

CHAPTER 4: AN EXAMINATION OF THE AFRICAN RENAISSANCE

4.1 CONCEPTUALISING THE AFRICAN RENAISSANCE

On the adoption of the new South African Constitution, then Deputy President Thabo Mbeki (1996) declared:

This thing that we have done today, in this small corner of a great continent that has contributed so decisively to the evolution of humanity says that Africa reaffirms that she is continuing her rise from the ashes.

Whatever the setbacks of the moment, nothing can stop us now!

Whatever the difficulties, Africa shall be at peace!

However improbable it may sound to the sceptics, Africa will prosper!

From the mid-1990s onward, the idea of Africa rising up and overcoming any obstacles in its way became a common theme in the speeches and writings of many African leaders and academics. The term 'African Renaissance' began emerging in a variety of different contexts and from a variety of sources. But what is this African Renaissance? What is it generally taken to mean and what does it entail?

As has been shown, there are many Western discourses on Africa. These discourses present a picture of Africa that is informed by Western assumptions and that reinforces the current power relations between the West and Africa. It has been shown that some kind of challenge to these Western discourses is necessary, and it has been suggested that any movement which calls itself an 'African Renaissance' ought to provide such a challenge. Having made the above clear, it is now necessary to closely examine the concept of an African Renaissance in order to try to bring some kind of conceptual clarity to this concept so that it will be possible to assess the challenge provided by the African Renaissance to dominant Western political discourses. No attempt is made to provide an exact or stipulative definition of the concept of an African Renaissance as there is no means of deciding which is the 'right' definition among the various competing conceptualisations of the African Renaissance. However, an indication is given of the ideas and perspectives that are generally associated with the African Renaissance.

4.1.1 The Emergence of the Idea

The idea of the revival or renewal of Africa is certainly not new, but has been articulated over and over again ever since the colonial era. The historical foundations of this concept, as will be discussed, show that the current articulation of an African Renaissance borrows extensively from several earlier calls for African revival. What is clear, though, is that the idea of African renewal has fairly recently become a point of discussion among African leaders, academics, and even to some extent, among ordinary African men and women. The contemporary call for African renewal and revival has most often been articulated as a call for an 'African Renaissance'.

The current popularity of the concept 'African Renaissance' is frequently attributed to South Africa's transition and to the ideas and speeches of South African President Thabo Mbeki, but Cornwell (1998:9) notes that it was Nelson Mandela who first invoked the vision of an African Renaissance in June 1994 at an OAU summit. In this speech Mandela (1994) declared:

One epoch with its historic tasks has come to an end. Surely, another must commence with its own challenges. Africa cries out for a new birth, Carthage awaits the restoration of its glory ... We know it is a matter of fact that we have it in ourselves as Africans to change all this. We must, in action, assert our will to do so. We must, in action, say that there is no obstacle big enough to stop us from bringing about a new African renaissance.

The African Renaissance vision was later popularised by Thabo Mbeki whose speech on the adoption of the South African Constitution in May 1996, is considered to be one of the most moving calls for an African Renaissance. Since mid-1996, the vision of an African Renaissance has featured prominently in the speeches of Thabo Mbeki and other members of the African National Congress (ANC). The term has also been used by other African leaders and by many African academics. The visit of then US President Bill Clinton to Africa in 1998 contributed to the popularisation of the concept globally as Clinton repeatedly referred to the African Renaissance and pledged his support for it (Bankie 1998:15).

While supporters of an African Renaissance do not claim that the vision of a revival of Africa is new, they do claim that current circumstances in Africa are conducive to the realisation of this revival that has for so long been a recurring dream with little hope of being actualised. Mbeki (1999a) argues that conditions now exist for the renaissance of Africa to begin. He describes these conditions as being:

- the finalisation of decolonisation with South Africa's liberation;
- the 'recognition of the bankruptcy of neo-colonialism by the masses of the people throughout the continent'
- the end of the Cold War; and
- globalisation.

The rise of a new leadership in Africa has been identified as another condition conducive to the realisation of an African Renaissance at this time in history (United Nations University 2001). These leaders are committed to democracy and to the integration of Africa with the rest of the world. Then Southern African Development Community (SADC) executive secretary, Kaire Mbuende (in PANA 1998), concurs that conditions for the realisation of a renaissance are favourable at the moment and makes mention of globalisation and the nurturing of democratic culture in Africa as being related to the creation of favourable conditions for an African Renaissance.

Maloka (1999) also believes that current circumstances are more conducive to the renaissance of Africa than the circumstances at the time of earlier calls for renewal. According to him, some of these improved conditions are political unity, regional economic integration and the improved capacity to handle intra- and inter-state conflicts.

Changes in Africa and the rest of the world have thus allowed for the hope that the time has finally come for Africa to shed its image of being a basket case and rise up to take its rightful position in the world. South Africa's transition is one of the changes which can be considered conducive to the realisation of an African Renaissance, which could explain why South African leaders, most notably Thabo Mbeki, have been at the forefront of the proclamation of an African Renaissance.

4.1.2 The Meaning of 'Renaissance'

The term 'Renaissance' is not a new one, but has usually been used to refer to a series of occurrences in Europe rather than in Africa. The word comes from the French and its literal meaning is 'rebirth'. When used to describe an era in Europe, Renaissance means the 'revival of art and literature (influenced by classical forms) in the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries' (Hawkins 1988:684). It refers to the period of renewal and rebirth that followed the era that has been called the 'Dark Ages' in Europe. It involved the revival of certain elements of the Greco-Roman civilisation (Magubane 1999:13). While the European Renaissance is more often associated with cultural and artistic change and revival, it also involved social, political and economic transformation. Social transformation occurred through scientific advances, voyages of exploration around the world, changes in the organisation of life, new inventions, and increased freedom of thought (Mulemfo 2000:46; Napier 2000:77-78). Economic transformation occurred through the increase in trade and through the search for new markets that ultimately led to the colonisation of many regions of the world (Mulemfo 2000:46). Political transformation was stimulated through investigation into the nature of political authority (Napier 2000:78).

The European Renaissance is considered to be an example of the transformation of a society, based on the rediscovery of past achievements. It is in this sense that the term 'Renaissance' is seen as being an appropriate name for a vision of the transformation of Africa. Certain similarities between Europe at the beginning of the Renaissance and contemporary Africa are drawn. Like Africa today, Europe in the fourteenth century was emerging from an era of social and intellectual decay and neglect and was experiencing great upheaval and uncertainty. The European Renaissance involved a rediscovery of past achievements and the African Renaissance looks to do the same. It is hoped that Africa, like Europe a few centuries ago, will be able to build upon its historical legacy to bring about a transformation of Africa.

The term 'Renaissance' has not only been used to describe Europe during the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, although this has been its most common usage. Reference has been made to an Asian Renaissance which is defined as the growth, development and flowering of Asian societies and 'the transformation of [Asian] cultures and societies from [Asia's] capitulation to Atlantic Powers to the position of self-confidence and its reflowering at the dawn of a new millennium' (Bankie 1998:17). The term 'Renaissance' has also

been used to speak of the Harlem Renaissance which was a literary and intellectual movement which took place in the 1920s and which involved an awakening of black culture in the United States (Wintz 1988:1-2). The idea of a Black Renaissance, referring to 'the insertion of the voice of the African diaspora into changing international relations' (Vale & Maseko 1998:281) is another example of the use of the term 'Renaissance' without reference to Europe. Talk of an African Renaissance is thus not the first time that the term 'renaissance' has been used to speak about some kind of revival other than that which occurred in Europe after the European Dark Ages.

The use of the term 'Renaissance' in the declaration of a period of renewal and transformation in Africa is not without its problems. Various writers have pointed out that using a term that is generally taken to refer to a specific era in Europe is problematic in several ways. Firstly, the first reference to a European Renaissance occurred in the nineteenth century - three centuries after this renaissance was said to have occurred (Barrell 1998). It was a retrospective characterisation of a historical era. While the European period of renewal was characterised *a posteriori*, the vision of an African Renaissance is an *a priori* wish rather than an *a posteriori* assessment (M'Baye 2000:69).

