An Afrofeminist study of Pan-African Movement : *Interrogating Gender, Sexuality, and the Limits of Universal Emancipation*

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Interrogating Gender, Sexuality, and the Limits of Universal Emancipation

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Abstract

This study provides a critical examination of the Pan-African movement by analyzing its historical and contemporary limitations in addressing gender and sexuality. Although the movement has been instrumental in advocating for African liberation, it has often marginalized the perspectives and concerns of women and queer individuals. The research traces the movement's origins, revealing foundational essentialist notions of African identity that tend to exclude diverse expressions of identity. Furthermore, it critiques the movement's inadequate engagement with issues of gender and sexual identity, proposing instead a redefinition of its goals to be more inclusive. By integrating Afrofeminist perspectives, the study advocates for a more intersectional framework that embraces a vision of liberation for Afro-descendants. This approach urges the Pan-African movement to reconcile its principles with the lived realities and diverse experiences of all.

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PART I. INTRODUCTION

1. Problematic

1.1. Context : the origins of the movement and the object of the criticism

Pan-Africanism thought emerged as a response to the colonial encounter and the systemic oppression faced by african peoples under Western[1] imperialism. Its roots can be traced back to the late 18th and early 19th centuries when african intellectuals, activists, and leaders began to recognize the interconnectedness of their struggles against colonial domination and racial subjugation (Boukari-Yabara, 2017, 5). The advent of this colonialism in Africa, characterized by the exploitation of regional resources, the imposition of the hegemon's cultural norms, and the dehumanization of african peoples, served as the catalyst for the development of what will first be Pan-Negrist thought which is the earliest articulations of Pan-Africanism (Alvarado, n.d.-b, 1). Pan-Africanism and its roots in Pan-Negrism involve a reimagining of black[2] identity through resistance, revolution, and liberation expressed in theological, social, and economic terms (Dabiré, 2017, 7). This reshapes historical narratives and the understanding of exploitation, aiming to transcend them. The genesis of Pan-Negrism is seen in black intellectuals identifying with Africa as both their ancestral home and a symbol of emancipation, exemplified by figure like Ottobah Cugoano[3] (1787). This concept emerged within Afro-American religious and intellectual traditions, especially in diasporic contexts, alongside the establishment of Afro-American churches like the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC) and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AMEZC), which centered the

[1] In this work, when the term Western is used, it refers to an ideology, in the sense of cultural, political, and economic norms associated with Europe and North America in specific contexts.

[2] The word *Black* is used when an author places particular emphasis on its use.

[3] Ottobah Cugoano was an African abolitionist and writer, known for his 1787 work *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species*, where he condemned the transatlantic slave trade on ethical, political, and economic grounds, advocating for its immediate abolition.

Afro-descendant experience in Christianity (Alvarado, n.d.-b, 3). Pan-Negrism integrates religious and political traditions, focusing on Africa's emancipation and redefinition, influenced by Egyptocentrism, Afrocentricity, and Ethiopianism.

It is clear, therefore, that this ideology shaped the thoughts of West African intellectuals like Edward Wilmot Blyden (1861) and Alexander Crummell (1862). The Pan-Negrist imagination seeks to establish an « African modernity » by reinterpreting a global African history and tradition within an industrialized, commercial society, providing an alternative to European modernity (Alvarado, n.d.a-, 4). It critiques colonial notions of civilizing missions and questions who should lead Africa's modernization. However, some critiques point out that Pan-Negrism, by focusing solely on a racial approach to what constitutes the African (Dabiré, 2017, 8), neglects other aspects of identity and ostracizes entire groups such as biracial Africans. As will be explained later, Blyden who advocates this essentialist view of Pan-Negrism, tends to present a monolithic image of the black race by aligning himself with racialists sociological theorists such as that of Joseph Arthur de Gobineau (Boukari-Yabara, 2017, 33-34). Through its members, Pan-African thought has inherited this culturally homogenous approach to what constitutes the African subject, conflicting with the specificity of *Black Individuals* (Tibebu, 2012), particularly the individual construction of Afro-descendant subjects in the complexities of modernity (Alvarado, n.d.-a, 5).

The Pan-African movement gained momentum with the convening of the Pan-African Congresses[4], which brought together Afro-descendants intellectuals and white progressives to discuss strategies for resisting colonial rule and advancing the cause of human rights[5] (Boukari-Yabara, 2017, 58-59). The first congress (called conference) was held in London in 1900, followed by subsequent congresses in Paris (1919), London (1921), New York City (1923) and others have followed to the present day. These gatherings provided a platform

[4] The Pan-African Conferences and the Pan-African Congresses from 1900 until today are the same events. This semantic difference is introduced by W.E.B. Du Bois, who, in order to emphasize his role in the conception of these historical gatherings for the movement, alters the term *conference* initially chosen by the activist and intellectual Trinidadian Henry Sylvester-Williams. To facilitate readability, the term *congress*, which is more widely recognized, will be used to refer to these gatherings (Boukari-Yabara, 2017, 59)

[5] According to the Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary (2024), human rights can be defined as « The basic rights to fair and moral treatment that every person is believed to have ». Throughout this study, whenever rights are employed or implied, it is this definition that will be referenced.

for these thinkers to articulate their vision of a united community free from colonial domination and racial oppression. It must be understood that the ideas of Pan-Africanism were further popularized by influential leaders such as Marcus Garvey (1923), co-founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), and W.E.B. Du Bois (1903), a prominent African-American intellectual and civil rights activist. Garvey's advocacy for African self-reliance and economic empowerment resonated with many Afro-descendants, while Du Bois's concept of the « double consciousness » of African descendants highlighted the psychological effects of systemic racism on black people's identity. Nevertheless, as we shall see these two intellectuals are representative of a symptomatic trend in the movement. The fact that the spotlight on Pan-African debates has been characterized by a predominant focus on issues and perspectives articulated by men (Bruneel & Gomes Sylva, 2017, 63). From a historical perspective, the movement seeks to embody a collective effort characterized by formal gatherings that bring together leaders from various Pan-African movements across different regions, each advocating distinct principles representative of their respective tenets. This structural framework has contributed to an disproportionate representation of male voices in articulating the collective discourse and ideological spectrum of the movement and its institutions (Roy-Campbell, 1996, 46).

Pan-African congresses aimed to unify and address the collective plight of people of African descent worldwide and advocate for their rights and dignity. But the representation of women remained limited, with their perspectives often marginalized or overshadowed by male counterparts. Despite their participation in particular that of notable female figures such as Amy Jacques Garvey and Adelaide Casely-Hayford, their contributions were at times subsumed within the broader discourse shaped by male intellectuals and leaders (Adi, 2019, 1-3). Furthermore, even within the context of discussions pertaining specifically to gender and women's issues, it was often invoked to bolster broader arguments rather than being foregrounded in their own right (Blain & al., 2016, 139). This phenomenon is evident in the writings and speeches of prominent Pan-African thinkers and activists, where references to women's struggles and aspirations are frequently framed within the context of broader societal or political analyses (Reddock, 2007, 256). In essence, the Pan-African debates, while instrumental in shaping collective consciousness and mobilizing efforts towards liberation and empowerment, have often reflected and perpetuated gender hierarchies. Predominant currents within this movement often remain reticent or even outright refute challenges to hegemonic conceptions of gender and sexuality (Bruneel & Gomes Silva, 2017, 70). However, the

epistemological fields dedicated to studying gender relations between Pan-Africans and, more broadly, Afro-centric activism are gaining increasing resonance within African and Afro-diasporic civil societies (Roy-Campbell, 1996 ; Adi, 2019). Over time, these fields have gradually found resonance among Afro-descendant[6] women and queer[7] individuals within this community. Their experiences and teachings shed considerable light on the intricacies that shape the Afro-descendant subject (Van Klinken, 2020). This should not merely be passively understood and acknowledged in the footnotes of the movement, but comprehended and integrated as essential elements to achieve the ideal of political, economic, and social unification that the movement strives for.

1.2. Contribution and research question

At the end of the 90s, the sociologist Gertrude Mianda (1997) established that it might be premature to speak of an African feminist movement due to its lack of Pan-African structure, with localized movements in countries like Cameroon and Senegal, and nearly non-existent presence elsewhere. However, she acknowledges the existence of an African feminist discourse within the works produced by African women, although there is a scarcity of essays specifically focused on feminism in Africa (87). In light of this observation, she emphasized the significance of directing attention towards these early advocates of African feminism. In the other hand, the seeds of an afro-centric feminist activism have been sown in both America and Europe since the 60s and 70s (Combahee River Collective, 2014, 272 ; Larcher, 2017, 104). This period saw

[6] For the purposes of this study, the term *Afro-descendants* will exceptionally be used to refer to the broad population of African descendants, encompassing both Africans and populations of the African diaspora. The term *Africans* will either be used to deliberately focus on populations within the African continent or to emphasize the Africanity of the targeted populations in a given argument.

[7] *Queer* refers to a gender identity or sexuality that diverges from society's traditional concepts of gender and sexuality. It encompasses identities and orientations that do not conform to established binary frameworks and heteronormative assumptions (Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary, 2024). It will be used in this work to refer to perspectives and identities that challenge these established norms without being confined to specific categories. Conversely, *LGBTQ+* will be employed when the focus is on normative issues pertaining to these particular groups.

the emergence of Black feminism and Afrofeminism (the second deeply inspired by the first), distinct from mainstream feminism, which has been scrutinized and critiqued for its focus on the experiences of white middle-class women. Grounded in issues specific to their respective contexts (though not devoid of interconnections), Black feminism and Afrofeminism aim to unite Afro-descendant women, as well as Black queer movements, against the heteropatriarchal and classist norms of neoliberal societies (Blain & al., 2016, 143). In its terminology, Afrofeminism aspires to be more inclusive, stemming from the struggles of Afro-descendant women from various communities and locations. It particularly bridges the gap between issues faced by women on the African continent and those within their diasporas, notably in Europe and the Caribbean (Melyon-Reinette, 2019, 5). In a manner akin to the principles of Black feminism, Afrofeminism considers the intersectionality of struggles, particularly those related to sexuality. In its inception, it's the Pan-African background of its members that steers the movement towards highly tangible and targeted issues, such as the fight against female genital mutilation, polygamy, and forced marriage (Kpenou, 2023, 11-12). Gradually, propelled by a new generation of Afro-descendant intellectuals, the movement has more formally articulate critiques of the social norms that impose life patterns upon them in both the private and public spheres. Consequently, there has been an increasing focus on the study and analysis of gender dynamics and pre-colonial expressions of sexuality (Day, 2021, 13). It is through this lens that we will uncover, in this research, which stands as a cornerstone of a much larger structure, the struggles they have waged and continue to wage today to carve out a distinct place within the broader Pan-African movement as a whole.

Thus, the research question of this study is to know :

How can the integration of Afrofeminist theoretical frameworks contribute to redefining the ethical underpinnings of Pan-African thought?

The problematic with this research question lies in the complexity of integrating Afrofeminist within the context of redefining what can be identified as the ethical foundations of Pan-African ideas. The objective is to contribute to shaping thought in such a way that it influences thinkers and their institutions (Van Klinken, 2020, 1). This involves navigating the divergent perspectives and priorities within both Afrofeminist and Pan-Africans, addressing potential tensions between gender equality and collective liberation, and grappling with historical power dynamics that may marginalize certain voices within the discourse (Tamale,

2020). Additionally, it necessitates a nuanced understanding of how intersectional gender approaches can impact the deontological aspects of a movement, while also recognizing the potential for resistance or backlash from entrenched ideologies within both movements (Harris, 1996, 25). Therefore, the challenge lies in not only conceptualizing the integration of these frameworks but also in practically implementing and sustaining this redefinition. The aim being to promote inclusivity[8] and equity in Pan-African institutions and therefore in African contexts (Campbell, 2018, 1077). This study endeavors to scrutiniz these dynamics, it aims to elucidate the role of freedom standards regulation within the movement institutions and its implications (Adi, 2019). Furthermore, it seeks to propose actionable strategies to mitigate this disparity and promote greater inclusivity, thereby advancing a more equitable Pan-African dialogue.

To develop this argument, this study looks at the multifaceted discourse of Pan-Africans[9], beginning with an in-depth exploration of its theoretical framework and the conception of Afro-descendance. The analysis traces the genesis of gender relations within Pan-Africanism, highlighting the contributions and challenges faced by Pan-African women. Additionally, it critiques the limitations of universalism and addresses the issues of queer people exclusion. Finally, the plan proposes a new vision for Afro-descendants in Pan-Africanism, advocating for a more inclusive and intersectional approach to the movement's future.

[8] *Inclusivity* refers to the practice of ensuring that all types of people, ideas, and perspectives are not only acknowledged but are also treated with fairness and equality. It involves actively incorporating diverse voices and viewpoints into discussions, decision-making processes, and structures, thereby fostering an environment where every individual and concept is given equal consideration and respect (Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary, 2024).

[9] Unlike the term *Pan-Africanist* which historically refers to a specific group of radical revolutionary activists (Mangalala, 2023), *Pan-African* is more broadly defined and encompasses Afro-descendants, institutions, ideas that, to varying degrees, embrace the ideals of African unification and independence (thereby including Pan-Africanists) (Nantambu, 1998, 562). For these individuals and entities, Pan-Africanism is understood as a politico-socio-cultural concept, which is the perspective adopted in this work.

