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GLOBAL AFRICA

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"Global Africa": A Critical Genealogy of a Militant Concept

History, diasporas, Pan-Africanism, Reparations, UNESCO's *General History of Africa*

While the term *Global Africa* seems to be increasingly used in sectors as diverse as art, fashion, banking, services and academic research to evoke the multiple connections between Africa and the world, it is worth returning to the activist origins of this term. Indeed, the term stems directly from African and international activism of the early 1990s, which claimed the right to reparations for slavery and colonialism. One step further, the term can be almost superimposed on the social and political history of Pan-Africanism over several centuries and across spaces. The author adopts a pedagogical approach that presents two salient works on the subject (by A. Mazrui and M. O. West) and mobilizes a multilingual and multidisciplinary bibliography to analyse the term in order to clarify the project and the struggles underpinning its use. The article covers the critical origins of Global Africa from its militant emergence to its institutionalization by the African Union and UNESCO. It argues that the stakes are high and the key issue is to grasp the changes in the way we think and represent Africa and Africans in our globalised world.

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"Global Africa": A Critical Genealogy of a Militant Concept

The expression *Global Africa*, in English, appears more and more regularly in a wide range of areas. It is mainly used to illustrate the relationships and interconnections between Africa and the world. Many establishments indeed bear the term in their names, such as a car park in Cape Verde, a bank in Malta or a construction company in South Africa. More significantly, several high-profile events and publications have helped spread the expression in the cultural, intellectual and scientific fields. For instance, The Global Africa Project, a major exhibition curated by Lowery Stokes Sims and Leslie King-Hammond, presented at the Museum of Arts and Design in New York in 2011, aimed to show the extent to which contemporary African art transcends the continent's geographical boundaries (Colard, 2012). The French-language book by Laura Eboa Songue and Paola Audrey Ndengue, *Global Africa : 150 personnalités qui font la mode africaine en 2016*, features men and women who have contributed to the "development of Afro fashion", both within and outside the continent (2016, p. 8). In the same year, academic publisher Taylor & Francis launched a new series called Global Africa, edited by Toyin Falola and Roy Doron, that has since featured 23 books. The series aims to "place African experiences within the fields of global history, globalization, African Diaspora and Atlantic History".[1] Dorothy L. Hodgson and Judith A. Byfield published a large collective volume the following year, entitled *Global Africa: Into the Twenty-First Century*. It aimed to demonstrate that Africa has a long history of interactions. On that account, the continent should be placed at the center of global historical processes rather than on its periphery. The contributions of some forty researchers, artists, journalists, activists and writers aimed to establish that Africa is not an exotic space outside of history – without obscuring the unequal power relations that continue to structure many African communities' living conditions (Hodgson and Byfield, 2017, p. 6). Other recent references contribute to a similar intellectual project, albeit without the title *Global Africa* (Kaag *et al.*, 2021), or with it, such as a special issue of *African Diaspora* (de Witte and Spronk, 2014) or then again, this new journal this article is published in. These examples illustrate the growing, widespread and accepted use of the term *Global Africa* to express the idea that Africa must be studied and understood through its interactions and interconnections with the world. As historian Paul Tiyambe Zeleza had already pointed out, questions related to Africa's place in the world and the world's place in Africa, as well as the intersection between world and African history, prove to be a promising field (Zeleza, 2010, p. 16).

However, the popularization of these cultural, intellectual and scientific uses of the term *Global Africa* seems to obscure a particular dimension associated with it. In fact, this expression derives directly from the early 1990s African and Pan-African mobilization, which demanded the right to reparations for slavery and colonialism. It can be found in the sources, preparatory documents and reports surrounding the major Pan-African conferences on reparations held in Nigeria, Lagos in 1990 and Abuja in 1993 (Bonacci, 2021). It is also used as a metaphor for the Pan-African impulse: *Global Africa* encompasses a dimension of struggle, embodied in the social practices and movements, political projects, relationships and cultures that make up Pan-Africanism's history. This struggle dimension could also be described as radical and non-consensual. It is significant because it

[1] See https://www.routledge.com/Global-Africa/book-series/GLOBAFR (accessed July 24, 2021).

summons the topic of the interaction between Africa and the world and, more specifically, the radical political projects originating from the relations between Africans and Afro-descendants.