A second problem with the use of the term 'Renaissance' is the fact that it is a European word. Why use a European word to describe the revival of Africa? If the African Renaissance is about rediscovering Africa's past, then surely the use of a European word is inappropriate. In addition, the European Renaissance can be understood to have had many negative implications for the African continent, which also makes the use of the term 'Renaissance' inappropriate. Mulemfo (2000:46) points out that the European Renaissance led to a search for new economic markets and ultimately to the invasion of the African continent by European colonisers. Many of the discoveries and inventions of the Europeans were used to dominate and exploit Africans. Thus the word could be considered to have exploitative and imperialistic connotations (Mulemfo 2000:47). The origins and the connotations of the word 'Renaissance' suggest that an African word may have been more appropriate. Ramose (2000:47-61) feels strongly that 'the term 'Renaissance' is not appropriate in reference to Africa. According to him, the term 'Renaissance' is a historical concept referring to a particular era in European history and its use to describe Africa is unnatural and a continuation of the tendency to look to the North (or West) to explain African phenomenon. It is also inappropriate in that it implies a linear conception of history according to which Africa is several centuries behind Europe -

Europe has already had its Renaissance and we are now hoping to have our own. Claims that there is no African word suitable to describe what is meant by the African Renaissance are easily disputed. Ramose suggests the term *Makoko-Hungwe* as a better word to describe contemporary African history and politics. This term has many references and thus implies a number of things simultaneously. *Makoko* is the Sotho word for cock and thus refers to the early morning cock-crow which signifies the dawning of a new day. *Hungwe* is the Shona name for a Zimbabwean bird which is regarded as sacred by the Shona and which is said to sing for the end of injustice on the African continent and the restoration of law, humanity and morality. The word *Mayibuye* which comes from *isiXhosa* and means 'let it return' has also been suggested as a suitable African word to replace 'Renaissance' (Pritvorov & Shubin 2000:82).

A third problem relates to the appropriateness of the term given the content of the African Renaissance. The content and various aspects of the African Renaissance will only be discussed later, so it is inappropriate to fully explain this problem here, but it is clear that certain writers feel that the content of the African Renaissance focuses on establishing something new in Africa, rather than about rediscovering something from the past. For example, Kirby (1998) points out that the term 'Renaissance' 'does not describe social reconstruction, political reform, balanced economic cadences, industrial and technical interlinkings, better telephone lines, medical services' and so on. The African Renaissance is frequently linked to improvements in technology, to economic development, to modernisation and to other changes that seem to have nothing to do with a rediscovery of the past.

A fourth shortcoming of the term 'Renaissance' relates to the fact that the European Renaissance was not just a marvellous period of cultural renewal and scientific improvement, but was also a period of violence, war and political instability (Van Aswegen 1998:8). To associate the aspiration that Africa will be transformed into a peaceful, prosperous region with the European Renaissance is thus not altogether correct.

The shortcomings discussed above relate to the terminology used to describe this vision of a transformed Africa, not to the vision itself. The content of the African Renaissance is more important than the words used to describe this vision. However, the terminology used is not without significance and there is undoubtedly a degree of irony in the use of a European term to describe the revival of Africa.

4.1.3 The Multiple Conceptualisations of the African Renaissance

When trying to define the African Renaissance, it may be better to speak of the meanings of the term, rather than to try to find one single conceptualisation of the African Renaissance. This term has been used in a variety of ways and appears to refer to all sorts of sometimes incompatible things. It is not possible to provide a single comprehensive conceptualisation of the African Renaissance, and so it is necessary instead, to examine the different conceptualisations of the African Renaissance which have been put forward by various scholars.

Vale and Maseko (1998:278-283) discuss two distinct interpretations of the African Renaissance which they label the globalist and Africanist interpretations. According to them, the globalist interpretation refers to a South African-led continental project involving economic globalisation and political liberalisation. It promotes Africa as an expanding market and would like to see the African equivalent of the Asian Tigers emerging. The globalist interpretation of the African Renaissance encourages modernisation, free markets, privatisation, and the like. This interpretation has been eagerly accepted by wealthy South Africans and South Africa's role in leading Africa's renewal is not questioned by this understanding of the African Renaissance.

The Africanist interpretation of the African Renaissance differs significantly from the globalist interpretation. It is post-structural and critical of the idea of embracing modernisation and globalisation (Vale & Maseko 1998:280 - 281). The Africanist interpretation calls for a rediscovery and reinterpretation of Africa's past and challenges dominant narratives within international relations. This interpretation is less quick to give South Africa a leading role in the African Renaissance and calls for African alternatives to globally accepted philosophies and ways of life.

Maloka (2000:3-6) discusses Vale and Maseko's two-fold division of the African Renaissance debate, and adds two more interpretations of the African Renaissance: a Pan-Africanist interpretation and a culturalist interpretation. The Pan-Africanist interpretation is a revival of Pan-Africanism and an attempt to realise the vision of Pan-Africanism in the 21st century. The culturalist interpretation of the 'African Renaissance' sees the African Renaissance as a movement that calls for a return to 'roots'. This

interpretation involves the promotion of African philosophical constructs, such as *ubuntu*, of African ethics and of African languages. The culturalist perspective resists any imitation of the West and asserts that Africans must develop institutions and structures that are products of Africa rather than poor copies of Western institutions and structures.

These four conceptualisations of the African Renaissance illustrate the impossibility of providing a clear definition of what the African Renaissance means. It means different things to different people, and some interpretations of the African Renaissance contradict other interpretations - for example, while the globalist interpretation accepts internationally dominant economic doctrines such as liberalisation and globalisation; the Africanist and culturalist interpretations challenge these doctrines.

4.1.4 Components of the African Renaissance

Given the impossibility of providing a single definition for the African Renaissance, it is useful to examine certain dominant themes that appear again and again in discussions of an African Renaissance. All of these themes do not occur in all discussions of the African Renaissance, and some may even appear to be incompatible, but the themes discussed below are ideas which are frequently seen as related to the vision of an African Renaissance. The discussion below identifies and briefly discusses these dominant themes.

4.1.4.1 The rediscovery of African history and culture

Through research we can retrieve history that was obliterated by colonialism. We are trying to restore the dignity of people whose history has been denied them.

- Pitika Ntuli (in Prabhakaran 1998)

To speak of a renaissance is to speak of something being reborn, and so to speak of an African Renaissance implies that there is something in Africa's past that can be reborn today. This means that the African Renaissance does not just predict and plan for a prosperous future for Africa, but also looks back into Africa's past in order to build the future upon a rediscovered past. A reinterpretation of Africa's history and culture is needed so that the colonial construction of African history and culture can be rejected and the wealth of African history and culture can be recognised (Vale & Maseko 1998:280).

Advocates of an African Renaissance believe that Africa has a proud history. They challenge those who have denied that Africa has any history, and argue that Africa's history must be re-examined from an Afrocentric perspective. Mbeki (in Legum 1999:71) makes this clear when he says that talk of an African Renaissance projects into both the past and future. He speaks of Africa's proud past, mentioning the achievements of the Nubians and the Egyptians; the artistic accomplishments of the Makonde people in Tanzania and Mozambique; and the contributions made to religious thought by Ethiopian Christians and Nigerian Muslims. Mbeki (2000) argues that Africans must use this proud history to overcome obstacles that stand in the way of African development, and that this can only be done if ordinary Africans are made aware of Africa's proud history.

Part of the rediscovery and re-examination of African history, is the re-evaluation of African culture. Mbeki (1999a) identifies 'the rediscovery of Africa's creative past to recapture the peoples' cultures' as being one of the important tasks which must be achieved by the African Renaissance. Kwaah Prah (1999:60) draws attention to the importance of culture arguing that the African Renaissance cannot be built on 'cultural borrowings from outside' but must rather be based on a rediscovery of Africa's own culture and history.

In the South African context, this rediscovery of African culture is often associated with the promotion of *ubuntu* - which is usually described as being the principle that declares *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* - a person is a person because of the people (Ntuli 1999:193). In explaining *ubuntu* Mulemfo (2000:57-58) quotes the words of Archbishop Desmond Tutu who says:

We believe that a person is person through another person, that my humanity is caught up, bound up and inextricable in your humanity. When I dehumanise you, I inexorably dehumanise myself.

Sindane and Liebenberg (2000:38-41) give a comprehensive definition of *ubuntu* relating it to humanism, to universal brotherhood and sisterhood, and to the affirmation of the humanity of the individual in reciprocity of fellow-humans. The revival and promotion of *ubuntu* is seen as an important part of the African Renaissance. Ntuli (1998:17) draws parallels between the humanism that was developed during the European Renaissance and *ubuntu* suggesting that *ubuntu* can play the role in the African Renaissance that

humanism played in the European Renaissance. Ntuli (1999:184) believes that Africa has experienced a moral and cultural collapse which has allowed for the spirit of *ubuntu* to disappear, but that the African Renaissance must involve its revival. This idea of *ubuntu* as part of the African Renaissance appears again and again, allowing Mangcu (2001:22) to conclude that while there should be multiple ways of pursuing an African Renaissance, these ways should occur within a common framework that should include *ubuntu*.

This theme of the rediscovery of history and culture is one that asserts that Africa can only move forward if it examines its past and that this past is one of which Africans can be proud. However, advocates of the African Renaissance are quick to point out that the African Renaissance is more than just a rediscovery of Africa's culture and history. This reinterpretation of the past is not a call for a return to the pre-colonial way of life, but rather an attempt to restore the dignity of Africans and to urge them to add to this worthy heritage. Mbeki (2000) sees the reclaiming of Africa's history and culture as important because it will give Africans the confidence to change their current circumstances and bring about a better future. The promotion of the study of African history and African culture is not the focus of the African Renaissance, but is part of the restoration of the self-worth of Africans which is necessary if Africa is to be reborn.