2. An Afrofeminist Theoretical Perspective

2.1. The conception of the Afro-descendant subjects

2.1.1. Afrocentricity

For an Afrofeminist critique and approach of Pan-Africanism, it is necessary to understand what the movement considers to be the constitutive elements of the African. The primary endeavor of Pan-Africanism was to consolidate under a unified banner the « Negro people » globally (Appiah, 1999, 2). Embarking upon an inaugural focus on a tripartite dynamic encompassing Africans, their diasporas and Afro-Americans [10], activists confronted the formidable challenge of discerning a substantive nexus among these factions, each characterized by its distinct socio-cultural paradigms. This established fact engendered the emergence of the Afrocentric approach. The Afrocentric perspective on Pan-Africanism does not root its conceptual beginnings in the reaction to European slavery and colonialism. Instead, it dates back to 3200 BC, when Pharaoh Aha unified the upper and lower regions of the Nile to create a cohesive nation aimed at resisting foreign invasions (Nantambu, 1998, 568-569). It will re-emerge in the academic world in the 1950s before being greatly popularised by Molefi Kete Asante in 1974. Afrocentricity recalibrates the focus in terms of epistemology by taking Africa as the central perspective (Chawane, 2016, 79-80).

Modern Afrocentricity encompasses two pivotal dimensions. Firstly, it underscores its Pan-African ethos, emphasizing the shared historical and cultural experiences between Afro-Americans, Africans and their other diasporas. This ethos advocates for a revival of unity, drawing upon a historical philosophy of strength in collective struggle. Proponents argue that these groups face analogous challenges, such as economic marginalization, political

[10] Several scholars expound upon a bipartite nexus involving Africans and Afro-Americans (Friedman, 1969). They concur that at a given time the African diaspora constitutes a microcosm unto itself, but according to them this assertion holds particular relevance from the generation commonly designated as second-generation immigrants. But this position ignores the involvement of Caribbean, Afro-Latino and Afro-Asian thinkers, some of whom have been around since the colonial period initially as an African diasporas.

subjugation, and cultural alienation, which can be traced back to Eurocentrism. They posit that Pan-African thought has roots driven by a profound awareness of mutual interests (Adeleke, 1998, 506). Secondly, Afrocentricity asserts an identity claim, asserting that Africans and the diasporic black community constitute one people, despite centuries of separation. Asante highlights Eurocentrism as a primary threat to black Americans, contending that it has persisted throughout history despite emancipation and societal progress. To counter this, he advocates for Afrocentricity, which aims to re-establish African heritage as the cornerstone of black American epistemology. The goal is to cultivate an awareness of African identity and culture as a defense mechanism against the pervasive influence of Eurocentrism. Afrocentricity involves a process of re-education and re-socialization to eradicate the « tragic conception » of Afro-descendant history and heritage, ultimately fostering a deeper connection with Africa through increased knowledge and understanding (507).

Nevertheless similar to other social, economic, and political movements, Pan-Africanism has functioned as both a unifying and divisive force since its inception. Engaging in a contextualization discourse yields less significance than commonly perceived[11]. Operating as a social laboratory, Afro-descendants can replicate numerous societal patterns they seek to critique. As mentioned in the introduction, in its early days, the movement adopted the dominant racial discourse of the colonial era, where some Pan-Negrists embraced blackness as part of African identity, placing non-*pure* black individuals in the position of the Other (Boukari-Yabara, 2017). This early attachment to the idea of black identity can be seen as one of the first attempted fomulations of Afrocentricity. Thus, Edward Wilmot Blyden, a 19th-century intellectual and Pan-African leader, that we quoted earlier, immigrates to Liberia in 1851. He advocated fervently for the repatriation of people of African descent to Africa to escape racial oppression and to realize their potential. He strongly believed in the establishment of a strong

[11] A cultural relativist approach might argue that disparities in visibility within the Pan-African movement regarding gender can be attributed to the historical context of the era. Indeed, during the inception of the movement, societal norms often relegated black women to subordinate roles. However, this does not exempt it from criticism since within this restrictive environment, early manifestations of female Pan-Africanist agency emerged, advocating for their perspectives and gender issues (Kanarek, 2013). Yet, this study will show how these voices were frequently marginalized, hindering their amplification within the discourse. Furthermore, the plight of non-heterosexual activists adds another layer of complexity, as many were compelled to self-censor due to prevailing societal prejudices and fears for their lives. Consequently, a significant number of non-heterosexual Pan-Africanists tragically passed away without ever openly expressing their sexual orientation.

and independent African nation, which motivated him, along with others, to immigrate to Liberia, a country founded by emancipated slaves from America (Adi & Sherwood, 2003, 11-12). Giving impetus to a future movement led by Marcus Garvey (14). Deeply influenced by his personal experiences and the intellectual milieu of his time, Blyden gave race an important place in his research. However, he rejected the hierarchical classification of races, arguing for the recognition of multiple races without subscribing to ideas of racial inferiority. He encouraged pride in black identity, which he saw as crucial to progress. Blyden opposed the mixing of races and challenged the classification of individuals with even a trace of black ancestry as black (Kasanda, 2016, 181). This perspective, which was already significantly undermined by the exclusionary processes it perpetuated within Afro-descendant communities, has faced even greater challenges in the new wave of globalisation in the 20th century. The ongoing changes of our societies towards interconnected networks, facilitated by both material and immaterial flows, has eroded the once dominant notion of racial purity based solely on melanin levels (Cheruiyot, 2019, 258-259). We will then see that, in this context, the contemporary relevance of Afrocentric perspectives is increasingly questioned.

2.1.2. Critique and controversies

Afrocentricity has been fiercely criticized, especially when it was defended by Asante. It must be said that this perspective often adopts a reductive approach to African cultures while engaging in a complex dialectic with conventional understanding (both shaping it and presenting it as inherently natural), deeply embedded in folklore, rituals, and communal practices. During the 90s, Afrocentrists, while critiquing White racist ideologies, simultaneously secure a comfortable Afrocentric position within the established Eurocentric academic framework (Marovatsanga & Garrett, 2022). Akinyela (1995, 29-31) rigorously challenged the perspectives of individuals like Asante, particularly their tendency to support Afro-descendant despots. In fact, it is arguably not coincidental that Afrocentrists and cultural nationalists in the U.S. have frequently endorsed dictators such as Mobutu, Amin, Burnham, and the Duvaliers, who exploited and oppressed African descendants while ostensibly promoting traditional African customs and culture (Marovatsanga & Garrett, 2022, 94). Afrocentricity has indeed faced substantial criticism that has characterised its rejection by part of the academic community (Howe, 1998 ; Walker, 2001 ; Adeleke, 2011). This theoretical

framework, often directed at Afro-Americans with limited formal education, has been criticized for its lack of scholarly rigor. In an understandable way, a growing concern among Afrocentric scholars regarding the absolutist views of figures like Asante and Marimba Ani on identity (Adeleke, 2011, 122). Since while Asante's work highlights the Pan-African ethos, it also perpetuates a romanticized and idealized view of Africa, emphasizing an illusory harmony (101-102). This will prompt others to characterize Asante's primary text on Afrocentricity, as a form of cultural recuperation (a self-help or psychological primer) that, when examined within the broader context of the recovery movement, appears rather banal (Walker, 2001, 78).

The primary issue is that North American theorizing, which is the most well-known, is deeply rooted in a pronounced parochialism (Howe, 1999, 105). This parochialism reflects a broader lack of interest shown by certain theorists in Africa itself (248). This discourse often dismisses the concept of evidence as Eurocentric, replacing it with an ill-defined « soul as method » (153). In the context of the Black African Diaspora, the debate surrounding Afrocentricity is heavily influenced by the U.S. political and cultural environment. A historical contextualization of Afrocentric ideas suggests that Asante's work significantly influenced the Afro-American intelligentsia and the emerging upper middle class (Marable, 1993, 118). It provided a framework for rationalizing their racial identity while simultaneously preserving their relatively privileged class status (119). This makes it clear that a vulgar Afrocentrism provided a vague sense of ethnic superiority without necessitating rigorous critique, focusing on a romanticized reconstruction of the past to address contemporary racial and class challenges (121).

A final important point of contention is the rejection by some Afro-Americans thinkers of the concept of hibridity, which is central to the diasporic experience. They advocate the primacy of African identity in Black American self-conception (Adeleke, 2011, 26). This assertion will be gradually deconstructed in the course of the study, as it contributes to the creation of a fixed identity. The most radical approach, for instance, dismisses any notion of difference between continental Africans and Black Americans (Adeleke, 2011, 96). It tends to be binary and reductive, overlooking the nuanced realities of individuals and communities. Obviously, this leads to exhibit intolerance toward those who do not conform to a unadulterated African identity. This point is even more striking in Asante's views on male sexuality, which dismiss homosexuality as incompatible with national development while calling for its tolerance until Afrocentric education is implemented (Walker, 2001, 122). In its effort to center Black Americans and enhance their self-esteem, Afrocentricity has conjured antagonism towards

various « others » including Europeans, Jews, gay individuals, and black people who do not share the Afrocentric worldview (Walker, 2001, 80). It is therefore obvious that the challenge will therefore be to undo the monolithic fundamentals that have a profound influence on the Afrocentrism of Pan-Africans.

2.1.3. The challenge of a use of Afrocentrism with Afrofeminism

Understanding the legitimacy of these critiques naturally leads to questioning the utility of employing Afrocentricity within the framework of a redefined Pan-African thought. However, it is essential to recognize that the Afrocentric perspective is deeply intertwined with Pan-Africanism (Tamale, 2020, 445). Although Asante coined the term and its initial formulation, remember that its essence has existed since the rebellion of enslaved people against colonial empires. Influenced profoundly by his North American context, Asante's perspective carries the biases of African American activists who have theorized about global Afro-descendant activism. He advocates and theorizes based on his beliefs about what Africa and Afro-descendants represent (Haskett, 1972). This is akin to the efforts of African immigrants' descendants, who, through their parents' or ancestors' stories and media legitimately strive to defend an heritage they are still in the process of understanding[12]. All this without explicitly invoking Afrocentricity, although the underlying concept remains the same. Yet, this is where Pan-Africanism finds its relevance : this heritage, whether desired or not, is often caricatured and amalgamated, only to be thrown back at them in various spheres of European or American societies where they reside (Lacirignola, 2023, 85). Consequently, they attempt to come together by focusing on the similarities in their experiences. For Afro-descendant women, there arises a need to unite and present a collective front on social and academic levels.

Thus, Sylvia Tamale's work (2020) becomes pivotal in this regard, drawing sustenance from an Afrofeminist epistemological domain to puncture the enclosing membrane of this barrier significantly. This study endeavors to delve into this realm, highlighting the imperative of

[12] In her work *Afropéa*, the writer Léonora Miano (2020) observes the fervent defense of wax fabric among Afro-descendants in Europe. Despite its widespread use in Central Africa, this textile does not originate from the continent; rather, it is a quintessential product of globalization.

ongoing decolonization within the consciousness of both the colonized and their progeny (DuBois, 1903). Central to this exploration is the application of Afrofeminist perspectives, prompting an examination of Pan-Africanism through a feminist lens devoid of heteronormativity. This lens prompts scrutiny of the rampant homophobia exhibited by influential figures within the movement, acknowledging its potential for devastation akin to the presumed indifference of Pan-African women. Who have endured processes of marginalization and in turn perpetuate them when they question, for instance, the existence of transgender identity (Van Klinken, 2020). Afrofeminism emphasizes the agency and resistance of Black women in the face of intersecting oppressions. It asserts the importance of centering black women's voices and experiences in the struggle for liberation. By challenging patriarchal and racist structures both within and outside of Pan-Africanist movements, Afrofeminism envisions a more inclusive and equitable expression of afrocentricity. It distinguished by its decolonial approach, and its critical examination of power structures and colonial legacies within feminist discourse (Tamale, 2020, 71). While Pan-Africanism typically focuses on unity and liberation from external oppression, and rarely establishes the ethical procedures for achieving this ideal. (Campbell, 2018).

The term decolonization is highly contested, with numerous definitions. According to Tamale, decolonization involves various processes aimed at deconstructing colonial interpretations and analyses of the social world (2020, 3). This perspective aligns with Fanon's discussions regarding the colonization of the mind. Fanon posits that for the colonized, mental decolonization involves a return to historical roots, fluency in cultural knowledge systems, cultivation of critical consciousness, and reclamation of humanity (Kane & Archibald, 2023). It will therefore be crucial in this study to address both the material and epistemic dimensions of coloniality in the Afrocentric movement. Afrofeminists argue that the epistemic level is particularly insidious and dangerous, operating in subtle and seemingly benign ways based on distorted understandings of African historiography, including gender (Tamale, 2020, 35). Thus, understanding « coloniality of power » is essential to recognizing that the structures and hegemonies of colonialism persist beyond political independence (29). Hierarchical dimensions and categorizations should be viewed as interconnected structural processes rather than separate systems of oppression (29). One major limitation in mainstream decolonial scholarship on Africa is its treatment of gender. As part of the colonial ideal, the world is organised ontologically through atomic, homogeneous, and separable categories. This categorical,

dichotomous, and hierarchical logic is central to modern, colonial, capitalist thinking about race, gender, and sexuality (Kame & Archibald, 2023, 168).

