko* make fish, crocodiles and hippopotamus to get out from the dry sand of Foneko (ibid).

And that very morning, in front of Farka Bera, the dean and Kanga Tandake, the chief, the *Do*, the butchers, the weavers, the seers, the dibias, the cobblers, the tailors and the bricklayers compete in terms of magic or enchanted proofs which do not left Marabouts behind. They also pray God who granted them with a heavy rain though it is the dry season. [Et, ce matin là, devant Farka Béra, le doyen, et Kanga Tandaké, le chef, les *Do*, les bouchers, les tisserands, les géomanciens, les voyants, les cordonniers, les tailleurs et les maçons rivalisèrent de magies prenantes devant lesquelles les Marabouts ne voulurent pas, non plus, demeurer en reste. Leur prière à Dieu, exaucée, fit tomber une pluie abondante en pleine saison sèche.] (ibid)

The above descriptive statement puts into exergue the variety and diversity of the *Sojey* cosmogony. But the most important thing to keep in mind is his capacity and ability to drive elders' attention on how education, especially scientific growth, with the advent of cinematography, can play a peculiar role to safeguard forever *Sojey's* traditions and cultural rites. On the other hand, Boubou Hama has done well in listing up and describing his spirituality step by step with edifying examples from the holders or possessors of traditional cults. It will allow youngsters to see, to believe or at least to know hints of their cosmogony even after the death of the elders.

The presentation of the owners of traditions is highly organized with cases in point or realistic illustrations. Sometimes, the reader hardly believes in the author's narrative and depiction; especially when he has portrayed the hunters' mystery or secrecy; when they turn themselves into wild animals. That is why the author decides to record the most important part of the *Sojey* cosmogony for the coming generation. And that is also why when he has projected the film, the elders get angry on the spot, thinking he wants to prove his supremacy on their cosmogony. As a result, they immediately start to show what they can be able to do in terms of magic and their link with the invisible world.

After a debate between the elders, concerning Bi-Kado, Tarba another elder who has not say a word, stands up and says: "...Bi Kado is also a valuable power, wisdom, perhaps as also respectable as ours...why is it compulsory to fight him without listening him till the end?" [...Bi Kado, est, lui aussi, ainsi un pouvoir valable, une sagesse, peut-être aussi respectable que la nôtre... pourquoi nous devons nécessairement le combattre sans l'écouter jusqu'au bout... ?] (45-46). Tarba's statement appeases the elders' anger towards Bi Kado concerning his eagerness to prove them that sciences can help and strengthen traditions. Now the *quid pro quo* is solved and Boubou conclude the debate by simply saying: "only a patient person can milk a young cow which gives birth for the first time"- « C'est l'homme patient qui peut, seul, traire une jeune vache, qui met bas pour la première fois » - *Suranté no ga zan wayi* in *Sojey* (46).

Kodo Tori, after consulting the earth has said: "Bi Kado is really Doulo's son. He is, I certify it, son of Foneko... he is Hama Tandake's son... and also the earth has said he is a friend. He is not against our power... he will be the courageous renovator." « Bi Kado, est bien le fils de Doulo. Il est, je vous le certifie, enfant de Foneko... il est le fils de Hama Tandake...il n'est pas contre notre pouvoir...il en sera le rénovateur courageux. » (47-48). Kodo Tori's statement is reinforced by Tanda, the *noru karka* (frappeur de cauris - cauris user) who confirms that Bi Kado is a light, an illustrious scientist of Foneko.

This sequence helps the reader to understand the *Sojey* people's behavior. Though they are patient, they do not accept anybody to show that he is more powerful than them. That is why they automatically react to Bi Kado's attitude. And their prompt reaction has a link with their powerfulness, their connection with the psychic forces and mainly their behavior as famous magicians, soothsayers or seers capable of marvelous and wonderful things.