4.1.4.2 Self-definition and self-determination

The African renaissance is a unique opportunity for Africans to define ourselves and our agenda according to our own realities and taking into account the realities of the world around us. It is about Africans being agents of our own history and masters of our own destiny.

- Malegapuru Makgoba (in Makgoba, Shope & Mazwai 1999:xii)

The African Renaissance acknowledges that Africa's recent history has been one in which Africa's destiny was determined by outsiders and in which Africans were defined and described by Westerners rather than by themselves.

The theme of self-definition and self-determination is part of the response to colonisation and the continuing process of decolonisation. In terms of self-definition, the vision of an African Renaissance recognises that Africans need to transform the way they see themselves and the way they are seen by others. Mazrui (2000) addresses this when he

identifies one of the pillars of the African Renaissance as being 'The Dignity Imperative' which is the 'recognition of Africanity as one dignified face of humanity'. Ntuli (1998:16) makes it clear that self-definition is part of the Renaissance when he says that the African Renaissance is:

about the redress of knowledge, of correcting negative images inculcated into [African] people; a people made to believe by systematic Eurocentric education that they had no history (Hegel), or at best they were noble savages (Rousseau).

The African Renaissance calls on Africans to challenge the many existing prejudices regarding Africans and for Africans to redefine themselves in preparation for the revival of their continent (Shilowa 2000).

The calls for a redefinition of what it means to be African and an assertion of the dignity of Africans, emerge from the realisation that colonisation and other forms of Western exploitation of Africa did not only damage Africa economically and politically, but also destroyed Africans' self-esteem by treating Africans as lesser humans or as animals. This is why, when addressing the United Nations University, Mbeki (1998a) felt it necessary to emphasise that as part of the Renaissance Africa must 'rebel, [and] assert the principality of her humanity - the fact that she, in the first instance, is not a beast of burden, but a human and African being'. This self-definition and affirmation of dignity is seen as essential if the revival of Africa is to take place.

Related to self-definition is self-determination. Africans have for too long allowed external powers to determine their destiny. The African Renaissance proclaims an end to this era and the beginning of an era in which Africans will determine their own destiny. When speaking about the African Renaissance, Reuel Khoza (1999:279), chairman of Eskom and Co-ordinated Network Investment (South Africa), declared that the heart of his entire message on the African Renaissance could be summed up as 'Be master of your own destiny!' This message is also seen as a key element of the African Renaissance in the ANC's 1997 *Strategy and Tactics* document (ANC 1997a:27). Proponents of the African Renaissance recognise that Africa has already begun to take its destiny into its own hands through the victorious struggle against colonialism. Formal decolonisation has been completed, but now Africans need to oppose neo-colonialism and ensure that Africa's future is determined by Africans.

4.1.4.3 Pan-Africanism and African unity

An Africa united, in spite of the poverty that we face today, would immediately be a force in world affairs to be treated with respect and equality. An Africa divided along the lines we have today would forever be at the mercy of external power and influence.

- Kwezi Kwaa Prah (1999:60)

Many discussions on the African Renaissance emphasise the importance of African unity and stress that the African Renaissance is supposed to be a continental movement which is driven by and benefits the whole of the African continent.

Landsberg and Hlope (2001:29) see the African Renaissance as a call for solidarity on the African continent. It is rooted in the anti-colonialist and Pan-African movements of the past. In discussing the African Renaissance, Sémou Pathé Guèye (1999:262) describes African unity as the greatest challenge for the African Renaissance, saying that the destiny of the peoples of Africa is the same - they will either survive together or disappear together.

Mbeki (1999a) has also drawn attention to the importance of African unity in his speeches, arguing that Africa shares a common destiny and encouraging greater co-operation and integration on the African continent. It must, however, be noted that there are several thinkers who criticise the African Renaissance, especially as conceptualised by Thabo Mbeki, as being more about the promotion of South Africa than about the promotion of Africa. If the African Renaissance is to be about the revival of Africa as a continent, then this will naturally require greater continental co-operation and solidarity. African Renaissance supporters recognise this and are thus encouraged by the establishment of the African Union and by displays of African unity at recent global discussion arenas.

4.1.4.4 The empowerment of Africa in the global arena

The African Renaissance is more than a rebirth. It is a renewal of our determination to be global partners rather than afterthoughts at the dinner tables of other nations.

- Pitika Ntuli (1998:17)

Africa's role in the global arena has been a marginal one. African countries have been low on the agenda at global discussions, and African leaders have had little influence on decisions made at such discussions. The African Renaissance proclaims an end to this situation. It promotes the empowerment of Africa so that Africa can influence rather than just be influenced, so that Africa's role can be that of an active decision maker in the global arena rather than that of a passive spectator who suffers as a result of decisions made by others.

This vision is evident in many analyses of the African Renaissance. Egan (1999) sums up the entire African Renaissance vision as being a movement that aims to revitalise Africa and improve its global position. Le Père (1997:3) concurs, saying that 'the renaissance idea seeks to move Africa from the perilous margins of its contingent and uncertain past to becoming a full and active participant in the global arena'. In its 1997 *Strategy and Tactics* document, the ANC discusses how the African Renaissance needs to be part of the fight to improve the standing of the African continent in global affairs (ANC 1997a).

In Mbeki's speech on the African Renaissance to the United Nations University in 1998 he addressed this issue arguing that there were periods in world history where Africa had been an influential continent and that Africans need to be confident that this position of influence can be restored (Mbeki 1998a). He repeated this vision in 1999 when speaking to Parliament, saying, 'No longer sliding towards a slow and painful death at the margins of an advancing global community, Africa must regain her place as an equal among the continents' (Mbeki 1999b).

The African Renaissance recognises that the current era is one of globalisation and that this means that the destinies of all regions of the world are interrelated. This means that decisions made by global powers deeply influence the African continent. As a result of this situation advocates of the African Renaissance include the end of Africa's marginalisation in the global arena as a key goal of the African Renaissance.

4.1.4.5 Economic development

At its core, African Renaissance is an economic and social development agenda for Africa. It is a comprehensive and far-reaching global plan of action to tackle poverty and the developmental needs of Africa.

- Department of Foreign Affairs, South Africa (2001a)

Sub-Saharan Africa has been identified as the most important development challenge of the twenty first century (Kritzinger-van Niekerk 2000:14). Economic indicators suggesting Africa's need for development abound, and there are few who deny that there is a need for some kind of economic renewal on the African continent. In his identification of the key elements of the African Renaissance, Botha (2000a:12) identifies several elements that are economic in nature: the economic recovery of Africa; rapid economic growth; people-centred economic growth; co-ordination regarding poverty alleviation and debt relief; and interdependence, co-operation and co-ordination of economic development in the SADC region. South African Deputy President, Jacob Zuma (2000a), described the African Renaissance as being 'economic growth and a better life for our citizens' and South African President Thabo Mbeki (1999a) described one of the fundamental tasks of the African Renaissance as being the achievement of sustainable economic development which results in the improvement of the standards of living and quality of life of the masses.

The theme of economic development is frequently discussed in conjunction with a discussion on globalisation and an appropriate response to globalisation. Siphoshezi (1998) stresses that the African Renaissance cannot be conceptualised outside of the global economic context. Taking this into account, many discussions of the African Renaissance give suggestions regarding Africa's economic response to globalisation. Viewpoints differ greatly with some (for example Kritzinger-van Niekerk 2000) regarding the African Renaissance to be primarily about establishing Africa in the global economic arena without trying to challenge or change the rules and philosophies which currently dominate the global economic arena, while others argue that the African Renaissance must confront these rules and philosophies and posit alternatives. An example of the latter perspective is the ANC's 1997 *Developing a Strategic Perspective on SA Foreign Policy* which states that 'the success of the Renaissance depends on the depth of and extent to which it challenges globalisation' (ANC 1997b). This tension between

supporters and critics of globalisation is discussed later, and at this point it is only necessary to point out that some kind of economic response to globalisation is seen as essential to the African Renaissance.

Clearly, economic development is viewed by key thinkers as central to the African Renaissance. The form that this economic development should take is much debated, but most interpretations of the African Renaissance do at least consider economic development as a relevant topic for debate when discussing what the Renaissance is and how it is to be realised.

4.1.4.6 Governance and democracy

What is it which makes up that genuine liberation?

The first of these (elements) is that we must bring to an end the practices as a result of which many throughout the world have the view that as Africans, we are incapable of establishing and maintaining systems of good governance.