It should be noted here that the militant aspect of these relations – identified as "Pan-Africanism", but also as "black internationalism", "the black intellectual tradition", or "the black radical tradition", depending on the period and contributors in question – has mainly been documented in English and not in French. The historical and symbolic reasons behind this deserve to be discussed in detail by specialists in these linguistic areas, following Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch (1999). Notable gaps and discrepancies have marred the quantity and quality of the knowledge produced and disseminated on Pan-Africanism in the Francophone academic world, due to scholarly traditions that have evolved differently; to French institutional reticence towards the emergence of this field; a weak link between the intellectual work of the militant Francophone elite and the deployment of activist social and cultural movements; besides a reluctance to talk about the racial question.[2] The point here is certainly neither to discredit scientific production in French, nor to compare research carried out in French or in English in a simplistic manner. Instead, it emphasizes the extent to which Pan-Africanism has had difficulty establishing itself in French academia. Moreover, well-known French intellectuals, specialists of African history, may discourage legitimate intellectual curiosity by claiming that Pan-Africanism died in the 1960s with the independence of African states or that any investigation into it would be subjective because it could be considered biased, committed, and not impartial[3]l. There is, nonetheless, a small bibliography in French on Pan-Africanism, including short and now outdated texts (Decraene, 1959); some classics (Dewitte, 2011 [1985]); books on major figures (Tété-Adjalogo, 1995; Zinsou and Zoumenou, 2004); studies on the American and Caribbean dimensions of Pan-Africanism (Lara, 2000; Guedj, 2011; Moussa, 2020) or its French-speaking dimension (Fabre, 1985; Frioux-Salgas, 2009); a collection of sources (OIF, 2006); specific works tying the Caribbean with Ethiopia (Bonacci, 2010) and a few essays attempting to understand the Pan-African movement globally (M'Bokolo, 1995, 2004; Boukari-Yabara, 2014). In addition to existing references, there are recent yet unpublished works (Nakao, 2017; Auque-Pallez, 2021) and scientific articles not easily accessible to the general public, which by no means cover the richness of the debate involving many African intellectuals (Mbembe and Sarr, 2017). However, this literature hardly finds its place in the teachings and reflections on the history of Africa, even though, as historian Elikia M'Bokolo (2004, p. 1) reminds us, Pan-Africanism "remains the most ambitious, all-embracing ideology Africa has produced for itself since the 19th century".

For this reason, as the expression *Global Africa* is spreading within a French-speaking cultural and scientific space, it is essential to recognize and return to the specific dimension it conveys and the historical and conceptual depth it holds. To better explain the project, the struggles and movements that *Global Africa* encompasses, I lean on two texts written by well-known intellectuals. These texts have been selected because they bear the title *Global Africa* and because they locate precisely this expression at the heart of the Pan-African movement. The first, by political scientist Ali A. Mazrui, dates back to 1994, and the second was published in 2005 by historian Michael O. West – both figures whose works have not been sufficiently discussed in Francophone research. We need then to question the institutionalization of this expression through the updating of UNESCO's *General History of Africa* (*GHA*) project, which is entitled, precisely, *Global Africa*. The aim, obviously, is certainly not to prescribe a militant use of the expression *Global Africa* but to encourage incorporating into *Global Africa's* future cultural and intellectual uses the symbolic and political baggage the term conveys. It is, in fact, a case where knowledge is at stake. The point here is to place *Global Africa* in the relationship between Africans and Afro-descendants, and particularly in the genealogies of struggle brought about by this relationship. This is necessary to grasp the militant origin of this concept and to replace Pan-Africanism within the ways we view and represent Africa and Africans' presence in today's globalized world.