Taking these critiques into account, Afrocentricity can still be a valuable framework in political theory if it is redefined to address its limitations. This reworked Afrocentricity should integrate Afrofeminism, in line with a vision of incorporating diverse perspectives within Afrocentricity. By being shaped by the agency of Afro-descendants, including women and queer individuals, this approach would evolve with their experiences and sentiments of belonging, thus fostering resilience and challenging marginalization imposed by Eurocentric narratives. A modernized Afrocentricity must extend beyond traditional issues and incorporate discussions on the marginalization of women[13]. It should address how some legacies have been internalized and perpetuated within Afro-descendant communities, resulting in problems such as institutionalized homophobia and sexism in Pan-African movement. By embracing plurality, this adaptive Afrocentricity would promote inclusivity and intercultural dialogue. Such a framework would help create, at first, a more open Pan-African institutions, better aligned with the movement's aim of federating.

2.2. Deontological ethics for shaping inclusive Pan-African movement

With the aim of federating of the movement, it is certain that the association of Afrofeminism, Afrocentrism, and deontological ethics may initially seem unexpected. This because these frameworks originate from distinct intellectual traditions and address different, or even antagonistic, aspects of human experience (Campbell, 2018, 1055). So, the synthesis of these perspectives may seem contadictory; however, this work, much like Hortense Spillers' « idea to make Hegel speak [her] language » aims to accomplish a similar integration with Kant and others (John Hope Franklin Center at Duke University, 2017). It weaves these seemingly

[13] Not to suggest that sexual or gender discrimination were absent in pre-colonial Africa. Rather, it highlights the particular manner in which some Pan-Africanists, under the pretext of African cultural authenticity, have appropriated colonial discourses on these matters.

disparate strands into a coherent ethical framework capable of addressing the unique challenges faced by Afro-descendant communities. The background objective is to draw insights from the critiques that have already been articulated and to develop theory reflective of the modern world : in an interconnected manner.

Therefore, the Deontological Ethics, originating from the Greek words for duty (deon) and the study of (logos), represents a branch of normative theories in moral philosophy[14]. Unlike virtue theories, which focus on the kind of person one should be, deontology concerns itself with determining which actions are morally required, forbidden, or permissible (Alexander & Moore, 2007). Deontological theories evaluate choices based on their adherence to moral norms rather than their outcomes. By prioritizing moral norms over consequences, deontologists categorically prohibit certain actions, even if they lead to favorable outcomes, and emphasize individual agency in pursuing personal projects without constant regard for maximizing overall well-being (Benlahcene, 2018, 35 ; Alexander & Moore, 2007). Within the deontological paradigm, the rule deontology posits that individuals should consistently adhere to a set of predetermined rules or principles in all situations, thereby judging actions as ethical or unethical based on the rules themselves, rather than the consequences of those actions. This approach entails evaluating whether a given action conforms to a principle that one would be willing to see universally adopted. To determine the moral acceptability of an action, one must consider what rule would be followed if the action were taken and whether one would be willing for this rule to be universally applied (Benlahcene, 2018, 36). If the rule can be universally endorsed, then the action is morally permissible. Conversely, if one would not wish for the rule to be universally followed, then the action is morally impermissible. This principle underscores the importance of rationality in moral deliberation. Rationality demands consistency, thus it is inconsistent to undertake an action based on a principle that one would not endorse as a universal (37). Consequently, adherence to moral rules must be interpreted without exceptions, encompassing a broad range of ethical issues from truthfulness to the sanctity of individual freedom. This rigorous consistency forms the foundation of deontological ethics within a social

[14] The African academic field has developed ethical approaches that are highly pertinent to regulating the dynamics and relationships within Afrocentric movements (Tamale, 2020, 11). However, this work tends to privilege a normative approach that specifically addresses existing deficiencies in gender relations. While the deontological paradigm alone may have limited relevance in a Pan-African context, when this approach is reformulated within the framework of an Afrofeminist epistemology, it provides a complementary perspective that highlights the inconsistencies in both form and substance within the movement.

movement, guiding actions and decisions through unwavering adherence to established moral principles.

The deontological approach to rules from an Afrofeminist perspective within the Pan-African movement is fundamentally grounded in a set of principles derived from Pan-African demands for the respect and dignity of Afro-descendants. This ethical framework aspires to address the triple standard identified previously, which delineates freedom between cisgender men in the movement, cisgender women, and queer individuals in Pan-Africanism. The objective of this deontological approach is not to impose a singular opinion by eradicating all disagreements regarding the substance or form of the movement, nor is it to establish an Afro-liberalism. It aims to confront Pan-Africans with their own contradictions concerning the consideration of Afro-descendant voices. If Pan-Africanism is indeed a movement of solidarity and unity for all Afro-descendants, wherein their collaboration and involvement are crucial, how can one then interpret the lack of freedom and space for expression granted to certain groups (Moloi, 2017) ? This deontological framework seeks to uphold the principle of freedom by ensuring that all voices within the movement, particularly those of marginalized groups, are heard and respected. This approach emphasizes the importance of consistency in the application of Pan-African values, calling attention to the disparities in the treatment of different groups within the movement (Alexander & Moore, 2007). It highlights the necessity of recognizing and rectifying these internal contradictions to foster a truly inclusive and egalitarian movement. This ethical stance is grounded in the recognition that gender-based oppression is inextricably linked to racial oppression. This involves challenging homophobic and transphobic attitudes and practices that marginalize individuals (Tamale, 2020, 160). By adhering to these deontological principles, the Pan-African movement can better align its practices with its foundational ideals, and the upliftment of all Afro-descendants, ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to contribute to and shape the movement.

PART II. ANALYSIS

3. Genesis : of Gender Relations in Pan-Africanism

3.1. The symbol of women maroons

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the origins of protest movements and actions reminiscent of early Pan-Africanism can be traced back to before the mid-sixteenth century and persisted until the late nineteenth century. African cultural elements, reestablished in foreign lands, emerged as unifying forces and systems of communication, facilitating some of the most notable slave rebellions in recorded history. Significant insurrections occurred in 1522 in Santo Domingo and 1550 in Cuba. These events marked the beginning of a succession of revolts orchestrated by Africans, known as « Maroons » who are considered the first revolutionaries acknowledged by Pan-African activists (Clarke, 1988, 46).

This historical introduction, which may seem peculiar as the first point of the analytical section, is presented with intent. Maroonage is regarded as one of the earliest organized acts of anti-slavery and anti-colonial resistance. As we will elaborate throughout this section, unlike Pan-Africanism and Pan-Negrism, maroonage is not a political movement per se, but a term that refers to a specific form of slave escape (Miki, 2012, 495). It holds significant importance for Pan-Africanists[15], as it represents one of the initial examples that inspire the organization of African revolutionary groups. The micro-societies formed by the Maroons provide a framework for the dynamics within the independent movements being established by freedmen and their descendants (Kopytoff, 1978, 288). Additionally, tracing back to the Maroons reveals the origins of an argument asserting that the first anti-slavery rebellions and early African libertarian courage were predominantly male-driven. This notion has profoundly influenced,

[15] The emphasis is deliberately placed on this category of Pan-Africans, who like John Henrik Clarke (1988), regularly refer to maroonage.

even subconsciously, the belief that the Pan-African struggle, which can be intellectually demanding and may involve violence, requires strong male leaders (Moloi, 2017, 74). However, this idea is at odds with the historical and socio-economic realities of enslaved women who became maroons and those who chose not to. This reality, as we shall see, reveals significant insights into the challenges and experiences of being a Pan-African woman.

Two etymological origins are debated for the term *maroon* : it is either derived from the Spanish « cimarrón » which refers to individuals brought into civilization by the colonial institution in the 17th century but who chose to escape this authority and return to the « cima »[16] thus to the wild state (Debien, 1966, 3) ; or it comes from medieval Germanic, denoting servants or slaves who fled Gaul or Italy to seek refuge in the Alps during the Carolingian period in the 10th century (Froger, 2015, 165-166). This etymological debate seeks to uncover the origins of a term that describes someone who strives to escape a political, economic, and socially enslaving system. During the colonial era, it is crucial to differentiate between the majority of slave runaways and maroons. While maroon communities were established by runaway slaves, the number of slaves who escaped bondage far exceeded those who became maroons, and the progression from runaway to maroon entailed several stages (Lockley, 2015). Many runaway slaves left their plantations only temporarily, often being captured or returning voluntarily within days or weeks. The term runaway is distinctly associated with the act of escape. Not all slaves had the necessary skills to survive independently in the forests or swamps; for some, the prospect of starvation outweighed the fear of punishment, leading them to return to the plantation. Slaveholders sometimes publicized their willingness to forgive runaways who voluntarily resumed their labor, with brief absences becoming a common way for enslaved individuals to express dissatisfaction (2).

In contrast, *Maroons* (in the plural form) had no intention of returning to enslavement. Their objective was to establish autonomous, self-sustaining communities that could operate independently of colonial governance (Kopytoff, 1978, 295). Within the contexts of Antillean, Guyanese, and Haitian Creoles, the designation « nèg mawon » derived from the French « Nègre marron » has been integrated (Lucas, 2002, 2). Historian Sylviane Diouf (2014) further categorizes maroons into « borderland » and « hinterland » groups. Borderland maroons lived in the forests and swamps between plantations, areas legally owned by planters but largely uncultivated. These spaces were often familiar to slaves, providing easy access to plantation

[16] Pointed end (of a tree, a rock, a mountain). Refers here to the wild.

resources and enabling them to maintain connections with family and friends. However, this proximity also made them more susceptible to recapture (98-127). Hinterland maroons ventured further away from their places of enslavement into remote swamps, woods, and mountains, seeking to create independent lives as a community. This distinction is significant as it highlights the different strategies and degrees of separation from the enslaved world : borderland maroons maintained some interaction with the plantation system, whereas hinterland maroons sought complete detachment (169-201).

As we delve deeper into the exploration and comprehension of the intricately structured societies established by the Maroons, there emerges a conspicuous trend indicating the predominantly male composition of these communities (Miki, 2012, 499). This realization has prompted inquiries within a select academic cohort, themselves members of the already exclusive circle of scholars specializing in Afrocentric epistemology. Arlette Gautier (2010) stands out as one of the pioneering voices to devote comprehensive attention to the discourse on resistance among enslaved black women. Indeed, there existed an academic consensus positing that men championed the universal concept of liberty while women remained confined to individual spheres, acquiescing to the slave regime. Nevertheless, some academics extolled the valor of women in revolutionary struggles, albeit mostly unnamed save for figures like Sanite Belair, Marie-Jeanne Lamartinière in Saint-Domingue, and the mulatto Solitude in Guadeloupe (259). Systematic examination of American slave narratives has revealed a propensity for women, rather than men, to engage in verbal or physical clashes with white oppressors. Paradoxically, this resistance has been construed as indicative of a greater leniency towards female slaves, while male maroonage is celebrated as a manifestation of an inherent yearning for liberty (261). However, akin to their male counterparts, maroon women occupy elevated positions within slave society, assuming roles such as midwives, seamstresses, domestics, launderers, or itinerant traders. Through these roles, which hint at shades of autonomy, they inevitably aspire toward genuine freedom. Many recaptured escapees return bearing marks of punishment, attesting to the risks undertaken in pursuit of autonomy (266). In the seventeenth century, women accompanying their husbands in maroonage faced specific penalties. Thus, the motives driving women's flight parallel those of men : not only escape from mistreatment but also the aspiration for self-determination, a pursuit often undertaken with resolute determination and in isolation. Conversely, the repercussions for failed attempts lack the perceived leniency attributed to them (267). This phenomenon of maroonage, which initially inspired Pan-Negrists and later Pan-Africanists, signifies not merely a quest for freedom but

also the assertion of autonomy acquired and sustained through diverse forms of capital accumulation. These bands, comprising armed slaves dwelling in forests, posed uncertainties for women, particularly as their inclusion was not always voluntary (Eddins, 2020, 569). Consequently, maroons conducted raids on plantations to pilfer livestock, acquire provisions, or seize women, whether consensually or otherwise (Miki, 2012). Attacks on lone travelers were also not uncommon (Lucas, 2002, 3 ; Lockley, 2015, 7). These women, primarily tasked with perpetuating the community's progeny, could also be treated as commodities. Hence, numerous factors prompted a considerable portion of maroons to eschew these communities in favor of urban settlements (Gautier, 2010, 271-272 ; Eddins, 2020, 570).