Bi Kado, at last, tells the elders of Foneko that he wants to give to their wonderful power a wit (a mind)... an eye which will eternally fix it to your sons' disposal, the sons of your sons, people who will come... in the future here in Foneko (55-56). Factually, he wants to insinuate that the very rich and varied *Sojey* cosmogony has to be safeguarded for the future generation. At this point, the author joins the other African novelists like the Nigerian Chinua Achebe, the Guinean Camara Laye, the Malian Seydou Badian and the Beninese Jean Pliya etc., who are toiling to regenerate, reinforce, defend and develop the African traditions and cultures.

To sum up this sub part, it can be said that the cosmogony of the Zarma- *Sojey* from the eyes of Boubou Hama in « L'aventure extraordinaire de Bi Kado, L'Enfant de noir » is well depicted through the eye of a kid. Though the narrator is a kid, the elders take time to listen to him and to follow word for word his *adventure*. They will never fail to complain or to disapprove once their interest is compromised. Their attitudes towards the young boy make me feel that children are venerated among the Zarma- *Sojey*. Let us see the next sub chapter in which the importance of a child among the Zarma- *Sojey* people is discussed.

The importance of a child among the Zarma- *Sojey* people:

On page 11, in the introduction of his novel *L'Aventure extraordinaire de Bi Kado, fils de Noir*, Boubou Hama asserts that “The child, in Black Africa, was the Saint. Up to the year of puberty, he was considered as pure, in direct relation with the kind forces and spirits of nature. Female or male, he is the receptacle where his strength and mind...are reflected. The child for the Africans was the seed, it was also the earth, more than that, a gift from God which moves on...the lack of a child in a household is a tragedy, and a reason of divorce in families...A child is then a hope...a sign of luck. Black Africa...accords to kids a prime importance. That is this privileged situation I will try to present in the social context of our continent in the dawn of colonization birth, when Africa was nearly itself.”

The author's above statement summarizes his thought and at the same time focus on the value of a child among the Zarma- *Sojey* people. In traditional Africa in general, parents have to feed, to dress and to cure their off-spring. They have the duty to educate them; that is to teach or to make them know and respect social life norms. Education is a constant preoccupation because parents know that their neighbors will judge them on the success or failure of their children's teaching. The impact will be either a good fame or a shame of the family. Kids have to be learnt the techniques that their parents have inherited from their parents too. If the child is a girl, her mother has to teach her the necessary knowledge that a female character has to master. Most of the Africans have a common denominator in terms of traditional education. The Guinean writer, Camara Laye's *The African Child* [7], for example, came five years before the independence of his country. By portraying the traditional religion through his father's supernatural power, Camara Laye contributes to the expansion of the African cultural identity and by the same occasion fights the doctrine of assimilation which has implied that the French culture was superior, and that Africans should abandon their own culture to become Frenchmen [8].

Concerning Bi Kado, the author emphasizes on the hero's *africanity* in these words: “Bi Kado ... is the African child, born in an African village, ‘Fonéko’, but who grows up through time, from the sap of black Africa and the active solidarity of this continent. His memory is witness to it. It remembers. In the course of multiple stories that follow, it will locate it and make him say in accents of dazzling clarity.” [Bi kado...est l'enfant noir, né dans un village africain, « Fonéko », mais qui grandit, au fil du temps, de la sève de l'Afrique noire, de la solidarité active de ce continent. Sa mémoire en est témoin. Elle s'en souvient. Au cours de multiples récits qui vont suivre, celle-ci va la lui situer et la lui faire dire dans des accents d'une clarté éblouissante.] (16).