Ali A. Mazrui and the Crusade for Reparations

In December 1994, Ali Mazrui (1933–2014) published the very first article, entitled "Global Africa: From Abolitionists to Reparationists", in *African Studies Review*, the journal of the African Studies Association (ASA), the professional organization of American Africanists. The paper had been presented to the ASA the previous year as the first Bashorun M. K. O. Abiola Distinguished Annual Lecture. This yearly conference within ASA was established thanks to Chief Abiola's financial support. A successful Nigerian businessman, Chief Abiola was actively involved in the cause for reparations for slavery and colonialism, and he won the presidential election in Nigeria in June 1993 – though he actually never held the position, because the military annulled the elections and a *coup d'État* took place in November 1993. This support was handed over by Ali Mazrui to the ASA, with a view to offering an African intellectual the opportunity to participate in a major scholarly conference in the USA, a

[2] Examining how the racial question is treated in French and in France is beyond the framework of this article. It is a complex issue with varying policy ramifications. Two books could contribute to the discussion: a reference work (Ndiaye, 2008) and a testimony (Soumahoro, 2020).
[3] These comments were made by senior colleagues at a round-table on Pan-Africanism and African Studies that I organised during the first Multidisciplinary Research Network Conference on African Studies held at the CNRS in 2006. See link to the workshop: http://etudes-africaines.cnrs.fr/atelier/le-panafricanisme-et-les-etudes-africaines-bilan-et-perspectives/ (accessed July 19, 2021).

contribution to the institution's slow decolonization process.[4] Thus, the inaugural lecture, held under the auspices of Chief Abiola, a defender and soon martyr of Nigerian democracy, whose commitment to Pan-Africanism still goes largely unrecognized, was presented by Ali Mazrui, a Kenyan, Mombasa-born intellectual, political scientist, prolific author, public intellectual and a great humanist with extensive international experience (Campbell, 2014).

Although the demand for reparations for slavery and colonialism is nothing new, it was given a fresh impetus in the late 20th century in the United States, Brazil, the Caribbean and on the African continent (Jewsiewicki, 2004; Martin and Yaquinto, 2007; Howard-Hassmann, 2008; Beckles, 2013; Araujo, 2017). Ali Mazrui's paper delves into the debates that took place among committed African intellectuals in the early 1990s. In fact, in the introduction and conclusion of the text, Mazrui follows in the footsteps of Chief Abiola, an advocate for a "crusade for reparations to be paid to black people for the hundreds of years of enslavement, exploitation and degradation" (Mazrui, 1994, p. 1). Chief Abiola had been committed to defending this cause since the late 1980s, for which he brought all his political, intellectual and financial weight to bear. He helped organize and finance the first "World Conference on Reparations for Africa and Africans in the Diaspora" held in Lagos in 1990, attended by the Nigerian political elite and key figures from the Pan-African world (Bonacci, 2021). As Nigeria assumed chairmanship of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1991, two resolutions (1339 in June 1991, and 1373 in February 1992) founded the Group of Eminent Persons (GEP), whose mission was to "explore the modalities and logistics of a campaign for black reparations world-wide" (Mazrui, 1994, p. 15). During Chief Abiola's chairmanship, GEP members, including Ali Mazrui, launched a series of actions, including organizing the "First Pan-African Conference on Reparations" under the aegis of the OAU and held in Abuja, Nigeria, in April 1993.

Thus, as a representative of the GEP, Mazrui posited from the outset a form of continuity between the abolitionists of the past – who had fought against the scourge of slavery – and today's "reparationists", whom he defined as a new moral and political generation advocating the idea that the injustices of enslavement did not end with emancipation, and could truly end only with reparations (Mazrui, 1994, p. 2). By describing the reparations movement as an offshoot of "black frustration" and black nationalism, and by placing its birth in the Americas and particularly in the United States, Mazrui set the scene for the birth of *Global Africa*. He explains the evolving transformation: "black people in the diaspora" demanded for reparations in their countries, but it is "Africa's" involvement in the cause that shifted these demands towards a "world-wide crusade for reparations for the African and black world as a whole" (Mazrui, 1994, p. 4). By shifting the scale of his approach of reparations from a national issue to a global cause, Mazrui makes it possible to conceptualize *Global Africa*. He defines this *Global Africa* as the African continent, plus the diaspora resulting from slavery and from colonialism as well. This concept is, of course, central to discussions held in the previous years and is reflected in the Abuja Proclamation (1993), which highlights the common condition and cause of "the damaged lives of contemporary Africans, from Harlem to Harare, [and] the damaged economies of the Black World, from Guinea to Guyana, from Somalia to Suriname".[5] Without dwelling here on the other arguments in Mazrui's text or its apparent limitations, it is nevertheless clear that the expression *Global Africa* does not refer so much to the interconnections between Africa and the world, as more particularly to the militant relations between Africa and its diasporas, old and new. When situated in this well-defined space, *Global Africa* acquires another dimension: one that is geographically and chronologically narrower, but thematically well-defined and politically more engaged. This dimension is precisely located in the relational space associated with the creation of Pan-Africanism.