However, what accounts for the marked discrepancy, that some Pan-Africanists like to support, between the numbers of maroon women and men? Firstly, this disproportionality is not a universal truth, as evidenced by instances such as Jamaica post-1773 or Guadeloupe, where the proportion of maroon women sometimes equaled or exceeded that of men (Eddins, 2020, 569 ; Gautier, 2010, 273). Yet, in contexts featuring a paucity of maroon women, the explanation lies less in their motivations and more in the organization and allocation of slave labor (Eddins, 2020, 564). Men enjoy greater mobility and possess better survival skills in the wilderness, making their presence seemingly more natural. Their resourcefulness often prompts visits to women, thereby eliciting colonial institutions' enactment of punitive measures. Moreover, male slaves predominantly undertake tasks outside the plantation, such as sentry duty, carting, or driving, thereby facilitating maroonage. Their skill sets also afford them more employment opportunities in ports or urban centers. Administrators and masters, in some regions, mistakenly deemed certain slaves trustworthy, unwittingly arming them during foreign incursions (Gautier, 2010, 274-275). Furthermore, the caregiving responsibilities for children limit women's avenues of escape. While some women depart with older offspring, others flee with infants or are pregnant. Although the refusal to subject their children to slavery intensifies their resolve for change, children constitute an additional burden, requiring care and attention and attracting unwanted attention during flight. The presence of children also grants masters leverage, as they could target them in the absence of the mother. As a result, the majority of maroon women, at the onset of their flight, are either childless or have children capable of self-sufficiency (Gautier, 2010, 276 ; Miki, 2012, 519). Consequently, the notion of justifying gender relations in contemporary Pan-Africanism by appealing to a desire to honor a historical framework is flawed. Maroon women were not passive individuals in the anti-slavery struggle; therefore, Pan-African women should not be confined to a subordinate role. Moreover, even if this

fantasized masculine conception of Maroons as less involved were true, why should this be a burden for women in the movement, especially when we observe that men often claim the right to hold paradoxical positions in relation to the historical narrative (Boukari-Yabara, 2017, 332-337)?

Thus, the examination of maroon societies uncovers a nuanced history where the complexities of gender and resistance intersect, providing a critical foundation for understanding the Pan-African gendered thought. This historical context is not merely a backdrop but a significant force that has shaped the contours of Pan-Africanism, where male-dominated narratives have often overshadowed the contributions of women (Gautier, 2010). The next section probes into how these inherited dynamics have perpetuated gender hierarchies within the movement, highlighting the persistent tensions between the ideals of liberation and the realities of exclusion (Mama & Abbas, 2014). This inquiry sets the stage for a deeper analysis of the ways in which the legacy of maroonage continues to influence and, at times, constrain the participation of women in the ongoing struggle for African emancipation (Eddins, 2020).

3.2. The place given to Pan-African women

Maroonage represents therefore a foundational element for comprehending the initial organizational and strategic inspirations of Afrocentric movements, notably Pan-Africanism. Furthermore, this analysis reveals that the dominant continental Pan-African agenda is often controlled by influential men, who utilize conservative Pan-African rhetoric to advance their own anti-democratic agendas (Atta-Asiedu, n.d. ; Boukari-Yabara, 2017, 320-323). Consequently, diverse grassroots Pan-African movements of the past have been subsumed into a hegemonic narrative that institutionalizes patriarchal values (Mama & Abbas, 2014, 1-4).

Over the years, Pan-African congresses are one of many forums where Afro-descendant peoples discuss responses to the new internationalization of capital. Foremost in these

discussions are Afro-descendant women who are trying to get their criticism of the movement's past weaknesses heard. We will see later that Afro-descendant feminists are exploring strategies to combat the numerous forms of subjugation. These progressive Africans advocate for the complete emancipation of women and the consequent humanization of men, aspiring for a Pan-African movement driven by social truth and energized by free women (Campbell, 1996, 86 ; Harris, 1996, 21). The voices of women have been marginalized in the conceptualization of Pan-African thought at gatherings, despite their significant presence (Moloi, 2017, 75). Eusi Kwayana, a contemporary activist, asserts that Africa's cultural constitution regarding women and youth requires revision, which must not occur without their involvement. Pan-Africanism will only hold validity if it addresses fundamental social injustices among Africans and supports justice, freedom, and development for all human communities (Campbell, 1996, 88). Thus the movement's goal of a free Africa will remain unattainable unless the liberation of women. Women cannot effectively contribute to broader movements if they are constrained by multiple social oppressions that Pan-African movement fail to address (Harris, 1996, 31). The same applies if they are not taken into account in the institutions. Indeed, it is regrettable to note that knowledge about women who supported leading Pan-Africanists, enabling the movement's progress through their work, remains scarce. For instance, little is known about Mrs. Williams[17], the unnamed wife of Caribbean Pan-Africanist Henry Sylvester Williams, or Dorothy, who assisted George Padmore[18] (Harris, 1996, 22 ; Moloi, 2017, 74). Throughout the Pan-African world, issues such as sexual choice, motherhood, nurturing, sexual oppression, harassment, genital mutilation, incest, rape, and child abuse occur outside the public sphere and remain politically undiscussed. Socialism discussions have traditionally ignored gendered terms and the cultural roots that conceptualize women as minors and property (Campbell, 1996, 91). Pan-African professor and activist Hollis Lynch's biography of Blyden inadvertently suggests that Pan-Africanism is an *intellectual interest* for a select group of men, disregarding the masses of literate and competent women in Africa and in its diaspora (Harris, 1996, 23).

In several contexts, Afro-descendant women occupy the lowest tier of the social hierarchy, representing the most oppressed, underpaid, and socially vulnerable group (de Medeiros Lima,

[17] We only know, without any details, that she was heavily involved in the Pan-African struggle (Harris, 1996).

[18] George Padmore was a Trinidadian Pan-Africanist, journalist, and intellectual who played a key role in the global anti-colonial and Pan-African movements during the mid-20th century. He is best known for his work as an adviser to Kwame Nkrumah and for his influential writings advocating for the decolonization of Africa and the unity of the African diaspora (Moloi, 2017).

2023). Well-known feminist theories proposed by Angela Davis (2017) and Bell Hooks (2014) assert that gender is a social construct, shaped by various relationally formed gender arrangements. Consequently, gender roles are not intrinsic but emerge from socio-historical contexts that have traditionally relegated women to a certain type of labor and ascribed to them characteristics of passivity, docility, and submission to male dominance. Roles and functions have been historically unequally distributed, consigning women to unpaid or poorly compensated jobs. Visible labor (capital and visible economy) is often seen as masculine while women are involved in invisible labor (Reddock , 2017, 257). Thus, we therefore find this this gendered hirarchization of the work provided in the Pan-African institutions and epistemological field. An early instance of African women's engagement in Pan-African movement can be traced to the formation of the African Association in 1897 by Joseph Ephraim Casely-Hayford and his spouse, Adelaide Smith Casely-Hayford. This organization sought to advance the political and cultural standing of African people, significantly contributing to the Pan-African movement. Moreover, in the late 1890s in London, Alice Kinloch, a South African woman, was actively involved with the African Association alongside Sylvester Williams. During the inaugural Pan-African Congress held in London in 1900, notable female participants such as Anna J. Cooper, a distinguished African American educator and activist, were also present (Mohamed, 2023, 4). It is worth noting, additionally, that several Pan-African congresses, such as the fourth, will be predominantly organized by women (Reddock, 2017, 259 ; Campbel, 2018, 1054). Nevertheless, these Pan-African feats are scarcely, if at all, documented in socio-political studies of the overall movement. For instance, Amy Ashwood Garvey, co-founder of the UNIA alongside her husband, has her contributions largely overshadowed by her identity as « the wife of », with her support for her husband's endeavors receiving minimal attention (Boukari-Yabara, 2017, 99 ; Mohamed, 2023, 5). However, we shall see that long before and after her marriage to Marcus Garvey, she was among the foremothers of Pan-Africanism who made substantial contributions to post-colonial thought. Plus, it is frequently observed that the names of notable female invitees at these congresses are often obscured by numerical representations or overshadowed by the names of their male counterparts. Similarly, female organizers are frequently relegated to the role of mere secretaries or registrars, whose contributions are primarily perceived as caretaking responsibilities (Campbell, 1996, 51). *In fine*, the gendered allocation of roles within the movement constitutes the very crux of the issue. It effectively, over the long term, restricts access to the epistemologies, discourses and impact of the movement's female figures.

Therefore, the analysis of the historical trajectory of Maroons reveals how the foundational structures Pan-Africanism, have been shaped by deeply ingrained mechanisms of gendered exclusion. This legacy has perpetuated a pattern where the contributions of women are marginalized, and their voices are often silenced in the broader narrative. Their contributions are only partially, if at all, integrated into the Pan-African legacy, in contrast to those of the male thinkers mentioned thus far (Harris, 1996 ; Mohamed, 2023). As we shift our focus to the role of Pan-African women, it becomes evident that the same patriarchal undercurrents that once defined maroon societies have persisted, influencing the organizational dynamics and leadership structures within Pan-Africanism. The following statement will critically explore how these entrenched gender biases have shaped the place of women within the movement, and how contemporary Afro-descendant feminists are challenging these norms to redefine the struggle for liberation (Mama & Abbas, 2014).

3.3. Pan-Africans about Afro-descendants' women sexuality

First and foremost, it is crucial to precisely distinguish between two often conflated yet distinct subjects : on the one hand, the critique of the approach to the sexuality of Afro-descendants women according to mainstream Pan-Africanism, and on the other hand, the condition of queer Afro-descendants within the Pan-African movement that we will see later in this work (Eromosele, 2013 ; Currier, 2016). Although related, these themes address different aspects of the social dynamics of Afro-descendants. The first one highlights the dominant norms and ideologies shaping attitudes towards sexuality, often rooted in conservative values advocating a traditional view of family and gender roles (Paris, 2018). This critique reveals how these perspectives, perceived as responses to colonization and aimed at restoring the cultural dignity of Afro-descendants, are in fact their extension, and maintain the veil over women's and queer people's reappropriation of their bodies and desires. Thus, this analysis is indispensable for understanding the second point, which is the ethical concerns surrounding the condition of queer Afro-descendants, who suffer from double marginalization : racial discrimination in global north societies and queerphobia outside/within their own communities (Van Klinken,

2020, 17). By denying this intersectionality, Afro-descendants have created a context of systemic discrimination within the movement, that seeks to dispossess queer people of their fundamental rights (Kaoma, 2018). Therefore, don't skip a step and understanding these critiques is a prerequisite for ethically and effectively addressing the struggles of queer Afro-descendants.

3.3.1. Pan-African silence

There is a notable silence among the Fathers of Pan-Africanism regarding the sexual emancipation of Afro-descendant women, who are particularly vulnerable. This silence is striking during the notable Pan-African congresses where the focus tends to be on broader political and economic issues rather than on the specific challenges faced by women in terms of sexual autonomy (Tamale, 2020, 454). Nonetheless, numerous of these congresses were attended or convened by African feminists or collectives of Afro-descendant women deeply committed to this theme (455-456). Yet this subject, which one might think is reserved for a non-mixed circle, is all the more crucial because Pan-African women are sounding the alarm about the consequences of this rhetoric. Women's problems are women's problems, and men's problems are everyone's problems[19] (Campbell, 2018). However, discussions about women's bodies typically arise only in the context of colonialism violence, but without ever going into detail. It is clear that in the Pan-African context, issues such as sexual oppression, notions of motherhood, education, sexual violence, rape and child abuse are not addressed in the public domain and remain excluded from political discourse. As a result, during the gatherings, socialist debates have never addressed these issues from a gender perspective, nor confronted the deep cultural underpinnings that perpetuate the perceived subordination of women and children (Campbell, 1996, 91). The general Pan-African discourse is highlighted to underscore broader themes of racial oppression and violence but do not translate into a Pan-African focused examination of women's sexual freedom and rights.

This leads to think about the concept of hauntology, which is used to reveal how colonial and patriarchal legacies persistently shape contemporary experiences (Coly, 2019). Hauntology refers to the way in which the past, or the promises of the past, lingers in the present despite

[19] See section 4.1.

social, economic, or cultural changes. So, from the point of view of heterosexual Pan-African cis-men[20], the dynamics deciphered so far reflect a desire rooted in the past, for reality to conform to their ideal of gender relations and identity. This highlights the continuous influence of historical injustices on women's lives, where the female body becomes a site of both oppression and resistance (Derrida, 1993). Thus, this means that despite efforts to combat racial oppression, patriarchal structures within Afro-descendant communities will continue to try to seek control over women's bodies (Coly, 2019, 75-80). Internal change are more likely to gradually extinguish this hauntological desire. This critique extends to acknowledging the dual challenge of recognizing racial injustices faced by Afro-descendant men while holding them accountable for their role in sustaining gendered oppression (84-88). The deontological approach further supports the need for ethical standards to regulate gender relations within Pan-Africanism, and the abandonment of such discriminating dynamics (Schuessler, 2015). Such standards should combat universally recognized immoral practices against Afro-descendant women. Since at present the lack of action is striking (Campbell, 2018, 1044-1045). For instance, while motherhood itself is not immoral, it becomes problematic when involving coercion, such as early pregnancies among young girls. And when this fact is not raised at any Pan-African congress, and women do not have the space within the movement to talk about it, then there is a real structural problem (Adi, 2019). It is therefore necessary to establish clear ethical standards in pan-African institutions that would enable these issues to be debated at the highest institutional levels. The idea is to have a recognised and respected space within the movement to act in favour of better protection for women of African descent.