- Thabo Mbeki (1998a)

The African continent is home to a variety of political regimes and forms of governments. Many of the governments in Africa are not considered to be governing according to internationally accepted norms. The African Renaissance tries to change this perception by encouraging democratic forms of government, but at the same time it is stressed that African governments must govern according to African realities and not just copy the effective forms of government from other regions in the world. Botha (2000a:12) sums up this aspect of the Renaissance by saying that a key element of the African Renaissance is 'establishing political democracy on the continent, though taking into full consideration African specific conditions'. Discussions of an African Renaissance are filled with references to democracy and good governance, with the consolidation of democratic governance often seen as one of the defining characteristics of the African Renaissance. Stremmlau (1999:101) gives a prime position to democracy in the African Renaissance vision, saying that the Renaissance is about 'convey[ing] a positive vision for Africa as a peaceful, democratic and market-orientated region'. Fraser-Moleketi (2001) also emphasises the importance of democracy, speaking about the African Renaissance as a vision of an 'Africa in which human rights, peace, stability and democracy thrives'.

In Mbeki's address to the United Nations University in 1998 he discussed what good governance is and declared that an African Renaissance rejects military coups and one party states and supports elected multi-party governments (Mbeki 1998a). The African Renaissance has also been related to democracy by leaders such as former executive secretary of SADC, Kaire Mbuende (PANA 1998); and former South African President Nelson Mandela (1994).

4.1.4.7 Other themes

The six themes discussed above are not the only recurring themes in discussions about the African Renaissance, but they certainly appear to be dominant. Other themes that regularly appear in discussions on the African Renaissance are education, language issues, gender and youth.

Discussions of the African Renaissance that mention education usually indicate that education in Africa needs to be changed if the African Renaissance is to be realised. The argument usually made is that education in Africa has been Eurocentric in orientation and that a distorted picture of African history and culture has been presented to Africans through educational systems. This necessitates the development of curricula that teach African history and culture from an Afrocentric viewpoint. Afrocentric education is seen as vital for the realisation of an African Renaissance. Examples of these arguments can be found in Ntuli (1998:15-18; 1999:184-199); Dladla (1997); and Mzamane (1999:173-183).

The issue of language is sometimes also related to the African Renaissance and it is argued that the suppression of African languages and the promotion of European languages need to be examined in the context of African revival. It is argued that new respect must be given to African languages and that instead of being seen as unsuitable for scientific and technological discourse, African languages should be adapted and standardised. Makgoba, Shope and Mazwai (1999:xi) note that language is a vehicle for identity and culture and that it is questionable whether an African Renaissance can be championed in foreign languages. Other examples of discussions relating the African Renaissance and the revival of African languages are Mazrui (2000); and Kwaa Prah (1999:60-61).

The promotion of gender and youth issues is also often associated with the African Renaissance. Discussions on an African Renaissance do not usually put forward any radical ideas regarding how women or young people should be treated, but emphasise that women and the youth must be part of the African Renaissance. The inclusion of women in the project of the African Renaissance is mentioned in many discussion of the African Renaissance, including Shilowa (2000), Mbeki (1998b, 1999a), Vale & Maseko (1998:274), ANC (1997a:27) and Mulemfo (2000:72-81). Examples of sources mentioning the importance of including the youth in the African Renaissance are Ntuli (1998:198), Mulemfo (2000:82-86), Vale and Maseko (1998:274) and Mbeki (1998b, 1999a).

No doubt there are several other themes that could also be identified and discussed, but the themes briefly discussed above provide some idea of the ideas that are usually associated with the African Renaissance.

4.2 THABO MBEKI, SOUTH AFRICA AND THE AFRICAN RENAISSANCE

The African Renaissance debate has been dominated by the ideas of Thabo Mbeki and much of the debate about an African Renaissance has taken place in South Africa. This South African dominance has provoked mixed feelings, with some feeling that South African leadership of an African Renaissance is necessary and desirable, while others feeling that South Africa's assumption of leadership is arrogant.

4.2.1 Thabo Mbeki - Renaissance Man

It is difficult to find an article on the African Renaissance that does not mention Thabo Mbeki. He is credited with initiating the call for an African Renaissance and his ideas are seen as forming the intellectual core of the African Renaissance. Botha (2000a:4) speaks of the African Renaissance as 'Thabo Mbeki's vision' and Esterhuysen (1997:16) calls the African Renaissance 'Mbeki se Afrika visie' [Mbeki's Africa vision]. Mulemfo's (2000) book on the African Renaissance is entitled 'Thabo Mbeki and the African Renaissance'. Kornegay and Landsberg (1998:30) refer to Thabo Mbeki as the 'architect' of the African Renaissance, Christianson (1997:27) calls the African Renaissance Mbeki's 'catchphrase' and Vale and Maseko (1998:286) say that 'no appreciation of the place of the African Renaissance in current policy can be formed without considering Mbeki's standing in the country's politics and his goals for South Africa'.

These and other discussions on the African Renaissance show that Mbeki is clearly understood to be at the forefront of the African Renaissance. It is he who is seen to have first called for an African Renaissance - although Mandela (1994) used the term before Mbeki - and Mbeki's perspectives on the African Renaissance form the core of the African Renaissance as it is understood by most people. The dominance of Thabo Mbeki in the conceptualisation can be seen as advantageous or harmful. Because Mbeki is fairly well-known respected internationally, he may be considered to be an effective leader for the idea of an African Renaissance because he can more easily popularise the concept outside of the African continent. Indeed, former US President Clinton's support for the concept could be said to be due to Mbeki. However, Mbeki is not universally liked in Africa, and his relative popularity with Western leaders may actually make him less popular on the African continent and thus make the acceptance of the African Renaissance by Africans less likely. Consider Bankie (1998:16) who criticises the Mbeki leadership of the African Renaissance, remarking acidly: 'Today we are offered Renaissance as an alternative [to Pan-Africanist nationalism] *by the United States and its friends*' (emphasis added).

4.2.2 Support for South African Leadership of the Renaissance

There are many advocates of South Africa as the leader of the African Renaissance. Many people appear to assume that South Africa will lead any Renaissance, without even giving the implications of such leadership much thought. Some discussions on the African Renaissance, especially those written by South African academics or politicians, appear to discuss the concept as if it was only relevant to South Africa, as if it is about changing South Africa, rather than changing the whole continent.

Maloka (1997:39) says that South Africa is 'well placed' to lead the Renaissance because of its 'moral authority' and strong economy. Urquart (2000) echoes this saying that 'it is South Africa, once the pariah of the entire planet, which appears best equipped to lead an African Renaissance' and Shillinger (2000) says that while the African Renaissance is a continent-wide phenomenon, South Africa is its 'moral and intellectual midwife'. Pritvorov and Shubin (2000:80-92) appear to regard South African leadership as inevitable given South Africa's size and strength, but hope that the role will be adopted with 'humility and responsibility'. South African government officials have also suggested that South Africa

should lead the African Renaissance. When addressing the German Chamber for Industry and Trade, South African Deputy President Jacob Zuma (2001a) said that because of its economy, South Africa 'has an obligation to lead' the process of African recovery.

Cleary (1998:21-26) discusses South Africa's role in the African Renaissance in an article entitled *African Renaissance: Challenges for South Africa*. He argues that South Africa will not be able to achieve a national rebirth in isolation and so a continental renaissance is necessary for South Africa's own prosperity. According to Cleary (1998:26) the success of the Renaissance depends upon South Africa's ability to build the necessary economic and political values in Africa. Cleary obviously assigns South Africa a hegemonic role in the African Renaissance.

The timing of this call for Renaissance is one of the reasons why South Africa has been dominant. It seems that South Africa's liberation was inspiration for the pronouncement of an African Renaissance and that the idea behind the Renaissance was to some extent to transform Africa just as South Africa had been transformed. Cornwell (1998:9) clearly interprets the Renaissance this way, saying that Mandela invoked the vision of an African Renaissance in 1994 by promising that the newly liberated South Africa would do all in its power to transform Africa.

Some commentators appear to see the African Renaissance as something occurring in South Africa and make hardly any reference to renewal outside of South Africa. Vil-Nkomo and Myburgh (1999:266-278) are an example of this way of thinking. Their discussion on the African Renaissance is dominated by the South African context and they speak of a 'renaissance in South Africa' and 'the South African renaissance' as if they are synonymous with the vision of an African Renaissance. Other commentators appear to support South African leadership, but to have reservations about the exact nature of that leadership. Kornegay and Landsberg (1998:29-47) ask the question: 'Can South Africa lead an African Renaissance?'. They discuss a number of different scenarios and conclude that South African leadership of the African Renaissance cannot be automatically assumed. Rather, South Africa has to be careful not to come across as hegemonic, but still assume leadership - a very tricky endeavour.