Michael O. West and the History of Pan-Africanism

In 2005, historian Michael West published an article entitled "Global Africa: The Emergence and Evolution of an Idea" in a special issue of *Review,* a journal of the Fernand Braudel Center for the Study of Economies, Historical Systems, and Civilizations. This research center was founded in 1976 by Immanuel Wallerstein at Binghamton University. Having traditionally hosted intellectuals such as Cedric Robinson, Bernard Magubane and Walter Rodney, it promoted historical social science and criticized Eurocentrism in the social sciences (Dufoix and Hugot, 2021). Research on the revival of Black World Studies quickly earned its place in this special issue, entitled *The Black World and the World-System* (Martin, 2005).

West, an African American and renowned scholar of colonial Zimbabwe and black internationalism, questions the changing nature of African diaspora studies. He argues that they are radical, as they challenge dominant modes of knowledge production on historically dispossessed populations, including people of African descent; and are also simultaneously co-opted, as they are now part of the academic establishment and can no longer align with popular struggles waged outside the academy (West, 2005, p. 85). From the introduction, West makes a sharp distinction between, on the one hand, the African diasporas' "physical

[4] Personal communication with Prof. Ned Alpers, who was president of the ASA in 1993–1994 (June 18, 2021). On tensions surrounding the decolonization of the ASA, see Guedj (2019).

[5] Find the Abuja Proclamation (1993) here: http://ncobra.org/resources/pdf/TheAbujaProclamation.pdf (accessed July 24, 2021).

existence" as a result of forced and voluntary migration from Africa, and, on the other hand, the "conscious and systematic articulation of the idea of the African diaspora", an idea he calls "*Global Africa*". He defines this *Global Africa* as the idea that the shared historical experiences of Africans and people of African descent, such as slavery, colonialism, racial oppression and their many consequences, are the basis of a common struggle for emancipation and mutual liberation for Africans at home and abroad (West, 2005. p. 86–87). This definition of *Global Africa* would therefore coincide exactly with that of Pan-Africanism. This convergence is supported by several references strategically mobilized by West: George Padmore (1956), a Trinidadian intellectual involved at the core of 20th-century Pan-Africanism; Imanuel Geiss (1974 [1968]), a German whose seminal work legitimized the study of the Pan-African movement; P. Olisanwuche Esedebe (1994 [1982]), a Nigerian who anchored the OAU in the Pan-African movement; and Brent Hayes Edwards (2003), an American who explored both its English-speaking and French-speaking dimensions in his work.