3.3.2. The marginalization of Afro-descendant women's sexuality: unpacking the intersection of gendered racism

So we can now look at a more specific point in terms of knowledge about the sexuality of Afro-descendant women. To understand how the marginalisation of a debate on the experience of these women helps to maintain a gendered racism. It must first be established that, during the colonial period and extending well into the post-colonial era, individuals of African descent were subjected to, among others, humanist theories that systematically

[20]Referred to as such as a constructed social category.

pathologized their sexual behavior. These theories characterized black sexuality as inherently deviant, abnormal, and bestial (Lopang, 2014, 3). This pernicious intellectual legacy, deeply rooted in racist ideologies, perpetuated a narrative that dehumanized Afro-descendants by framing their sexual expression as something fundamentally different from and inferior to that of their white counterparts (Boukari-Yabara, 2017 ; Paris, 2018, 87). This pathologization not only reinforced existing social hierarchies and justified discriminatory practices, but also inflicted profound psychological and social harm on Afro-descendant communities, the effects of which reverberate to this day. Frantz Fanon, advocating for a new humanism, was among the first Pan-African man to address the question of Afro-descendant sexuality with the aim of dismantling the colonial imaginaries imposed on it. Both Fanon and Angela Davis illustrate that the narratives of racism, gender, and sexuality are deeply interconnected. In this way, if one concept is not deconstructed, it finds the historical, political, or social grounding to sustain and reinforce the others. This linkage is intentional, as both scholars utilize the concepts of hypersexualization and the coexistence of civilized whiteness with notions of primitive blackness to support their arguments (Paris, 2018, 86 ; Davis, 1983 ; Lopang, 2014, 2). Afro-descendant women, in particular, were deemed hypersexual and excluded from the prevailing ideology of femininity (Abdel-Shehid, 2021, 345). This exclusion was never actually questioned in the movement's debates, addressing only the racial aspect within the conceptual triad (racism, gender, sexuality), while leaving the others confined to non-mixed contexts (Campbell, 2018, 1054). In this way, principle such as the sexual coercion is silence.

Sexual coercion elucidates various forms of sexual violence and manipulation employed to subjugate and control black women (Davis, 1981). Davis contextualizes this within broader systems of racial, economic, and gendered oppression, highlighting how sexual coercion operates not merely as isolated acts of violence but as systemic practices deeply entrenched within social and political structures (41). Her scholarly inquiry underscores how these coercive tactics, encompassing sexual harassment, assault, and other forms of pressure, serve to uphold hierarchical power dynamics, often intersecting with racial and class dimensions (43). This encapsulates a crucial aspect of what women, with the support of informed Pan-African men, are striving to bring to the forefront of Pan-African congresses (Adi, 2019, 2). Fanon, in his exploration of these intersections, engages with the gendered complexities of knowledge production, notably regarding black women's sexuality. His assertion that nothing is known about black women's sexuality has wrongly led some scholars to argue that Fanon marginalizes

black women's experiences, relegating them to the periphery of the masculinist perspective[21] (Paris, 2018, 88). Whereas, Fanon can be considered as an intersectional theorist, intertwining race, sexuality, and gender before the term was coined. This perspective allows for the interpretation of Fanon's work as a foundational contribution to feminist and queer studies (Abdel-Shehid, 2021, 346). Interconnected approaches show that racism sustains itself through its capacity to construct the ostensibly normative category of gender, to which pan-Africans adhere (347). This demonstrates a highly avant-garde position for Fanon, who was already perceived as a distinctive figure within the movement of the 1950s, due to his very lucid, even critical[22], approach to certain major ideas of Pan-African movement (Boukari-Yabara, 2017, 202-203). Furthermore, although he is one of the pillars of the epistemology concerning the sexual freedom of Afro-descendants, he scarcely addressed the subject, and this in works that remained obscure and relegated to minor eccentric approaches until the early 21st century.

As we move from the analysis of Pan-African views on the sexuality of Afro-descendant women to the broader topic of women reclaiming their agency in public political discourse, it is crucial to underscore the connections between these issues. The previous discussion has highlighted the systemic marginalization of Afro-descendant women within Pan-Africanism, revealing how gendered racism has been sustained within the movement (Campbell, 2018). This pattern of exclusion reflects a broader struggle against both patriarchal and colonial legacies that continue to shape the lives of these women. In the following section, we will explore how Afro-descendant women, historically sidelined within Pan-African discourse, have

[21] Fanon observed that concerning the sexuality of black women, « we don't know about it *[Nous n'en savons rien]*» Scholars such as Gwen Bergner (1995) err in two ways: they interpret Fanon as a staunch follower of Freudian psychoanalytic theory and presume that Mayotte Capécia epitomizes the black woman for Fanon. This misinterpretation confuses Fanon's engagement with the coercive abstractions of black gender and sexuality as an endorsement of these abstractions. It is crucial to recognize that Fanon's intellectual project seeks to navigate through abstraction to reach the concrete (Paris, 2018, 97).

N.B. Mayotte Capécia (pseudonym of Lucie Lucette Combette-Ceranus) was a Martinican writer whose portrayal of a black woman's desire for a white man in her autobiographical novels was controversial, as it was criticized for reinforcing colonial and racially gendered stereotypes in 1940's Antilles (Clark, 1996).

[22] Fanon regarded the idea of African Unity as a concept influenced by the desire to differentiate from the colonizer while paradoxically being defined by the colonizer's perspective. He thus saw it as an aspiration to create a United States of Africa (Boukari-Yabara, 2017).

begun to challenge these hegemonic structures (Bruneel & Gomes Silva, 2017). By examining a key case, we will demonstrate how these women are not only confronting the enduring effects of patriarchal control but are also actively redefining the parameters of political engagement within the Pan-African movement (Thiam A., 1978).

4. Of an Exclusive Universalism : Facing Menversalism

4.1. Challenging patriarchy within Pan-Africanism : women reclaiming freedom in the public political debate

Be introduced by a known case study in the expression of Pan-Africans when it comes to sexism. In her seminal work, *La Parole aux Négresses* (1978), Awa Thiam presents a critical intervention in the discourse on African feminism and postcolonial thought. This text serves as a profound critique of the intersections of race, gender, and class within African societies, exposing the systemic oppression faced by Afro-descendant women. The study highlights the persistent patriarchal structures within African movements, challenging the male dominance that has historically marginalized women within these spheres. Through detailed testimonies and incisive analysis, the work illustrates the dual struggles faced by African women against both colonial and patriarchal oppression. During the colonial era, Black African women were doubly subjugated by the colonizer and by the colonized Black African man. Post-colonization, these challenges have only intensified, with the remnants of colonialism persisting through superficial decolonization and the rise of cultural assimilation. Afro-descendant women continue to be controlled by Afro-descendant men (whether as fathers, brothers, or husbands) and are often reduced to mere objects of sexual gratification and symbols of male status (155).

Thus, this case exemplifies the public reception and treatment of gender issues within the Pan-African intellectual landscape, which has often been fraught with controversy and

backlash. The study's bold assertions were met with significant resistance from certain Afro-nationalist and Pan-African male figures who sought to discredit its legitimacy. These detractors often questioned the credibility and authenticity of the work, accusing it of being influenced by Western feminist ideologies that they claimed would fragment African struggles (Bruneel & Gomes Silva, 2017, 71). This is all the more insidious because when Pan-African men attack Afro-descendant women for publicizing the interconnection of their oppressions, they are exploiting a dominant white oppressive discourse and aligning themselves with those they claim to be resisting. Thus, the author was at the same time a target of the intellectual elitism she critiqued in white feminists, as evidenced by Benoîte Groult's preface to the first edition of the book (Thiam A., 1978). Groult dismisses the scientific merit of the work, instead characterizing it as a testimony of « […] a refusal, still timid and often confused. But […] also a call, which we must hear »[23](8). This dismissal underscores a broader pattern of marginalization and undermining of intellectual contributions from non-white scholars, particularly within feminist discourse (Bebey, 2024 ; Mianda, 2014, 12). Symptomatic of the movement, this rhetoric resurfaces during the *Journée des Femmes Noires*[24] in 1977 and 1978 in France, facing strong opposition from both left-wing political actors and notably, male Pan-Africans (Bruneel & Gomes Silva, 2017, 70). It underscores the ethical imperative of recognizing and developing an ethical means of regulation that prevents such an impediment to free expression, as Pan-Africans have distinguished between the liberation of Africa and the liberation of African women (13). Here, ethics to conceptualizing necessitates a comprehensive framework that transcends the mere reevaluation of ethical norms advocating for women's rights. While the promotion of women's rights is undeniably crucial, this normative focus must avoid overlooking the deeply ingrained structural inequalities and the systemic nature of gender-based relations.

The call for a global redefinition of Pan-Africanism has been echoed across generations. Prior to the 6th Pan-African Congress, Walter Rodney characterized Pan-Africanism as an exercise in self-definition, undertaken by a specific social group or class speaking on behalf of the entire population. Afro-descendant women have expanded this position by highlighting that previous self-definitions merely distinguished Africans from Europeans. They are now at the forefront of developing a new one for the movement (Farmer, 2016). Since the 6th Pan-African Congress,

[23] *Groult's full and original quote about Thiam's book* « Il est un refus, encore timide et souvent confus. Mais il est aussi un appel, que nous devons entendre »

[24] i.e. Black Women's Day

a primary criticism has been the movement's male-centric nature and the domestic exploitation perpetuated by those advocating for liberation (Campbell, 1996, 89). Conversely, prioritize the perspectives and struggles of women can be profoundly transformative. Such an approach would not only demonstrate the movement's capacity to address the needs of the most vulnerable groups but also allow these groups to fully appropriate and shape the movement according to their realities (Adi, 2019, 3). The contributions of women to the Pan-African movement and the anti-colonial struggle, are increasingly documented despite the challenges they face within male-dominated spheres (Mama & Abbas, 2014, 97). From an ethical standpoint, women should not be pushed out of the movement, even with the intention of encouraging them to lead a separate but related Pan-African movement, as this would amount to treating them differently than as ends in themselves. This is akin to the argument posed by McMahon (1991), who discusses the paradox of deontology, where certain actions, even if they could prevent greater harm, are considered impermissible because they violate fundamental moral principles. The exclusion of women from defining Pan-Africanism would be seen as inherently unjust, as it disregards their agency and moral worth. Therefore, A reconceptualization that would divide the movement into two separate parts in order to avoid issues related to gender dynamics is untenable. Since promoting insularity as an avoidance strategy amounts to tolerating the disregard of everyone's rights.

In considering the epistemological dual battle against both hegemonic structures and familial expectations, particularly as it pertains to women reclaiming freedom in public political debates, the critical reflections of Pan-African women serve as an essential point of departure. Their work not only exposes the multifaceted oppressions faced by African women but also challenges the often male-dominated narratives within Pan-African discourse (Reddock, 2017). The resistance her work encountered, both from within and outside her cultural sphere, underscores the broader struggle for recognition and the redefinition of gender roles within postcolonial contexts (Mianda, 2014). This discourse, therefore, sets the stage for exploring how these entrenched gender dynamics intersect with other forms of identity, such as queerness, revealing further contradictions and challenges within Pan-African movement. The transition from analyzing the battles faced by women to the ethical considerations surrounding queer Afro-descendants highlights the ongoing need to address not just the overt exclusions but also the more insidious forms of marginalization that persist in these movements (Semugoma & al., 2012).

4.2. Exclusion of queer identities in contemporary Pan-African discourse

The discourse of Pan-Africanism, while historically rooted in the pursuit of unity has been co-opted in contemporary times to exclude and marginalize queer identities. This appropriation of Pan-African rhetoric serves as a mechanism to frame homosexuality and transgender identities as antithetical to African cultural authenticity (Van Klinken, 2020, 3). The politicization of sexuality within this ideological framework not only denies queer Africans their rightful place within the Afro-descendant's socio-political fabric but also reinforces a colonialist discourse that once depicted African sexuality as inherently heterosexual (Biney, 2022). This section explores how Pan-Africanism has been deployed as a tool for non-ethical considerations of queer identities, thereby contributing to the erasure and oppression of sexual and gender minorities. By critically examining the intersections of nationalism, religion, and anti-queer sentiment within Pan-African thought, this analysis seeks to uncover the underlying power dynamics that sustain these exclusionary practices and to question the authenticity of such a monolithic representation of African identity (Mama & Abbas, 2014, 99).

To understand the mistreatment of queer individuals by Pan-Africans, one must first grasp the specific relationship that Afro-descendant communities, particularly in Africa, have with non-heterosexuality. This relationship is shaped by historical, cultural, and socio-political factors, including the legacy of colonialism and the reinforcement of heteronormativity as a key aspect of cultural identity (Thiam C. & Frehiwot, 2023, 71). A thorough analysis of queerphobia within Pan-African thought requires an understanding of these complex dynamics. Homosexuality is widely viewed as un-African in both religious and political spheres, framing it as an illegitimate human rights issue. This narrative is contested by sexual minorities and human rights advocates, leading to what is termed the « contestation and externalization of sexuality » (Kaoma, 2018, 1). Contestation addresses the conflicting views on homosexuality as both un-African, un-Christian and a human rights issue, while externalization frames it as a foreign vice imported into Africa. Thus, they highlight the role of transnational evangelical influences, for example from the U.S., which fostered a political homophobia in Uganda on one side, while progressive American groups promoted global LGBTQ+ human-rights advocacy on the other hand (Kaoma, 2018, 6 ; Wahab, 2016, 693-694). There are indeed a severe impact of homophobia on sexual minorities, attributing African opposition to homosexuality to a desire to protect African identity, culture, religion, and youth from perceived Western influence.

This *protective homophobia* is supported by various sources, including statements from African leaders and religious figures who frame homosexuality as a Western construct threatening African values (Kaoma, 2018, 3). As previously revealed, church plays a strong role in shaping sexuality politics, particularly during the HIV/AIDS crisis[25], where the church's promotion of heterosexual norms and stigmatization of non-heterosexual behaviors reinforced its influence in contemporary debates on sexuality (Wahab, 2016, 687-688 ; Kaoma, 2018, 3).