4.2.3 Resistance to South African Leadership of the Renaissance

Several analysts of the African Renaissance do not feel that South African leadership of this Renaissance is desirable. Vale and Maseko (1998:283-287) vehemently oppose a South African led Renaissance. According to Vale and Maseko, South Africa's relative economic and military strength are reasons why South Africa should *not* lead the African Renaissance rather than being reasons why Africa should assume leadership. South Africa's power as well as South Africa's history makes it difficult to believe that South Africa will be able to lead without placing South African interests above the interests of the continent as a whole. Moyo (1998:10) also believes it is unlikely that South Africa will place the interests of the continent above its own national interest. He criticises the South African articulation of an African Renaissance for equating South African interests with African interests and points out that what is good for South Africa is not necessarily good for African and *vice versa*.

Moeletsi Mbeki (1998:215) notes that an ironic situation has developed with regard to South Africa's leadership of the African Renaissance. While South Africa regards the African Renaissance as the key to its foreign policy, other African countries demonstrate reluctance to accept South African leadership of an African Renaissance fearing that South Africa will abuse its dominance and not be sensitive to the needs of other African countries. Moeletsi Mbeki says that this reluctance is reflected in the lack of African support for South African endeavours such as Cape Town's bid to host the 2004 Olympics, and by the disagreements regarding South Africa's role in SADC. Kobokoane (1998) also comments on this situation, saying that there is some cynicism with regard to the idea of an African Renaissance with some people wondering if the idea is just another 'unwanted South African concept foisted on the rest of the continent'. Africans outside of South Africa are suspicious about South African leadership and their suspicions are not without foundation. South African intervention in Lesotho and the way in which trade on the African continent is skewed in South Africa's favour have made some Africans sceptical about South Africa's commitment to the good of the continent. Karithi (2000:41-45) remarks that some of South Africa's actions since 1994 have been detrimental to other African countries. For example, the South African-EU trade pact benefits South Africa and Europe, but has had a destructive influence on other African economies. In addition, the post-1994 period in South Africa has seen what Karithi calls the 'corporate invasion' of Africa by South Africa. South African companies have benefited greatly in their relations

with the rest of the continent. This situation is not likely to make African countries eager to support South Africa's vision for Africa's future.

South Africa's eagerness to be part of Africa after many years of isolation may have led to South Africa being somewhat insensitive about its role in Africa. Botha (2000a:11) analyses ANC documentation and concludes that the African Renaissance vision is the cornerstone of South Africa's foreign policy, and that the African Renaissance is not a national policy, but a continental policy. He notes that the African Renaissance has at times been equated with the national interest. This commitment to the African Renaissance as part of foreign policy, can be read two ways. On the one hand, it can be welcomed as a sign that South Africa will no longer neglect Africa in its foreign policy and will promote the whole continent, not just its southern-most tip. But on the other hand, the projection of a vision that has been mostly articulated by South Africans, on the rest of Africa is a little presumptuous. In addition, there is an implied arrogance in the suggestion that the liberation of South Africa will allow for the long awaited renewal of Africa to finally be realised. Africa is depicted as being a helpless victim awaiting South Africa's saving leadership. Unsurprisingly, many Africans do not perceive South Africa's leadership as any more desirable than the leadership of Western powers or international financial institutions. While South Africa's economic dominance and position of relative international influence may suggest that it is the ideal leader of an African Renaissance, if South Africa comes across as a bully promoting South African interests disguised by the vision of an African Renaissance, then the renewal of Africa will not succeed.

4.3 TENSIONS IN THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF AN AFRICAN RENAISSANCE

A close examination of the African Renaissance reveals several tensions. The multiplicity of discussions relating to an African Renaissance may be an explanation for these tensions: different people conceive of the Renaissance in different ways, leading to incompatible ideas being associated with the African Renaissance.

4.3.1 Vision for the Future or Identification of a Current Process?

Is the African Renaissance already happening? Is it a process already occurring or a vision for future success? Napier (2000) notices this tension and points out that whenever the African Renaissance is spoken of, it is not clear whether it 'embraces a process

already underway or a vision or a wish for the future'. An examination of various documents on the African Renaissance indicates this tension.

Some thinkers clearly believe that the African Renaissance is not yet underway. For example, Howard Barrell (1998) writes in an article in the *Mail & Guardian* that as he understands the Renaissance, it is not something already underway, but rather a call for a commitment to renewal to be made. In a later article, Barrell (2000:9) notes that many discussions on the African Renaissance have implied that the Renaissance has already begun, but that 'there was no evidence whatsoever to support such a suggestion'. Moeletsi Mbeki (1998:211) examines ANC documents introducing the idea of a Renaissance and concludes that these documents describe a 'coming epoch in Africa's history' rather than a present reality. Many discussions on the African Renaissance discuss the need to transform this vision into reality - implying that the African Renaissance is only a vision at present, but may become a real process later. Consider Cornwell (1998:9) who describes Mbeki as having pledged to transform the 'vision [of an African Renaissance] into a reality' and Seepe (2001) who says that the African Renaissance invokes 'an idyllic future' for Africa.

The use of the future tense when discussing the Renaissance contributes to the impression that the African Renaissance refers to a vision for the future, rather than a present reality. When speaking or writing about the African Renaissance, its supporters frequently speak about what must be done rather than what is being done, and about what will happen rather than what is happening.

Other discussions on the African Renaissance appear to suggest that the African Renaissance is already underway. Former United States Ambassador to South Africa, James Joseph (1997) serves as an example - he discusses changes on the African continent, saying: 'Whether you call it an African renaissance as Thabo Mbeki does or a third wave as Kofi Annan does, there is no question that something new and something different is happening in Africa'. Thabo Mbeki also appears to regard the African Renaissance as something already underway. When speaking at the United Nations University in 1998 he declared that 'the African Renaissance has begun' (Mbeki 1998a) and when addressing the Ghana-South Africa Friendship Association in October 2000, Mbeki (2000) said:

I would like to make bold to say that the African Renaissance is not just a dream whose realisation lies in some dim and distant future. We are already seeing the seeds of this renewal being planted everyday, by many brave and pioneering ordinary people as well as leaders in business, politics, culture and other fronts.

Perhaps there is a way to resolve this tension. Perhaps this Renaissance is like a child that has been conceived, but not yet born - its existence has already begun, but its birth is still to come. This idea is suggested by several writers. For example, James Joseph (1997) speaks about Africans today living 'between two worlds, an old order that is dying but not yet dead and a new order that is conceived but not yet born'. Cleary (1998:26) warns that care must be taken to ensure that the African Renaissance is not aborted, and Oppelt (1999) says the African Renaissance must be prevented from being a stillborn child. This image of the Renaissance as something that already exists and is about to be born is perhaps the most appropriate way of resolving the tension between the Renaissance as a vision for the future or as a process underway.

4.3.2 An Élite Process or a Mass Movement?

Some have accused the African Renaissance of being an élite process while others have declared that the Renaissance is all about mobilising the masses. While it is unlikely that any advocate of the African Renaissance would support the complete exclusion of either élites or the masses, either the one or the other may be subtly marginalised in some discussions of the African Renaissance. There is also tension with regard to the leadership of the African Renaissance - is it to be led by élites or by the masses, is it to be a top-down process or a bottom-up process?

There has been commitment on behalf of the South African government to include the masses in the African Renaissance. Mbeki (1999a) speaks about how the masses and all their organisations must be drawn into the process of realising an African Renaissance. Mbeki (1998b) speaks about building a mass army to fight for the renewal of the African continent and says that this army should include:

workers and the peasants, business people, artisans and intellectuals, religious groups, the women and the youth, sportspeople and workers in the field of culture, writers and media workers, political organisations and governments.

Other South African leaders also emphasise the importance of mass mobilisation for the African Renaissance. Joel Netshitenzhe (1999), CEO of the South African Government Communications and Information Systems (GCIS), speaks about how it is vital that the idea of an African Renaissance captures the minds of the masses on the African continent. A report on the African Renaissance issued by the South African Minister of Transport, Dullah Omar, shares this vision, saying that the African Renaissance must 'grip the imagination of the masses before it can become a truly potent force in our society' (Office of the Minister, Department of Transport 2000). In an ANC (1997b) discussion document on foreign policy, the idea that the Renaissance should be led by the masses rather than an élite is affirmed:

For an African renaissance to be a reality requires that this process be led by the most progressive sectors of African society. This bloc of forces represents an alliance of the working class, the peasants, the poor, the middle classes and progressive sectors of an emerging African bourgeoisie.

Support for the African Renaissance as a mass movement is also evidenced in the writings of intellectuals. Ntuli (1998:15) and Maloka (1999) both warn that the Renaissance cannot be a process of élites and Maloka (1999) adds that the failure of earlier attempts at African renewal can be ascribed to the fact that these movements were confined to intellectual and political élites.