The rest of West's article is an introductory historical summary of Pan-Africanism, spread over four separate periods. The first one, stretching from the 1770s to 1900, started in the Americas with the American, French and Haitian revolutions. Then, the idea of *Global Africa* rested on two concepts: redemption and vindication, and its proponents were members of a tiny black and English-speaking male elite that wished to rehabilitate Africa's history and claim a role in the continent's development.[6] From 1900 to 1945, the second period began with the First Pan-African Conference held in London in 1900, following which four, often antagonistic, perspectives unfolded in a world disrupted by two world wars: Pan-African Congresses, Garveyism, the Communist International and Negritude. In 1945, the anti-colonial perspective of the Pan-African project and the quest for political power were clearly voiced by the Pan-African Congress held in Manchester. The third period, from 1945 to 1963, was characterized by the disintegration of Pan-Africanism in the name of African nationalism and the emerging role of African states as pivotal players, thus affirming the continent's primacy over the diasporas, a primacy institutionalized with the founding of the OAU in Addis Ababa (1963). In the last period, from 1963 onwards, there was a major international political realignment known as Black Power, which was supported by several figures, music, and cultures. While the first Pan-African Congress held on the continent in Tanzania (1974) drew attention to African states' grip on the Pan-African movement, twenty years later, African states were delegitimized by the failure of their development policies. When the seventh Pan-African Congress was being held in Kampala (Uganda), the initiative came from outside the state sector; and it tragically coincided with the April 1994 genocide of the Tutsi people in Rwanda. In his article, West illustrates how *Global Africa* is imbricated in history and he identifies advocacy for reparations for slavery and colonialism, driven by activist movements rather than governments, as the 20th-century Pan-African movement's "central claim" (West, 2005, p. 104). In that regard, West agrees with Mazrui and other specialists of Pan-Africanism (Adi, 2018, p. 217–220).

This summary of the history of Pan-Africanism, which coincides with the idea of *Global Africa* to such an extent as to become its synonym, follows a well-known chronology and involves space-time markers and renowned figures, with the gender, class and position nuances common to West's works. These nuances are not conveyed precisely in the above outline, though. As it turns out, the expression *Global Africa* suggested by Michael West does not only refer to the interconnections between Africa and the world, nor solely to the relations between Africa and its old and new diasporas. More precisely, it refers to the consciousness of a shared condition and a common struggle, inspired by ideals of sovereignty, solidarity and justice. Both articles by Mazrui and West, which are among the first to bear *Global Africa* in their title, sharply clarify the militant origin of the expression, which stems from the early 1990s Pan-African movement and serves as a synonym for the history of Pan-Africanism. Now, the question is: how has the expression *Global Africa* been recently adopted by the *General History of Africa*, a flagship project of UNESCO?

Institutionalizing *Global Africa*

In 2009, UNESCO launched the second phase of the *General History of Africa* (GHA), which consisted of developing pedagogical uses of the knowledge compiled in the eight volumes of this collection, revising its contents and proposing a new volume, volume IX. This revision of the contents is organized around the expression *Global Africa*, described as an "innovative concept".[7] The GHA is a monumental undertaking, launched in 1964 under the impetus of the newly independent African states striving to reclaim and reconstruct their history. Numerous African historians were involved in this long-term intellectual enterprise under the supervision of an international scientific committee. The launch of the GHA gave rise to documentation and inventory work, valuable campaigns to compile oral and written archives, as well as a long series of meetings between the 350 or so

[6] West mentions Edward W. Blyden (1832–1912), Alexander Crummell (1819–1898) and James Theodore Holly (1829–1911), who settled in Liberia or Haiti. As Christians, they were convinced they had a civilizing mission to fulfil, and they drew on the resources of Ethiopianism, a symbolic reservoir shaped by biblical texts and a racial worldview. See, for example, Drake (1991).

[7] See the GHA website: https://en.unesco.org/general-history-africa (accessed July 19, 2021).

specialists involved in preparing and publishing the GHA in eight volumes and several languages, over more than 35 years.[8] Such a project was eminently political, and African historians defended the existence and richness of the continent's material, cultural, and social history. Intellectual and political commitment, Pan-Africanism and anti-imperialism were present in this project, in an era marked as much by Third Worldism as by the liberation struggles still underway on the African continent. From the late 1980s on, there were discussions about drafting a sequel to GHA, a ninth volume, although the project was not launched (Maurel, 2014, p. 720). It eventually was, in 2009, following the African Union (AU) summit in Sirte (Libya), where member states pledged to support this new volume, whose drafting was finally launched in May 2013 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