Beside this, the interaction between homotransnationalist mobilization and homophobic countermobilization, framing it within a global necropolitical ordering. A statement that introduces an interesting concept : homonationalism. It describes the intersection of nationalist and LGBTQ+ discourses, where the inclusion of certain queer individuals within the national fabric serves to reinforce existing power structures, such as colonialism, patriarchy, and capitalism (Puar, 2007). At its core, homonationalism is the process through which some LGBTQ+ subjects are assimilated into the nation-state in ways that uphold and legitimize these power structures (Wahab, 2016, 696 ; Sadurní-Balcells & Langarita, 2024, 1). This incorporation does not challenge the status quo but rather strengthens it by normalizing certain forms of sexuality and identity that align with nationalistic and capitalist ideals. In this way, a government can include an openly non-heterosexual member without necessarily improving the situation for queer individuals within its society. This member may be used as a token in the event of intervention in another country, with the government highlighting the notion that the country it intervenes in does not respect queer rights as it claims to do itself. This strategic inclusion inevitably leads to the exclusion and marginalization of those who do not fit within these narrow parameters, often reinforcing racial and other forms of discrimination (Sadurní-Balcells & Langarita, 2024, 2).
It should be noted that there is three interrelated aspects of homonationalism :

- sexual exceptionalism,
- queer as regulatory,

[25] The fight against HIV/AIDS is a pan-African issue because of its profound and pervasive impact on African societies and their diasporas. In sub-Saharan Africa, the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS is exacerbated by poverty, gender inequalities and limited access to care, resulting in a severe public health crisis. This situation calls for a collective response integrated at regional level, due to the interdependence of African countries and migratory movements. African diasporas, including Afro-Americans, often face health disparities that exacerbate their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. Racial and economic inequalities, as well as limited access to quality health services, contribute to higher rates of infection and mortality within these communities (Bharat, 2003).

- the ascendancy of whiteness.

Sexual exceptionalism refers to the notion that certain nations or regions are more progressive or advanced in terms of LGBTQ+ rights, positioning themselves against those deemed backward or barbaric (Puar, 2007, 3). This idea perpetuates a colonial temporal framework that categorizes regions and cultures along a spectrum from primitive to modern, often reinforcing Western supremacy. The *regulatory aspect of queerness* in homonationalism highlights how certain LGBTQ+ identities are normalized and controlled to fit within the heteronormative and nationalist agendas. This regulation often manifests in policies and societal norms that dictate acceptable forms of LGBTQ+ existence, aligning them with the nation's image of modernity and progress while excluding those who deviate from this model. Lastly, the *ascendancy of whiteness* within homonationalism underscores how racial hierarchies are maintained and reinforced (Sadurní-Balcells & Langarita, 2024, 4). This facet reveals how the inclusion of queer individuals is often predicated on their alignment with white, Western ideals, thereby marginalizing racialized LGBTQ+ communities and perpetuating systemic racism. Overall, homonationalism functions as a means to sustain and reinforce existing systems of oppression by co-opting LGBTQ+ rights and discourses into nationalist projects that uphold colonial and patriarchal frameworks (6).

In Pan-African debates, homonationalism thus provides a false moral justification for rejecting and repressing expressions of identity and sexuality that deviate from conventional norms. Nonetheless, we will extend the critique further by stating that in the radical repudiation of queerness as a colonial legacy, they already navigating a precarious path, face the risk of erring on both sides. One known side involves the defense of a traditional pre-colonial African identity, which confronts them with complexities that, in the absence of thorough understanding, they tend to essentialize (Walker, 2001). The other side embraces a modernism that encourages Afro-descendants to look towards the future while retaining elements of the past, with the risk of allowing interest groups to selectively determine what aspects of the past should be preserved (Princess Alice Sibanda, 2023). Having observed this precarious position, advocates of Afropolitanism [26] criticize the stagnation of Pan-Africanist narratives and the resulting

[26] Afropolitanism is a multifaceted concept that defies a singular definition, representing a diverse array of identities and cultural practices within Africa and its diasporas. Coined by Taiye Selasi in her essay *Bye Bye Babar (Or, What Is an Afropolitan?)*, Afropolitanism describes individuals who navigate and integrate multiple cultural influences without simplifying African identity. These individuals engage with African culture on various scales,

depictions of Africa. Mbembe articulated that Pan-Africanism has been one of the predominant frameworks shaping African intellectual discourse throughout much of the twentieth century. However, this paradigm, along with two others, has become rigid. According to him, these frameworks no longer align with the contemporary living conditions of Afro-descendants. In essence, they are increasingly seen as inadequate for engaging with and interpreting modern African realities and discussions. These paradigms have largely become institutionalized and rigid to such a degree that, today, they no longer make it possible to analyze ongoing transformations with any credibility (Kasanda, 2016, 191).

Transitioning from the discussion on the ethical issues surrounding the treatment of queer Afro-descendants within Pan-African movements, it is crucial to explore how these internal contradictions align with broader frameworks of systemic marginalization. While the critique of queerphobia within these movements highlights significant ethical failings, these issues do not exist in isolation (Biney, 2022). They intersect with larger patterns of exclusion and discrimination that have been theorized within global contexts, such as those articulated in Mills' theory (1997) of the Racial Contract. By examining these intersections, we can better understand how Pan-African movements, despite their resistance to colonial legacies, may inadvertently perpetuate similar forms of marginalization within their own ranks. This calls for a deeper reflection on the movement's role in either reinforcing or challenging these systemic issues, as we move forward in the analysis.

facilitated by new media and technology, making Afropolitanism a distinctly 21st-century phenomenon. Achille Mbembe further connects Afropolitanism to cosmopolitanism, emphasizing cultural complexity and resisting reductive narratives. This concept serves as a lens to explore contemporary African urban life, arts, and social practices, enriching Africanist scholarship (Skinner, 2017, 4-11).

4.3. Addressing contradictions using the Racial Contract theory

When it comes to studying the system of discrimination and marginalization, it's worth taking a look at the theory of the Racial Contract. Charles W. Mills (1997) theory is a profound critique of traditional Western social contract theory, arguing that the historical realities of race and racism have been systematically overlooked or misrepresented by mainstream political philosophy. The book's central thesis is that white supremacy is an underlying, often unacknowledged, political system that has profoundly shaped the modern world.

The philosopher asserts that white supremacy is an unnamed political system integral to the modern world's development (1). He critiques the standard political theory curriculum for omitting the impact of race, which he argues is a deliberate oversight reflecting the racial biases of its authors. This omission obscures the reality that white domination and racial exploitation are foundational to the political and economic systems of European and North American nations (2). The concept of racial contract is posited as a historical and actual agreement among whites to subordinate nonwhites (9). This contract is not merely a metaphor but a literal social contract that has structured global relations, privileging whites and disadvantaging nonwhites through exploitation and exclusion (19). This contract has moral, political, and epistemological dimensions, shaping not just the distribution of resources but also the very framework of knowledge and moral consideration (31). The Racial Contract norms space by segregating and racially coding geographical areas, establishing physical and social boundaries that privilege white spaces over nonwhite ones (41). Similarly, it « norms » individuals by assigning them racial identities that determine their social status and access to rights and resources (53). This system is sustained through both overt violence and ideological conditioning, perpetuating racial inequalities (81). Mills also argues that while the social contract theory espoused by thinkers like Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau purports to be universal, it has always implicitly or explicitly excluded nonwhites (91). Nonwhites have historically understood and resisted the Racial Contract as the real foundation of their political and social disenfranchisement (109). This contract provides a more accurate explanatory framework for understanding modern political realities than raceless social contract theories, which fail to account for the pervasive impact of white supremacy (120).

While this study does not aim to provide a comprehensive analysis through the framework of the Racial Contract, given that such analyses have already been thoroughly conducted (Lindsay, 2015 ; Mills & Vucetic, 2021). It is nonetheless useful to dedicate a few pages to address the validity of such theory in a Pan-African rhetoric, since it outlines the several systemic mechanisms of exclusion that we have been discussing. Pan-Africanism, being fundamentally a movement rather than a geographically confined zone, cannot be arbitrarily subjected to critical theories that are tailored to specific societal mechanisms of particular populations. Therefore, is the movement's position towards certain categories which is analogous to this theory. The application of Mills' theories by Pan-Africanists increasingly reveals inconsistencies confronted with their marginalizing attitude towards queer Afro-descendants and their limited support for Afro-descendant women (Clennon, 2017, 113). However, it is crucial to emphasize a significant nuance here : the intention is not to assert that Pan-Africans lacks legitimacy in theorizing racial critiques of neoliberal societal systems as Mills does. On the contrary, the movement must continue to serve as a bulwark against neo-colonialism (Ani & Matambo, 2016). The statement at hand focuses on the shortcomings within the self-critique of Pan-Africanists, who are adept at recognizing the prejudice of systemic discrimination externally but are less successful in addressing such issues within Afro-descendant populations to which they themselves belong (Blain & al., 2016). Although these communities are diverse and heterogeneous, they often manage to justify their internal discriminations on bases that are remarkably similar to one another, as explained in previous sections. Thus, the genuine intent of the movement is to not being categorized as a prototypical example of a Gender and Sexual Contract in political movements. For this purpose, a process of reconceptualization is imperative.

Thus, to bridge the analysis of Mills' systemic marginalization and the development of a new vision for Afro-descendant identity in Pan-Africanism, it is essential to first address the theoretical boundaries and limitations encountered thus far. While Mills provides a compelling critique of systemic racial dynamics, the practical application of his theories within Pan-Africanism, particularly concerning gender and sexual diversity, exposes certain inconsistencies. These inconsistencies underscore the need for a reconceptualization of Afro-descendant subjectivities within the movement. The following section will delve into this necessary reworking, emphasizing the importance of embracing more fluid frameworks that reflect the complex and varied experiences of Afro-descendant communities (Currier, 2016).

This approach not only responds to the identified limitations but also sets the stage for a more representative discourse within Pan-Africanism.

5. A new vision of Afro-descendants in Pan-Africanism

5.1. Reframing Afro-descendant subjectivities: the role of intersectionality and strategic essentialism

The movement's reliance on essentialized views has diminished its relevance among younger generations (Chipato, 2023, 2-5). Afro-descendancy should be recognized as an inherent aspect of lineage rather than a static or acquired condition. To effectively represent diverse populations, Pan-African thought must adopt frameworks that capture this complexity. Aligning with evolving conceptual frameworks, it is essential to view subjectivities as continuously evolving constructs. This perspective acknowledges that identity is shaped by social interactions, cultural contexts, and personal experiences (Kasanda, 2016, 191).

Intersectionality is crucial for understanding the complex ways in which various forms of discrimination intersect (Crenshaw, 2010, 13). Rather than isolating race from gender, intersectionality reveals how these dimensions interact to create unique forms of oppression. This perspective underscores the complexity of marginalization and the dynamic nature of identities, which are continually shaped through social interactions and experiences. Individual and collective narratives play a pivotal role in shaping Afro-descendant identities. Narratives of resistance against racial oppression and struggles for civil rights are central to these identities, while addressing issues like homophobia and transphobia is essential for understanding the experiences of queer Afro-descendants. For instance, the critiques surrounding queerphobia[27] within the Black Lives Matter movement demonstrate that for some Afro-descendants, issues

[27] Yet the Black Lives Matter movement and black queer movements are not in opposition ; indeed, queer black women played a foundational role in the establishment of BLM in 2013 (Garza, 2014).

of sexuality and gender may be as pressing, or even more, than racial discrimination (Dernikos, 2016, 51-52 ; Bunyasi & Smith, 2019, 204-207). Judith Butler's theories of performativity (1990) support this view, positing that gender identities, like racial and sexual identities, are constituted through repeated acts (175-177). This approach acknowledges the diversity within Afro-descendant communities and the influence of social and power dynamics in shaping these identities (Van Klinken, 2020). But now that this point has been established, and we recognize the importance of viewing identities as processes, it becomes evident that in certain specific contexts, group categorization is indispensable.

In a political context, labeling groups is essential for understand demands and organizing struggles. A very particular essentialist approach, whose aim is not to subjugate but to enable defense. We then speak of *strategic essentialism* in Spivak's terms, or of pragmatic essentialism (Eide, 2016, 1). It refers to the process where marginalized groups temporarily put aside internal differences to form a unified collective identity for political purposes. This approach recognizes that, while labels like indigenous peoples can obscure important distinctions, these constructed identities play crucial roles in advancing political objectives (Thamizharasi, 2021, 152). For instance, labels such as *queer Afro-descendants*, though artificially constructed and potentially suppressing significant differences, still serve important political functions. While critiquing essentialist identity categories is necessary, it is also important to acknowledge that these categories can sometimes be indispensable for navigating complex political and social landscapes. Using essentialism as a short-term strategy allows marginalized groups to effectively assert their interests, provided their identity does not become fixed or co-opted by dominant forces. The balance between employing essentialist identities for political gain, and avoiding the risk of these identities becoming solidified by external powers is crucial for maintaining agency (Gandhi, 2015,156). In our case, women's groups might emphasize a shared identity based on :

- their Afro-descendence,
- their experience as women,

to fight for the recognition of their past and present contribution to the Pan-African movement (Coly, 2019). Similarly, Afro-descendants may unite on a share experiences of people :

- non-heterosexual,
- who do not identify with their assigned gender,
- who do not fit in the binary and the dichotomy of genders,

to resist their marginalization in Pan-African debates and institutions, and to counter the dehumanization that would reduce them to mere instruments of European and North American hegemony[28] (Currier, 2016, 1). This approach differs therefore from traditional essentialism in two key ways. First, it allows the group itself to define its essential attributes rather than having these attributes imposed externally. Second, it understands that these attributes are constructed, not natural, and can be selectively invoked when politically advantageous. This flexibility ensures that the group retains control over how and when to emphasize or downplay these attributes, providing greater autonomy in political engagements (Gandhi, 2015, 157 ; Thamizharasi, 2021, 155).