However, despite support for the mass mobilisation of African people as part of the Renaissance, some commentators on the African Renaissance believe that the African Renaissance is at present a process of élites and functions to marginalise rather than include the masses. For example, Harvey (1999) describes the Renaissance as being 'an elitist project which soothes the conscience of our leaders' and says that it needs to develop into a powerful mass movement if it is to achieve its goals. Egan (1999) warns that while the Renaissance could be something great, it may also be nothing more than 'a comfortable and comforting discourse to plaster over socioeconomic cracks' and to defend the position of the new élite at the expense of ordinary people. Maloka (1997) notes that there is a perception amongst some left-wing intellectuals that the African Renaissance is a movement of the new African bourgeoisie which is using the concept to advance its own interests. Liebenberg (1998:45) asks if the Renaissance is not perhaps an 'élite plot' designed to fool the masses while pursuing the interests of the élites.

These concerns may appear unfounded at first glance. Calls for a Renaissance appear to be calls for the whole of Africa, not just élite groups, to rise up and become a powerful, prosperous continent. However, deeper analysis does reveal some tendencies which may be motivation for critics of the African Renaissance to argue that the Renaissance is about enriching élites rather than empowering the disempowered. Cornwell (1998:11) notes that while the African Renaissance has been directed towards the masses, a significant role is reserved for the state; Scales (in Ntuli 1998:15) argues that the success of the Renaissance depends upon the wisdom and determination of Africa's political and business leaders; Cleary (1998:26) also says that the success of the Renaissance depends on the leadership of Africa; Van der Berg and Du Plessis (2000:28) say that if the African Renaissance is to succeed, 'the emerging educated élite would have to be its bearers'; Mamdani (1999:53) argues that the driving force behind the Renaissance will be the intelligentsia; and Mbigi (2000:3) says that Africa is in need of 'strong parenting' and that this parenting will be done through government and private institutions. While the ideas of these writers may appear unobjectionable, they do imply that it is élites that will drive the African Renaissance, not the masses. Thus, even if the African Renaissance claims to benefit all, there is always the suspicion that it may benefit its 'drivers' a little more than the 'passengers' it has invited along for the ride.

Furthermore, when examining the goals for the African Renaissance as described by key thinkers, it seems that these goals are related to élite activities rather than to the actions and ideas of the masses. Some important components of the African Renaissance as identified by Cleary (1998:22) are rooting out corruption, encouraging the return of African intellectuals who have left Africa, and introducing economic reforms so that Africa can attract foreign investment. Other goals of the African Renaissance are said to be co-operation between South Africa and other countries, the promotion of democracy and good governance, the prevention and resolution of conflict, and the provision of humanitarian assistance (Department of Foreign Affairs, South Africa 2001a). These goals are likely to affect the masses, but their achievement is to a large extent dependent upon élite activities rather than mass action.

The extent to which the Renaissance comes across as an élite-driven process is also dependent upon which conceptualisation of the Renaissance is being put forward. Thinkers who are labelled Africanists by Vale and Maseko (1998:278-283) and who see

the Renaissance to be about a rediscovery of African history and an embracing of African language and culture, are likely to see the African Renaissance as a mass movement which cannot be realised without extensive mass participation. However, the globalists according to Vale and Maseko's classification are likely to see the process as élite-driven and to see its goals as involving élite activities, rather than the actions of ordinary people.

4.3.3 The Rebellious Rediscovery of African Values or the Promotion of African Success in a Western-dominated World?

This rather lengthy heading aims to capture several related tensions that are evident in the African Renaissance. Is the Renaissance about a rediscovery of the past or is it a call for rapid modernisation? Does it reject Western values in favour of African values or does it try to inculcate Western values into Africans? Is it a call for Africa to rebel against global 'rules' based on Western experience or is it a call for Africans to attempt to succeed according to these rules?

Certain discussions of an African Renaissance appear to see the Renaissance to be primarily about the rediscovery of African history, of African values and of African culture. There is an assumption that African history, values and culture differ significantly from Western equivalents and that Africa must be different from the West and stop trying to emulate the Western way of life. These thinkers interpret the Renaissance as a rebellious response to Western dominance and see the African Renaissance to be about reviving African values and rejecting Western values. Consider Dladla (1997) who says:

What we are talking about here is critically and respectfully tapping into hitherto neglected reservoirs of knowledge and practices that can make us walk tall, feed all our stomachs, lay to rest the image of the perpetually dancing, skin-clad African who is always smiling through ridicule and pain, and help us contribute meaningfully to rescuing the world from a barbarism that masquerades as civilisation.

However, other discussions of the African Renaissance encourage the adoption of values and ways of life which have nothing to do with African history or culture. Becoming 'modern' and more like the rest of the world seems to be a key goal of the African Renaissance according to these discussions. An example of this approach is found in Guèye (1999:259-260) who says that science and technology are the 'powers' which

determine the position that a country of region holds in the current international balance of forces. Guèye (1999:260) says that these powers must be conquered so that they can:

spread some values whose assimilation is essential today for ... renewal: a spirit of rigour, organisation and method; a culture of rationality, effectiveness, efficiency and objectivity; a capacity for creation and innovation; a great aptitude for assimilation and adaptation; and permanent openness of mind and readiness to question oneself

A similar list of values is given by Vil-Nkomo and Myburgh (1999:278) who argue that the African Renaissance must be based on values that entail:

economic competitiveness, systematically confronting the information age, building and sustaining a work ethic, investing in life-long learning, managing scarce resources effectively, allowing citizens to make informed choices and decisions, and vigorously pursuing economic development.

These two lists of values are similar to lists of values associated with the 'modern' person as described by modernisation theory (for a description of these values see Coetzee 1996:43-56). The idea of 'modernisation' being part of the African Renaissance is also suggested by other proponents of an African Renaissance. Mbeki speaks about the importance of the modernisation of African industries (Mbeki 2000), of building modern infrastructure (Mbeki 1998b) and of establishing modern economies (Mbeki 1998a). Mbeki's repeated emphasis on becoming 'modern' has led to him being criticised for disguising a call for rapid modernisation as a call for a return to Africa's past (Holiday 2001). Many discussions of the African Renaissance do indeed sound like a resurrection of modernisation theory despite the many critiques which have shown modernisation theory to be premised upon unacceptable biases and to be an arrogant continuation of colonial values (Treurnicht 1997:18).

An overview of different discussions on the African Renaissance reveals an inherent tension. Does the African Renaissance seek to encourage Africans to be proud of being African and to nurture African values? Or does the African Renaissance encourage Africans to emulate the West and embrace the values which have contributed to making the West what it is today? This tension is a fundamental one as the whole approach of the Renaissance is determined by whether or not it is seen to be about rebelling against Western values or accepting them. Since the next Chapter explores this tension in detail

by asking if the African Renaissance does challenge Western discourses, it will not be discussed further here.

4.4 ROOTS OF AN AFRICAN RENAISSANCE

Several writers have pointed out that the idea of an African Renaissance is not new - such as Maloka (1999), Ramose (2000:49-50), Mbeki (1999a), and Botha (2000b:25-30). These and other writers draw attention to earlier ideas regarding African renewal and point out that the concept of an African Renaissance rests upon the foundations made by earlier ideas and debates.

It is necessary to briefly draw attention to these earlier ideas and debates. It may seem odd to only draw attention to them now, after having already discussed the African Renaissance and what it is taken to mean and to include. However, without an understanding of the core elements of the Renaissance, it is difficult to identify which earlier ideas had the same elements or were based upon a similar philosophy. On the basis of the conceptualisation of the African Renaissance, it is possible to recognise the debt owed by the concept to earlier articulations regarding African renewal and recovery.

It should be noted that the word 'renaissance', related words and synonyms such as 'regeneration', 'rebirth' and 'renascence' have been used several times in previous discussions about Africa and about how Africa should move forward. Maloka and Le Roux (2000) trace the idea of an African Renaissance all the way back to the nineteenth century. Thinkers such as the Sierra Leoneans James 'Africanus' Horton, James Johnson and the Liberian Edward Blyden spoke of the 'regeneration' of Africa. Blyden, the most well-known of these scholars, argued that this regeneration would take place through the joint activities of former slaves and indigenous Africans (Ramose 2000:52).

Two South Africans, Pixley ka Seme and Gilbert Coka, were instrumental in the promotion of the idea of an African Renaissance in the first half of the twentieth century. Pixley ka Seme (1906) wrote an article entitled 'The Regeneration of Africa' in which he declared:

The giant is awakening! From the four corners of the earth Africa's sons, who have been proved through fire and sword, are marching to the future's golden door bearing the records of deeds of valour done.

About thirty years later, Gilbert Coka wrote an article on African liberation in which he also referred to African renewal and regeneration, saying 'Africa is opening another era in human history' (in Ramose 2000:51).