In May 2013, the fiftieth anniversary of the OAU was celebrated with pomp and circumstance in Addis Ababa, with a special summit bringing together diplomats from across the continent and the world, and a range of activities and conferences organized as part of the AU's festivities. The expert meeting to draft the ninth volume of GHA received funding from Brazil – a grand gesture on the part of the great Latin American country. With the law 10.639/2003, Brazil had introduced the teaching of African history and African and Afro-Brazilian cultures from primary school onwards, and its African diplomacy was growing fast. Indeed, getting GHA and other UNESCO flagship projects to run smoothly often depends on political, financial and institutional support by states and intergovernmental organizations – without its content being subservient to political demands. For several days, forty experts or so discussed the orientations and terms for the proposed volume IX, under the leadership of GHA's International Scientific Committee chairman, historian Elikia M'Bokolo. Without going into the details of these sometimes very lively debates, we must highlight the prominence of issues relating to African diasporas, the challenges faced by Afro-descendants and the relations between Africa and its diasporas.[9]

The session on diasporas was moderated by Sir Hilary Beckles, a historian who specialized in slavery and the Caribbean region's social and economic history, having served in many leadership positions, including Principal of the Cave Hill Campus in the University of the West Indies in Barbados. Hilary Beckles was also the author of a plea for reparations for Caribbean slavery and Native genocide (2013); he was the coordinator of the Caribbean delegations throughout the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance organized by the United Nations in Durban in 2001; Vice-chairman of the International Scientific Committee of UNESCO's Slave Route Project; and Chairman of the Reparations Commission for CARICOM, the organization of Caribbean states. As a recognized, committed intellectual, he opened discussions by calling for the reconceptualization of African diasporas' historiography and a critique of how African societies within and outside the continent were analyzed. He called on his colleagues to destabilize the concept of diaspora and to identify themes to represent this *Global Africa*. During the collective discussion, many themes were addressed. For instance, the definition of diaspora proposed by the AU and the lack of action towards formalizing it institutionally as a sixth region; the dating of historical waves of migration that have formed several strata of diasporas; the rise of Afro-Latin organizations and demands; the risk of forced homogenization under an umbrella expression of *Global Africa*; the lack of teaching on diasporas in the continent's educational institutions; and the ambition of considering Africa's history without continental borders. All these topics were central to, at times convergent, at times divergent, but always passionate debates.

In anticipation of this volume IX, which has since become IX, X and XI, it is possible to understand the significance of the expression *Global Africa* introduced by UNESCO's GHA as the result of intense negotiations and an intellectual and political compromise between perspectives giving precedence to Africa's continental history, and others that consider the history of the diasporas as part of the continent's; between the conceptual primacy given to the race issue and a geographical and continental interpretation of Africanity; and between scholarly traditions in English, French and Portuguese. It should be recalled that GHA's history is marked by several polemics and compromises, such as the debates on the chapter written by Cheikh Anta Diop in volume II. Even though his peers disputed his methodology and concept of "race", Cheikh Anta Diop's chapter was eventually published because his argument that ancient Egypt was of African origin contributed significantly to GHA's project (Schulte Nordholt, 2021). The interpretation of the term *Global Africa* publicly proposed by GHA[10] could be described as follows: the concept makes it possible to understand "the history of relations between Africans and people of African descent as an interconnected and continuous process", in order to break away from a binary perspective on Africa and its diasporas as distinct and separate groups. Furthermore, the concept of *Global Africa* aims to go beyond the "race issue" – and, therefore, the sometimes-disputed juxtaposition between Africanity and negritude – to focus on "Africa's multifaceted presence" taking particular account of the diasporas in the Indian Ocean, the Near and Middle East and Asia. This interpretation reflects the relational space between Africa and its diasporas that Mazrui identified as the matrix of *Global Africa*. However, GHA's concept of diasporas deviates from Michael West's, who distinguished the physical presence of people of African descent (the various

[8] Meeting of experts to prepare Volume IX of the *General History of Africa* (GHA), UNESCO, Addis Ababa, May 20–22 2013, Conceptual note, 5 pages, on file with author.
[9] I was one of the invited experts and the rapporteur for the session on diasporas.
[10] See the GHA website: https://en.unesco.org/general-history-africa (accessed July 19, 2021).

waves of forced and voluntary migration out of Africa) from the idea of the African diaspora (the consciousness of a connection, whether real or imagined, with the African continent). West only considered the latter in his concept of *Global Africa* and located this idea of diaspora specifically in the Atlantic space, and not equally in the many African diasporas, where issues of integration, belonging and social mobility are not akin to the model of the Atlantic space and the Americas (Zeleza, 2010).