Beside this, a genealogical perspective on identity further clarifies the utility of a counter-essentialism. Through this lens, a group can be recognized as distinct not because of shared inherent characteristics but through the complex and overlapping historical narratives that bind its members. This approach aligns with the idea that group identities, while constructed, can maintain coherence while embracing internal diversity (Ghandi, 2015, 159). By situating experiences and practices within a group based on historical connections rather than essential traits, it becomes possible to reconceptualize social groups without resorting to the notion that all members share a common social position or experience (Butler, 1990, xxix). The process of becoming part of a group identity involves engaging with and reinterpreting existing concepts in relation to specific contexts. This continuous cycle of practice and reinterpretation creates intricate connections among members, forming a genealogy that reflects both the history of these concepts and the history of the individuals who adapt and redefine them (145-146). It may be argued that a genealogical approach tends to place too much emphasis on the continuities and commonalities between various interpretations and experiences of afro-femininity or afro-queerness. With the risk of overlooking the significant gaps and disruptions in the understanding of these categories, which would cause breaks in the chain of reinterpretation. Nevertheless, it is essential to recognize how the erosion that occurs during the reinterpretation process can lead to the formation of distinct cultures (Ghandi, 2015, 161). As a result of these breaks in the meaning of afro-femininity or afro-queerness, women and queer Afro-descendants should be seen not only as groups characterized by internal diversity but also as one that is fractured and divided by power dynamics (162). In this way, strategic essentialism and genealogical analysis

[28] See subsection 4.2.1.

provide valuable frameworks for understanding the fluid and constructed nature of collective identities in political and social contexts.

In the preceding analysis, we have delved into the evolving nature of Afro-descendant identities, highlighting the significance of both intersectionality and strategic essentialism in effectively addressing the complexities of representation within the Pan-African movement (Creenshaw, 2010 ; Thamizharasi, 2021). This discussion has laid the groundwork for understanding how these approaches can be harnessed to navigate the intricate terrain of collective identities. Moving forward, it is imperative to shift our focus to the ethical foundations that should guide the movement. The following principles are not merely abstract ideals but are essential components for building a cohesive and inclusive Pan-African community. They must be intricately woven into the fabric of the movement to ensure that it remains responsive to the diverse experiences and needs of its members. In the following sections, we will explore these concepts in greater depth, beginning with a examination of respect as a cornerstone of the Pan-African ethical framework.

5.2. Conceptualizing the movement's pillar ethical principales

The critical analysis conducted throughout this work has established that, in order to achieve their goal of unifying Afro-descendant peoples, Pan-Africanists must adhere to two deontological key concepts: respect and freedom (Darwall, 1977 ; Blackstone, 1973). These principles serve as the cornerstone for fostering solidarity and ensuring the equitable treatment of all individuals within the Pan-African movement. Without a steadfast commitment to these values, the objective of unification is likely to remain elusive, as they are essential for building a cohesive and just movement. However, the most crucial task ahead is to establish a framework that effectively integrates these two concepts within a Pan-African context. Ensuring they do not fall victim to the masculine-centric narrative that has historically characterized universalism

within the movement (Reddock, 2017, 258). This framework must be deliberately crafted to reflect the diverse experiences and perspectives within the Pan-African discours.

5.2.1. Respect

Respect within the Pan-Africanist framework serves as a foundational principle, essential for fostering unity, mutual understanding, and collaboration within the Pan-African community (Abidde, 2021). This respect must be deeply rooted in a recognition of the shared history, struggles, and aspirations that unite African peoples and their diaspora. It should manifest in a profound appreciation for the diverse perspectives, experiences, and contributions of each individual and community, acknowledging the complex and multifaceted nature of African identities (Mama & Abbas, 2014). Central to this concept is the recognition of intrinsic dignity and a historical consciousness that honors the collective memory of the African experience. This respect transcends individual backgrounds, instead embracing the entirety of African peoples' historical journey, from the legacies of ancient civilizations to the fight against colonialism and beyond (Schiele, 1994). This requires an inclusive approach that values different perspectives, recognizing that no single narrative can encapsulate the entirety of the African experience. Respect thus demands a commitment to fostering inclusive spaces where all voices are heard and valued, irrespective of their origin or status within the broader Pan-African movement (Galeotti, 2010, 138).

Moreover, respect in the Pan-African context must be closely linked to the principle of *reciprocity*[29], which entails a mutual exchange of ideas, resources, and support (Cook-Sather, 2013, 1). Interactions among Pan-Africanists should be guided by equity[30], where each party acknowledges the value of the contributions of others and strives to engage in fair and balanced exchanges. This reciprocity ensures that relationships within the Pan-African context are not exploitative but are instead rooted in shared goals and collective advancement (Galeotti, 2010, 23). Furthermore, it underscores the importance of transparency and ethical governance,

[29] Conduct in which two individuals or groups engage in mutual assistance and benefit from one another (Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary, 2024).

[30] A situation where everyone is treated equitably based on their needs, with no particular group receiving preferential treatment (Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary, 2024).

reinforcing the collective responsibility to uphold the values and principles of the movement. Respect among Pan-Africanists must also translate into responsibility, particularly in the context of promoting social justice across the African continent and its diaspora (Cook-Sather, 2013, 3). This responsibility extends to both individuals and institutions, necessitating a commitment to ethical behavior, accountability, and the continuous pursuit of the common good. A crucial aspect of respect within the movement is the active effort to dismantle the legacies of colonialism, racism, and other forms of oppression that have historically divided African peoples. This respect involves challenging internalized biases and stereotypes, fostering a deep sense of pride in African heritage, and working collaboratively to build solidarity based on mutual recognition (Akinyela, 1995, 30). Respect within the Pan-African context must be forward-looking, embracing the diversity of thought and innovation that can propel the movement towards achieving its long-term objectives. This requires an acknowledgment of the past and a critical engagement with the present where respect for individual and collective rights is paramount in the pursuit of Pan-African ideals (Mama & Abbas, 2014, 62).

In this conceptualisation, it is crucial to clarify what type of respect is not being addressed. The respect we refer to here goes far beyond mere surface-level politeness or deferential behavior that lacks genuine engagement with the values and principles of Pan-African thought. We are not concerned with :

- a passive form of respect that simply tolerates differences without actively fostering understanding and cooperation,
- a hierarchical respect that demands uncritical obedience or subservience based on power dynamics or authority.

Because, such forms of respect are rooted in the maintenance of status quo power structures (Bird, 2004). This conceptualization thus partially set aside the Kantian notion of respect in favor of a more dynamic and context-sensitive understanding that eschews rigid dogmatism. Kantian respect is rooted in a deliberative disposition, meaning that respect involves a certain way of thinking and reasoning about others that imposes constraints on how they should be treated. This form of respect is due to all persons equally, irrespective of their particular attributes or identities, and it is tied to the idea that every person, by virtue of being a rational agent, holds a moral status that commands respect (Bird, 2004, 209-210). However while Kantian respect is egalitarian, it is still hierarchical in another sense. The hierarchy arises from the fact that the respect is based on the moral standing of persons as autonomous, rational

beings, which places them on a higher moral plane compared to other considerations[31]. This creates a « vertical » hierarchy, where the moral status of persons as ends in themselves « trumps » other deliberative concerns (214 ; 229).

Thus, without abandoning it, we move away from this *recognition respect*, and gravitate more towards a more structured idea of a *appraisal respect*[32] (Darwall, 1977, 38-39). This positioning is due to the fact that, in our context of Pan-African institutions, the fluidity and contextual nature of identity are not obstacles to deliberative reasoning, since it incorporates a counter-essentialist view[33], Pan-African institutions can uphold a form of respect that is both egalitarian and sensitive to the diverse and evolving identities within the African diaspora[34]. Yet, the rationale is that we must prioritize a form of respect grounded in an evaluative basis, which provides a more empirical understanding of who is actively contributing to the desired unification and who is sustaining its effects. This approach enables a clearer assessment of the individuals' efforts and their ongoing commitment to the goal. Appraisal respect has a stronger motivational dimension, encouraging individuals to cultivate virtues by recognizing them for their moral excellence (Darwall, 1977, 44-45). This form of respect not only acknowledges the individual but also promotes ethical behavior within the movement. This is aimed at avoiding the pitfalls to which the movement is susceptible. Therefore, all this means that, if *reciprocity* is violated, those who engage in such breach cannot be seen as committed to the principle of

[31] These other considerations would include the achievement of a collective ethical principle such as the unity of Afro-descendant communities.

[32] *Appraisal respect* involves a positive evaluation of a person or their qualities. One can hold appraisal respect without necessarily understanding the specific behaviors it might require. Appraisal respect is the evaluation itself, akin to esteem or high regard, though its criteria are more narrowly defined.

Recognition respect is a concept regarded as intrinsic to all persons. Asserting that individuals are inherently entitled to respect implies that others must seriously consider and appropriately weigh their personhood in decision-making. This form of respect lacks universal consensus, as it involves defining our moral obligations towards others. The key point is that recognizing all individuals as deserving of respect demands a nuanced understanding of what their personhood requires (Darwal, 1977).

[33] See section 5.1.

[34] This is in response to the criticism that kantian respect for identity would fail a « reckoning test » which requires that any object of respect must have a clear and independent significance in deliberative reasoning. Identities, being fluid and context-dependent, would not provide the clear and determinate guidance needed to meet this test. Thus, incorporating identity into the framework of respect would risk undermining the egalitarianism that Kantian respect is meant to uphold, potentially leading to a form of partiality that contradicts the very notion of equal respect (Bird, 2004, 216-217).

unity, which is here the *standard* to pursue (Darwall, 1977, 42). Their actions reveal a disregard for the collective advancement of African peoples and instead suggest a pursuit of self-interest that is incompatible with the movement's goals. To state it once again, such individuals or groups, by failing to honor the principle of reciprocity, ultimately demonstrate that they do not genuinely aspire to the unity and solidarity that are at the heart of Pan-Africanism. Consequently, they not only betray the foundational values of the movement but also contribute to the very divisions and inequalities that ideal Pan-African approach seeks to overcome.

Thus, just as respect forms the bedrock of unity within the Pan-African movement, the notion of freedom is equally essential, as it drives the pursuit of self-determination, autonomy, and the liberation. Transitioning from respect to freedom, we must examine how these two principles are intertwined, with each reinforcing the other to achieve the broader objectives of Pan-Africanism.

5.2.2. Freedom

The concept of freedom, within the Pan-African movement must be understood as more than a mere rhetorical flourish; it is a foundational principle that demands rigorous application and enforcement across all dimensions of the movement. It is imperative to recognize that freedom mandates the inclusion of the diverse experiences and struggles faced by all groups within the movement, particularly those who have historically been marginalized (Biney, 2022, 405). To assert otherwise is not only intellectually negligent but morally indefensible. The Pan-African movement, in its quest for true liberation, cannot afford to overlook the internal structures of domination that perpetuate oppression from within (Van Klinken, 2020, 9). Sexism, queerphobia, and other forms of internalized oppression must be actively dismantled if the movement is to achieve its stated goals. A superficial or selective application of freedom serves only to reinforce these structures, thereby undermining the movement’s legitimacy and efficacy. Thus, is not an optional consideration but a non-negotiable condition for genuine liberation. The Pan-African movement must recognize that each group within it has the right to pursue its own struggles, free from the imposition of a monolithic vision of liberation that is often dictated by dominant ideologies or power structures (Hirschmann, 2009, 25-26). The struggles of Pan-African women, must be allowed to focus on dismantling patriarchy and securing fundamental rights without being subsumed under an anti-imperialist agenda that fails

to address gender issues adequately. Similarly, queer individuals within the movement must be free to advocate for their rights without being coerced into conforming to heteronormative standards prevalent in some Pan-African discourses (Thiam C. & Frehiwot, 2023). The respect for freedom within the Pan-African framework is not a passive acknowledgment of diversity; it is an active commitment to uphold the autonomy and integrity of each group's struggles (Van Klinken, 2020, 16). It is not enough to simply include women and queer individuals as sub-categories within the broader movement. They are autonomous entities whose voices must be heard and respected in their full complexity. The Pan-African movement must resist the temptation to impose a singular model of resistance that prioritizes certain struggles over others. Instead, it must embrace a pluralistic approach that allows for a diversity of strategies and goals, each rooted in the specific experiences and needs of different groups (Mama & Abbas, 2014, 118-119).