In 1937 the Nigerian Nnamdi Azikiwe wrote a book entitled 'Renascent Africa' in which he described how Africa must be regenerated spiritually, socially, economically, psychologically and politically (Maloka & Le Roux 2000). In the late 1930s and the 1940s, ANC Youth League leader, Anton Lembede wrote a number of articles related to the renewal of Africa (Van Vuuren 2000:63). He spoke about how 'clear signs of national awakening, national Renaissance, or rebirth are noticeable on the far-off horizon'. In 1948 Cheik anta Diop wrote an essay entitled *When can we Talk of an African Renaissance?* (Maloka 2000:5) and in 1964 the chapter 'The African Renaissance and the African Past' appeared in a book by Walter Wallbank (in Maloka 1997). Wallbank described the African Renaissance as being about a rediscovery of Africa's past and an affirmation of the proud destiny of Africans. In 1969 Leonard Barnes *African Renaissance* was published (Maloka 1997:38). It advocated a 'Positive Policy' and a programme of modernisation for Africa. In the early 70s, Thabo Mbeki was influential in convincing ANC activists in South Africa to hold a 'Black Renaissance Convention' (Barrell 2000:9). In 1979 Kwame Nkrumah used the term 'new African renaissance' in his book *Consciencism* to describe the rebirth and renewal of Africa (Ramosé 2000:52-53).

The above list of references indicates that the idea of the African Renaissance is certainly not new. The exact term and many related terms have been used before and African renewal and regeneration has been a goal of African leaders and intellectuals for at least a century. Various philosophies and schools of thought can be considered as forerunners of the contemporary call for an African Renaissance. Some of the most prominent forerunners will now be discussed briefly. It should be noted that the movements discussed below are sometimes difficult to separate from each other, as there are links between them and they build upon several common ideas.

4.4.1 Pan-Africanism

Pan-Africanism can be described as global African nationalism (Motyl 2001:395). Its focus is on the liberation of Africa and African descendants, the unity of African nations and the international co-operation of peoples of African descent. Mamdani (1999:51) defines Pan-Africanism as Africa's attempt to move beyond slavery and colonialism, to rediscover Africa's past and to use this past as a resource to enable Africa to escape the legacy of slavery and colonialism. Maloka (1997:37-38) describes Pan-Africanism as a movement that emerged as a reaction to slavery, colonialism and later decolonisation. It was initially an intellectual movement, but gradually developed a political dimension. Pan-Africanism can be considered to consist of two stages (Snyder 1990:266-267). The first stage was led by black people living in America and the West Indies and involved a mass movement of American blacks to Africa. The most prominent leaders of this stage of Pan-Africanism were Marcus Garvey and W.E.B. du Bois (Snyder 1990:266-267). The second stage of Pan-Africanism took place in Africa and was related to decolonisation. It was led by educated Africans and aimed to achieve the political emancipation, economic prosperity and industrial modernisation of Africa. A number of Pan-African congresses were held in the first half of the twentieth century and a number of resolutions were made regarding what Pan-Africanism meant and what its goals were. These resolutions demanded that Africans have a voice in how they are governed, that Africans have access to the land and resources of Africa, that African children have the right to education, that Africa be developed for the benefit of Africans, that commerce and industry be reorganised so as to benefit the masses, and that 'civilised men' all over the world be treated equally regardless of their race (Snyder 1999:268-269). The second half of the twentieth century saw the convening of only two Pan-African congresses, one in the early 1970s and one in 1994 (Campbell 1996:1). The 1994 conference aimed to articulate a vision for Pan-Africanism in the twenty first century. While divergent opinions and attitudes were expressed at the most recent conference in 1994, some agreements were made and the Congress was able to comment on the present leadership in Africa, on struggles against racism in Europe and America, and on the impact of international organisations and structural adjustment on Africa (Campbell 1996:2-5).

Several commentators on the African Renaissance acknowledge its Pan-Africanist roots. Kornegay and Landsberg (1998:33) speak about the African Renaissance as '[P]an-Africanism revisited', Mamdani (1999:51) calls the African Renaissance a 'child of the idea

of Pan-Africanism' and Bankie (1998:16) says that the African Renaissance is 'part of the Pan African lexion'. Certain similarities between the two are evident. Both argue for the ending of colonialism, neo-colonialism and slavery. Both fight for the complete liberation of Africans and for the unity and co-operation in Africa. Both combine an intellectual and political dimension.

It is possible then to ask if the African Renaissance is just a new name for an old idea. Is there anything different about the African Renaissance and Pan-Africanism? Perhaps one difference is that Pan-Africanism has its origins in the ideas of black Americans and has a key focus on the unity of Africans *and those of African descent* throughout the world; whereas the African Renaissance is primarily focused on the African continent. Depending on how the African Renaissance is conceptualised, it can also be argued that the African Renaissance has a much greater focus on the rediscovery of Africa's past than Pan-Africanism does. The 'enemy' as understood by each movement is also different: Pan-Africanism fought colonialism and the legacy of colonialism for most of its history, whereas the African Renaissance appears to be more intent on fighting the marginalisation of Africa in a globalising world. Despite these difference, the African Renaissance and Pan-Africanism have much in common, and advocates of an African Renaissance would do well to pay attention to the achievements and failings of Pan-Africanism so that the African Renaissance can be more successful than the Pan-African movement.

4.4.2 Black Consciousness

Black Consciousness originated in the United States and later spread to Africa (Scruton 1996:46). It urges black people to develop a consciousness of their identity and political aspirations. Black Consciousness implores black people to form this consciousness independently of the values of white people and colonialism, and to throw of a subservient consciousness dominated by the values of white people (Scruton 1996:46). Steve Biko (1998:350), the most prominent South African advocate of Black Consciousness, defined Black Consciousness as follows:

...Black Consciousness is the realisation by the black man of the need to rally together with his brothers around the cause of their operation - the blackness of their skin - and to

operate as a group in order to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude.

Biko (1998:360-363) argues that black people must not regard themselves as 'appendages to white society' but must develop their own values in terms of culture, education, religion and economics. Black Consciousness aims to inculcate black pride and end feelings of inferiority among black people (Bernstein 1987:13). It promotes the self-definition of black people in a world that continually defines black people in a way that degrades them.

The African Renaissance's assertion that Africans must define themselves and determine their own destiny is clearly similar to Black Consciousness' encouragement of the self-definition of black people and the development of black pride. Both movements encourage people who have been oppressed to reject the image of themselves painted by their oppressors, and to assert themselves and their dignity. Differences between the two concepts can, however, be identified. While Black Consciousness promotes the self-definition and assertion of dignity of *black individuals and groups*, the African Renaissance promotes the self-definition and self-determination of *Africans, of African countries and of the African continent*. Two differences are evident here. Firstly, Black Consciousness is focused more upon the consciousness of individuals and groups, whereas the African Renaissance has this consciousness as a concern, but arguably not as a key concern. Black Consciousness aims to liberate the mind of individuals (seeing this as a prerequisite for political liberation), but the African Renaissance has broader goals such as political and economic emancipation and the increased international influence of the continent as a whole. Secondly, Black Consciousness is a project of black people, and the African Renaissance a project of African people. This of course, introduces the lengthy (and probably insoluble) debate about who is a 'black' and who is 'African'; but however each is defined, to be black is not necessarily the same as to be African, and to be African is not necessarily the same as to be black. This means that while there is considerable overlap between the group that each concept aims to liberate, some distinction may be able to be made between each concept's 'target group'.

4.4.3 Afrocentricity, Negritude and the African Personality

Afrocentricity can be defined as 'an individual or collective quest for authenticity ... [and] above all the total use of method to effect psychological, political, social, cultural and economic change' (Asante in Lemelle 1993:104). It is a quest for identity and for the empowerment of the oppressed (Lemelle 1993:104). Afrocentricity argues that Africa should be understood from the perspective of Africans rather than that of Europeans (Lemelle 1993:94). Negritude is a cultural movement that aims to reassert African values as a worthwhile part of the heritage of mankind (Thompson 1969:251). It is associated with the poet Aimé Césaire and with the former Senegalese president Léopold Senghor. The African Personality was articulated by former president of Guinea Sekou Touré and former Ghanaian president Kwame Nkrumah (Thompson 1969:278). When these leaders and other writers speak of an African Personality, they are referring to the promotion of African culture in such a way that it can determine the future of Africans (Thompson 1969:268). The development of the African Personality involves a rediscovery of African values and morals and the assertion that Africa's future path must be based on African culture (Thompson 1969:268-271).