With this new "innovative concept", GHA's ambition was also to "better understand the aspirations of the new generations in Africa and its diasporas to contribute to the African Renaissance and the construction of a 21st century Pan-Africanism". Is this the militant and committed spirit associated with the historical Pan-Africanist project? Or the stilted vocabulary used for the institutional communication of the AU and UNESCO? Probably both, as the use of *Global Africa* seems to be the result of an intellectual and political compromise between Africa and its diasporas that could be summarized as follows: GHA maintains the dimension of political commitment and the common struggle that the expression *Global Africa* represents while leaving behind the Atlantic confines and the radical tradition associated with it. Despite stating its ambition to embrace the great diversity of African diasporas, GHA nevertheless claims to be based on the political projects that have emerged from the relationship between Africa and the Atlantic diaspora: African Renaissance and Pan-Africanism. This is the fulcrum on which GHA seems to be based: the desire to go beyond the Atlantic space while simultaneously extending the Pan-African project associated with it. The process of institutionalizing *Global Africa*, an expression that originated in committed Pan-African circles and the concept around which GHA's momentous project revolves, is not free of tensions and is still ongoing. Nevertheless, it promises a central location to the Pan-African project in the ways we think and represent the presence of Africa and Africans in our globalized world.

Conclusion

While the expression *Global Africa* has recently been used to represent the interactions and interconnections between Africa and the world, it is essential to remember that this expression originated in Pan-Africanist circles and in radical political projects born out of the historical relations between Africans and Afro-descendants. In an attempt to clarify the project, the struggles and mobilizations that the expression *Global Africa* encompasses, I have selected and presented two texts published by Ali Mazrui and Michael West, the first ones to include the term in their titles. Mazrui's 1994 article places *Global Africa* at the heart of the relationship between Africa and the diaspora by focusing on the cause of reparations for slavery and colonialism. A *Global Africa* appeared on the international scene thanks to committed African figures at the highest state level, who joined the claims for reparations made by diaspora representatives. The second article, dating from 2005, juxtaposed *Global Africa* with Pan-Africanism's political and social history and thus located *Global Africa* in the consciousness that a shared experience of oppression was the basis for a common struggle for emancipation. These two precursory uses of the expression *Global Africa* illustrate its specific, militant and politically committed dimension, which should not be obscured by the reproduction and great variability of its contemporary cultural and intellectual uses. The expression *Global Africa* has also been institutionalized through intellectual and political processes that have placed the expression at the core of the update of UNESCO's *General History of Africa*, precisely entitled *Global Africa*. By providing a strong institutional anchor to a concept that emerged from Pan-African movements, the scholars involved in this colossal project extended the Pan-African project and placed it once again at the heart of their ways of thinking and representing the presence of Africa and Africans in our globalized world.

In the new contemporary uses of the expression *Global Africa*, which focus on the interactions between Africa and the world and apply to all kinds of fields, the same specific symbolic and political baggage seems to disappear. It is indeed uncertain whether the structuring tropes of Pan-Africanism and their radical and non-consensual dimension already have their place in this wealth of academic publications. However, the study of reparations advocacy, the critical history of struggles and solidarity, and the idea of global Africanity could play their full part in the representations of Africa's and Africans' presence in the world. Knowledge on Pan-Africanism could contribute more directly to building academic knowledge on Africa in French, by giving their rightful place to controversial personalities, ambiguous political projects, manifold instrumentalization, and divergent interpretations; as well as to the great aspirations, bitter failures and fantastic victories carried by the many voices that have emerged from *Global Africa*. Therefore, as its name promises, this new journal could become a space wherein to discuss, nurture, and disseminate accurate and documented knowledge on the history of Pan-Africanism and its radical political and cultural projects.

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