According to the author, Bi Kado is a model. He has done what the character of *la grande royale*, in the Senegalese writer, Cheick Hamidou Kane's[9] *The Ambiguous Adventure*, has advised their children to do once in the Europeans 'school: “to select all what is good there and combine with all what is good in Africa in order to get a good model of development.” Bi Kado himself has said on page 57 of the book: “oh! Wise men of Fonéko, you have owned a spiritual force that nobody in the world has possessed. I admire and envy your spirit unequal powerfulness. I direct myself to you, because you have the spiritual power. I would like to exchange the materialistic power with you; it conserves the spiritual power.” « [O! Sages de Fonéko, vous possédez une force spirituelle qu'aucun peuple ne possède au monde. Je vous admire et j'envie votre puissance de l'esprit, inégalable. Je viens à vous, car vous avez l'œil de l'esprit. Je vous apporte, en échange, celui de la matière qui conserve l'esprit. »

The above assertion has a double significance: (i) the superficial meaning is the submissive attitude of Bi Kado towards the elders, their culture and traditions on the one hand and the recognition of the powerfulness of their psychic forces in relation to the invisible world on the other hand; (ii) the deep meaning is the role played by sciences or scientific inventions thanks to which *Sojey* traditional rites can be confined, secured and safeguarded.

Bi Kado keeps on developing his thought in the following words: “... I will not destroy your spiritual world, but, I come to secure them in order to allow them to resist to time weariness. I will conserve them so that you can transmit them to coming generations, to other people so that... they accept to engage, legally, the useful ‘dialogue’ with you.” [... je veux vous conserver pour que vous transmettiez votre pensée magnifique aux générations de l'avenir, à d'autres peuples pour ... qu'ils acceptent d'engager, dans la l'égalité, le « dialogue » utile avec vous.] (59)

The author through the character of Bi Kado continues to sensitize the elders on the advantages of scientific progress. Sciences can help people to safeguard their traditional religious beliefs for their own coming children and for

other ethnical groups and even worldwide. Bi Kado as a Fonéko native son has succeeded to help his fellow villagers through the knowledge he has acquired from the Whiteman's school. He has recorded the most important aspects of the *Sojey* culture and traditions. This act will allow them to last long and to be known nationwide and worldwide. Here, the child has shown his importance. He has done well to select the best of the European culture and combine it with the best of the African civilization to get profit from the two systems. It is not useless that the *Sojey* give a great importance to a child. They are convinced that one day he will be among the leaders. That is why a Hausa proverb said: *mai dukushi shi yake da doki dan watan watarana zai hau abunai idan ya tat'talashi*. [He, who owns a baby horse, will later on have a horse if he entertains it.].

Boubou Hama seizes the opportunity to put a stress on the children's future; especially with the advent of the colonial school. He has said that he "wants African kids to continue to dance, to sing always good games of their country first; he does not want them to always and exclusively imitate other people even if they are white... I want our boys to perform in our dances, songs, African games and in our own good human civilization..." [« je veux que les enfants continuent de danser, de chanter, toujours de bon jeux, de leurs pays d'abord; qu'ils n'imitent pas, toujours, exclusivement, d'autres hommes, même quand ils sont Blancs ... je veux que les enfants de mon pays se réalisent dans nos danses, dans nos chants, dans nos jeux Africains, dans leur bonne civilisation à eux, humaine... »] (69).

Here, in the novel, Boubou Hama as a character and a man of Fonéko, wants their children to be able to select all what is good in their best civilization to strengthen and to expand it for a better policy of development. He does not want to see their kids, with the influence of Western culture, to become, as said by Frantz Fanon, « a peau noir masque blanc. » [a black skin white mask].

It is not *fortuit* and *gratis* that the importance of a child among the Zarma- *Sojey* people is discussed in this paper. It is because a child is highly appreciated in this community. They know that if he is well educated, he will become part of the elders who will decide on the destiny of the whole ethnical group. The example of Boubou Hama himself is edifying.

Conclusion:

To conclude, one can say without mistaken that *The Value of a Child in Boubou Hama's The Wonderful Adventure of Bi Kado an African Child (L'aventure extraordinaire de Bi Kado, fils de noir)*, is a theme commonly share by both pioneers of the African Literature written in French and English. It is a topic dedicated to refresh or to revive the importance and significance of having a child in a traditional context. African consider children as the future administrators of the clan and for that, a special attention must be lay upon them; initiation and education are the most prominent tools to be gifted to a child. A couple without a child is hardly accepted and respected in traditional African; and for that, a barren lady has complicatedness in social insertion.

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