This pluralism is not merely a theoretical construct but a practical necessity. Feminist, queer, and other marginalized struggles must coexist within the movement without being subordinated to those deemed more legitimate or urgent by its elites (Hirschmann, 2009, 88-89). Any attempt to redirect these struggles toward causes perceived as more central to Pan-African movement, without the consent of those directly involved, constitutes a betrayal of the very principles the movement purports to uphold. The respect for freedom within the Pan-African movement must foster genuine dialogue, not artificial consensus. This requires the elimination of constraints that might force uniformity of thought or suppress dissenting voices. Per se, this freedom, when it is in its political meaning[35], can be regulated within Pan-African institutions, at congresses, and through other assemblies. In these cases, this regulation would focus specifically on the rights and capacities of individuals within this political community (Blackstone, 1973, 421). Compared to the freedom described so far, in political terms, we would refer to a form sometimes described as negative. Indeed, there is a classification that categorizes freedom into two approaches (MacCallum, 1976) :

[35] Political liberty refers to a set of rights recognized and protected by a given political community. These rights define the boundaries of an authority and the circumstances under which state intervention in the affairs of the members of the political community is justified. Thus, political liberty entails a particular social and legal standing within a framework of rules and institutions, and it is often interpreted differently depending on social and political contexts (Blackstone, 1973)

- a negative freedom : characterized by an absence of external interference or constraints, allowing individuals to act as they choose without obstruction from others (320-321). It emphasizes *« freedom from »* restrictions imposed by others or institutions (318) ;
- a positive freedom : characterized by a presence of enabling conditions that allow individuals to realize their potential and achieve self-mastery (324). It focuses on *« freedom to »* do or become something, often requiring support or resources to ensure meaningful choices (319).

Thus, in this conceptual framework, we prioritize the first scenario, which, in practice, does not inhibit the active realization of free will[36]. From a deontological perspective, it serves as a means of integrating into political institutions the inalienable moral right of individuals not to be coerced or oppressed (Galston, 1982, 622). In front of this, the threat that positive freedom can lead to paternalism and authoritarianism is too robust to support this idea. Although this conception argues for the idea of individuals as constructed subjects, it often justifies external interventions under the pretext of helping individuals achieve their (perceived as) true potential, which risks imposing a particular vision of the right way (Hirschmann, 2017). Additionally, the concept's inherent ambiguity and subjectivity make it difficult to define what conditions truly promote freedom, potentially leading to misuse by those at the head of Pan-African institutions, or politically influential in the movement. It's therefore necessary to think of a movement with negative freedom, which, as we shall see in the application, remains flexible in the expression of its thoughts.

Having thoroughly examined the foundational ethical principles of respect and freedom within the Pan-African movement, it is now imperative to explore how these principles can be applied in practice. The theoretical grounding of these values sets the stage for a more nuanced understanding of their role in fostering inclusivity and ethical governance within the movement. Moving forward, we will delve into the application of these principles, particularly focusing on how they can be systematically integrated to address the complexities of internal diversity and ensure equitable participation. This next section will outline practical strategies for embedding these principles into the movement's structures and decision-making processes, with the idea that this would be an important step towards making a real shift on pan-Africans thought.

[36] It is evident that these concepts, as theorized, draw heavily from robust liberalism (Galston, 1982). However, the key idea to keep in mind is that these two principles, in conjunction, become paramount for introducing inclusiveness into the movement..

5.3. Application of the ethical principles

The conceptualization of the movement's ethical principles calls for a academic approach to theoretically design the features of the values of respect and freedom within the Pan-African framework. This analysis explores how these concepts can be systematically integrated to foster inclusivity and ethical approaches. By addressing the complexities of internal diversity, this section aims to provide a framework that aligns with the core objectives of Pan-Africanism. The framework for applying these established ethical principles extends to three key aspects highlighted in the critique of gender relations and heteronormativity within Pan-Africanism :

- freedom of expression and thought,
- participation in decision-making,
- equitable access to responsibilities.

To begin with, it is necessary that the Pan-African movement fosters an environment where all voices can be expressed, even when they raise points of contention or grievances, as long as these exchanges occur within a framework of mutual respect. Promoting a diversity of opinions and perspectives strengthens the movement by creating a space, during the gatherings, where every identity and experience is acknowledged and valued (Harris, 1996, 21). Moreover, reclaiming and rediscovering indigenous African traditions that historically valued diversity is crucial (Schiele, 1994). Every individual or group should have the freedom to speak on these subjects, to bring them to the forefront, and to elevate them to the highest levels of the movement, either through representation or by directly engaging in open discussions organized by the movement. For instance, non-heterosexual relationships existed in several precolonial African societies, such as forms of marriage between women observed in certain. Similarly, non-binary gender roles were recognized, with specific roles for individuals who did not conform to the strict categories of male or female (Debele, 2022, 104-105). In a similar vein, the expression of Afro-descendant women's experiences contributes to the education of Afro-descendants on existing issues (Campbell, 2018, 1066-1067).

Following on from that, ensuring balanced participation requires a concerted effort, and these contributions must be fully recognized and integrated into current discourses and institutions. A key strategy to achieve this is the implementation of « gender mainstream » to ensure

significant representation of women in decision-making positions within Pan-African institutions. Gender mainstreaming, a strategy and policy framework, aims to systematically integrate a gender perspective into all policies, programs, and public actions at every level and stage of the decision-making process (Meier & Lombardo, 2013). The primary objective of gender mainstreaming is to promote gender equality by ensuring that the experiences, needs, and priorities of both women and men are equally considered in the formulation and implementation of policies. In this context, more so than in others, gender *quotas* can be considered a « good practices » if they are designed to provoke the necessary changes within political institutions (50-51). These quotas, serving as an important initial step in this process of inclusion, should guarantee that women's and queer people's voices directly influence the movement's policies and orientations. Ideally, these quotas would become unnecessary after a certain period, once full inclusion is achieved. Queer individuals could in addition be granted a special status as representatives, directly designated by the congresses themselves to represent specific political communities, such as exiled queer individuals (Held, 2023). This would ensure that these essential voices are heard, despite the constraints of national or community selections.

In the original thinking presented here, it is considered that, in addition to participation, creating inclusive spaces and events within the Pan-African movement is essential. This effort includes establishing clear codes of conduct to protect participants from all forms of discrimination or harassment. These codes must be based on the principle that the foundations of a person's gender or sexual identity are not up for debate, just as one would not debate the foundations of skin color or religion. Indeed, challenging these foundations would undermine the identity of Afro-descendants, which must be regarded as a non-negotiable red line in any discussion. Furthermore, the various positions within Pan-African institutions must be as accessible as possible to any qualified individual. To ensure and maintain real diversity within organizations, regular audits should be conducted to evaluate the state of diversity and identify areas in need of improvement. Consequently, these audits can lead to recommendations or corrective actions. This evaluative principle should be scheduled regularly, either at the request of stakeholders or triggered when the principle of mutual respect and the free expression of a liberty, that does not violate the established code of conduct, has been breached.

In the preceding analysis, we have highlighted the evolving nature of Afro-descendant identities, emphasizing the importance of intersectionality and strategic essentialism in addressing the complexities within the Pan-African movement (Creenshaw, 2010; Thamizharasi, 2021). As we move towards the general conclusion, it is crucial to underscore the ethical foundations of respect and freedom as vital to fostering a cohesive and inclusive Pan-African community. Respect in this context goes beyond politeness; it requires acknowledging the shared history and diverse experiences of African peoples while ensuring equity and mutual responsibility (Abidde, 2021 ; Mama & Abbas, 2014). Freedom, similarly, demands the inclusion of all groups, particularly marginalized ones, and supports a pluralistic approach to the movement's goals (Biney, 2022; Van Klinken, 2020). To integrate these principles effectively (in the institutional structure, for example), the Pan-African movement must ensure inclusive participation, uphold clear codes of conduct, and regularly assess diversity within its structures. These steps are essential for maintaining the movement's commitment to unity and liberation for Afro-descendant peoples.

PART III. SYNTHESIS

6. Conclusions

6.1. Summary of the argumentation

In conclusion, this study has provided a critical examination of the Pan-African movement through an Afrofeminist lens, shedding light on the complexities of integrating gender and sexuality into a discourse historically dominated by a focus on race and anti-colonialism. The Pan-African movement, while pivotal in advocating for the liberation of African peoples and the African diaspora, has often fallen short in addressing the multifaceted identities and experiences of those within its fold, particularly women and queer individuals. This work has traced the origins of Pan-Africanism, revealing how its early formulations were deeply intertwined with an essentialist and homogenous approach to African identity, one that has largely marginalized the voices and experiences of women and queer individuals. Through a detailed analysis, it has been shown that the Pan-African movement's foundational structures were heavily influenced by gendered exclusions, perpetuating a narrative that often silenced or overlooked the contributions of women. The examination of maroon societies, for instance, reveals how the early inspirations for Afrocentric movements were shaped by predominantly male-led narratives, which have continued to influence the organizational dynamics and leadership structures within Pan-Africanism. This historical context is not merely a backdrop but a significant force that has shaped the contours of Pan-Africanism, where male-dominated narratives have often overshadowed the contributions of women.

Furthermore, this study has highlighted the persistent tensions between the ideals of liberation and the realities of exclusion within the movement. The marginalization of women's voices in the conceptualization of Pan-African thought has had far-reaching implications, limiting the movement's ability to fully address the complex intersections of race, gender, and sexuality. The critique of Afrocentricity, particularly its limitations in addressing the lived experiences of Afro-descendant women and queer individuals, underscores the need for a more inclusive and

intersectional approach to Pan-Africanism. The integration of Afrofeminist theoretical frameworks into Pan-African thought offers a path forward for calibrate the ethical underpinnings of the movement. Afrofeminism, with its emphasis on the agency and resistance of Black women in the face of intersecting oppressions, provides a critical lens through which to challenge the patriarchal and heteronormative structures that have historically dominated Pan-African discourse. By centering the voices and experiences of Afro-descendant women, Afrofeminism calls for a more inclusive and equitable expression of Afrocentricity, one that acknowledges and addresses the diverse identities and experiences within the African diaspora.

The deontological ethics proposed in this study further contribute to shaping a more inclusive Pan-African movement. By emphasizing the importance of consistency in the application of Pan-African values, this ethical framework calls attention to the disparities in the treatment of different groups within the movement. It highlights the necessity of recognizing and rectifying these internal contradictions to foster a truly egalitarian movement. The recognition that gender-based oppression is inextricably linked to racial oppression is crucial in this regard. Challenging homophobic and transphobic attitudes and practices within Pan-Africanism is essential for ensuring that all voices within the movement, particularly those of marginalized groups, are heard and respected. In summary, this study has illuminated the limits of universal emancipation within the Pan-African movement, as it has traditionally been conceived. By interrogating the intersections of gender, sexuality, and race, it has become clear that the movement's ideals of freedom and liberation cannot be fully realized without a critical reevaluation of its foundational assumptions and practices. The proposed integration of Afrofeminism and deontological ethics into Pan-African thought offers a promising avenue for advancing a more just movement, one that truly embodies the diversity and complexity of the African and Afro-descendant experience. As the movement continues to evolve, it is imperative that it embraces these perspectives to ensure that the struggle for liberation is not only broad but deep, encompassing the full range of identities and experiences that constitute the Afro-descendants.

6.2. Contributions and theoretical advancements

This work represents an intellectual endeavor to critically reexamine the ethical foundations of Pan-African thought through the lens of Afrofeminism. It directly addresses the limitations of traditional discourse, particularly its systemic neglect and exclusion of gender and sexuality issues that profoundly impact Afro-descendant women and queer individuals. By drawing on a range of scholars and thinkers, this study undertakes the deconstruction of enduring colonial and patriarchal legacies within these movements, which, despite their aspirations for unity and collective freedom, continue to overlook these critical dimensions. The analysis illuminates how these movements, historically dominated by male perspectives, have often perpetuated colonial power dynamics, particularly through the marginalization of women's voices and the disregard for the specific forms of violence they endure. In this sense, the study contributes to a more sophisticated understanding of the broader ideological framework by integrating intersectional perspectives that acknowledge the interwoven oppressions related to race, gender, and sexuality. By scrutinizing concepts such as Afrocentricity in dialogue with Afrofeminism, the work suggests a reconfiguration of these ideologies to address contemporary challenges with a more inclusive and equitable approach.

One of the noteworthy advancements of this research is its formulation of a deontological ethics that seeks to guide these movements toward genuine inclusivity, calling for the recognition of the rights and dignity of all Afro-descendants, regardless of gender or sexuality. This theoretical integration aims not merely to critique but to evolve the discourse beyond a simplistic resistance to racial oppression, advocating instead for a platform where the complexities of gender and sexuality are central to the realization of true collective liberation. It is important to note that this work does not presume to revolutionize these intellectual traditions. Rather, it aims to substantiate, through practical exploration, the existence of a range of possibilities inspired by the scholars and theorists cited. This approach is premised on the belief that by demonstrating these possibilities, a foundation can be laid for further scholarly inquiry and development within the movement. In this context, the reflection that « *the history of Pan-Africanism, a vagabond history, is a history of circulation. The circulation of people, the circulation of ideas, the circulation of struggles »*[37] becomes particularly illuminating. It underscores the necessity for

[37] Trad.*« L'histoire du panafricanisme, histoire vagabonde, est une histoire de circulations. Ciraculation des hommes, ciculation des idées, circulations des luttes »* (Boukari-Yabara, 2017, 335)

these ideologies to evolve, ensuring that the diverse ideas and struggles of all members of the African diaspora, including women and queer individuals, are fully integrated. Thus, this work proposes a new framework for critically engaging with and reimagining the movement in all its complexity and diversity.

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