These three concepts can be discussed simultaneously because they are very similar and have sometimes been used interchangeably. The African Renaissance can be related to all three of these. The African Renaissance, especially the Africanist and culturalist conceptualisations of the Renaissance as discussed earlier, involves the rediscovery of African culture and African values. The Africanist and culturalist conceptualisations of the African Renaissance, like the three concepts discussed here, argue that Africa's future path must take into account African values and morals and should reject European culture. In this way the African Renaissance can be considered to have roots in Afrocentricity, Negritude and the African Personality. This link is explicitly made by Pityana (1999:146), Vil-Nkomo and Myburgh (1999:266-267), Maloka and Le Roux (2000), and Botha (2000b:25). Nevertheless, certain distinctions can be made between the three concepts discussed here and the African Renaissance. Afrocentricity, Negritude and the African Personality, like Black Consciousness, aim to change the consciousness of individuals and groups. Afrocentricity, Negritude and the African Personality believe that this change can be brought about through the rediscovery of African culture and values. These three concepts reject European values and emphasise the importance of ensuring that Africa's future is based on African culture. Some conceptualisations of the African

Renaissance (the globalist conceptualisation is an example here) place very little emphasis on African culture and values, and most conceptualisations of the African Renaissance are broader than Afrocentricity, Negritude and the African Personality because they involve political and economic goals for the entire continent.

4.4.4 Implications of these Roots

It is evident that the African Renaissance is by no means a new idea. But, is it relevant to identify these roots and acknowledge their influence on the articulation of the African Renaissance? There are several reasons why it is vital that it is recognised that the Renaissance is not a new idea.

4.4.4.1 Ensuring that the African Renaissance is not just another miscarriage

Africa's rebirth has been predicted and anticipated since the end of the 19th century. Writer after writer has declared that a new Africa is about to be born, and yet this birth has not yet been witnessed. It seems that while Africa is continually expecting this new child, it never arrives. This situation can be compared to a woman who is continually hopeful that she will bear a child, but who miscarries each time she becomes pregnant. This does not mean that there is no hope of renewal in Africa, but it does mean that supporters of the Renaissance must realise that this is not the first time that the situation in Africa has been described as being conducive to the rebirth of Africa. Africans must work hard if they are to ensure that this call for a Renaissance does not disappoint like its many predecessors.

4.4.4.2 Learning from previous mistakes

The roots of the African Renaissance must be scrutinised so that lessons can be learnt regarding why earlier attempts at African renewal and African unity did not succeed. These earlier attempts were not wholly unsuccessful, but had significant achievements and failings, and the current African Renaissance movement should pay attention to these achievements and failings so that the African Renaissance does not end up duplicating earlier mistakes.

4.4.4.3 Acknowledging the roots of the African Renaissance

Thabo Mbeki has been criticised for not acknowledging the intellectual foundations upon which he bases his understanding of the African Renaissance. Seepe (2000) sharply criticises Mbeki for this lack of acknowledgement of thinkers such as Steve Biko, suggesting that Mbeki learn from Isaac Newton, who said "that if I have seen further than the others, it is because I stood on the shoulders of giants". To be fair though, both South African President Thabo Mbeki and South African Deputy President Jacob Zuma have acknowledged that the African Renaissance idea which they both so eagerly support, is not a new idea and is based on the ideas of earlier thinkers. When speaking at the launch of the African Renaissance Institute, Mbeki (1999a) acknowledged that the ideas 'has been propagated before by other activists for liberation, drawn from many countries'. Jacob Zuma (2000b) too has acknowledged this legacy, saying: 'This call for rebirth of the African continent is not an entirely new concept. It has been made before in different ways by African leaders'; and South African Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nkosozana Zuma (2001), quotes a speech made by Albert Lithuli in 1961 regarding African Renewal.

4.5 BRANCHES OF AN AFRICAN RENAISSANCE

The African Renaissance not only has roots, it also has branches. Certain ideas have grown out of the original idea of an African Renaissance. These ideas are related to the African Renaissance and can be considered to be part of the Renaissance. Various projects for realising the Renaissance have been conceptualised. These projects include the Millennium African Renaissance Programme (MAP), the Omega Plan, the New African Initiative (NAI) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). These four programmes are very similar, and the MAP and Omega are supposed to be united in the New African Initiative which was later labelled the New Partnership for Africa's Development. Each of these programmes will be briefly outlined and then the core arguments and assumptions of these programmes and the implications of these arguments and assumptions for the African Renaissance will be discussed.

4.5.1 MAPping a Renaissance

MAP is a plan of action that hopes to achieve the goals of the African Renaissance. There is some confusion regarding what the acronym actually stands for, with various names

being given to it, including the Millennium Africa Renaissance Program (Mbeki 2001a, PANA 2001, Malala 2001, Cokayne & Fabricius 2001:4), the Millennium African Recovery Plan (Zuma 2001b), Millennium African Recovery Programme (Zuma 2001a, Breuillac 2001:18, Mills 2001a:34), Millennium African Renewal Programme (Pityana 2001), the Millennium Plan (Economic Commission for Africa 2001), and the Millennium Partnership for African Recovery Programme (United Nations University 2001). These different names all appear to point to the same thing - to a programme aiming to allow for the realisation of the African Renaissance.

Deputy President Jacob Zuma (2001b) says that the vision of the African Renaissance and the commitment to the realisation of this renaissance, led to the adoption of MAP by key African leaders. He describes MAP as 'a clear programme for African recovery'. Its architects are identified as being President Mbeki, President Obasanjo of Nigeria and President Bouteflika of Algeria and its key programmes are said to be 'human resource development; infrastructure development; peace and security; commitment to democracy and human rights; sustainable economic growth and development' (Zuma 2001b).

The MAP aims to plot out the path to African Renewal (Fraser-Moleketi 2001). It aims to do this by implementing a number of practical strategies. Proponents of the MAP emphasise that it must be an African-led endeavour, but also that it must be conducted in partnership with the West (Zuma 2001a). The South African Department of Foreign Affairs (2001b) describes the MAP as 'a detailed sustainable development project for the economic and social revival of Africa involving a constructive partnership between Africa and the developed world' and Stober (2001) sums up the MAP, saying: 'In a nutshell, MAP commits African countries to good governance and economic stability in return for better trade and aid deals from the advanced economies'. These two descriptions succinctly describe the MAP.

4.5.2 Senegal's Omega Plan

The Omega Plan was articulated by Senegal's President Abdoulaye Wade. The Omega Plan aims to assess Africa's needs and to try to 'bridge the fundamental gaps' between African countries and developed countries (Omega Plan 2001). The Plan identifies four areas that will have to be given attention: infrastructure, education, health and agriculture (Breuillac 2001:18).

The Plan aims to integrate Africa into the global economy and attempts to adapt Africa to globalisation rather than opposing globalisation. The Omega Plan says that at its core it is 'the African strategy for globalization'. The Plan resists Africa's marginalisation and believes that the best way to combat this marginalisation is to adhere to globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation.

4.5.3 The New African Initiative (NAI) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

In July 2001 the New African Initiative (NAI) was adopted by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) (Department of Foreign Affairs, South Africa 2001c). It was said to be a merger of the MAP and the Omega Plan. According to the NAI document, the New African Initiative is a pledge by African leaders to eradicate poverty, promote development and to be an active participant in the global economy and global politics (Department of Foreign Affairs, South Africa 2001b).

In October 2001, it was decided to rename the NAI as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (Granelli 2001). It is not clear why this name change was thought necessary, but evidently no content change accompanied the change of name. It seems that NEPAD is basically the new name for NAI which in turn was essentially a new name for MAP. This makes it possible for these to be referred to interchangeably. This dissertation will use the term NEPAD to refer to NEPAD and its predecessors MAP and NAI.

NEPAD advances a particular explanation of the African situation and provides a particular solution for this situation. The argument presented by NEPAD is summarised succinctly by a member of the President's Office, Nazeem Mahatey (2001), in an article in the *Pretoria News*. Mahatey (2001) points out that Africa is the cradle of humanity and has been an indispensable resource base for centuries. However, these resources were not used to develop the continent. Reasons why these resources were not used for Africa's development include both internal reasons (such as weak states, poor leadership and corruption) and external reasons (such as colonialism, Cold War divisions and international economic pressures). These and other factors have led to the situation in which Africa currently finds itself.

Mahatey (2001) goes on to describe NEPAD's assessment of the current global situation and how this situation provides an opportunity for Africa to develop. The current situation is one of global integration and, according to NEPAD, this situation presents Africa's best hope to end poverty and find the path to prosperity. Africa's development is seen as favourable to the rest of the world and deterioration in Africa as detrimental to the whole world. NEPAD argues that globalisation has the potential to eradicate human suffering, but that its potential benefits to the poor have not yet been realised. NEPAD hopes to affect the process of globalisation so that it can benefit the poor and marginalised.

NEPAD identifies a number of themes and accompanies each theme with a practical plan. The themes are divided into three sections: preconditions for development, sectoral priorities, and mobilising resources (Department of Foreign Affairs, South Africa 2001d). Preconditions for development are broken down into The Peace, Security and Political Governance Initiative and The Economic and Corporate Governance Initiative. Sectoral Priorities include The Human Resource Development Initiative, The Infrastructure Initiative, Diversification of Production and Exports, and The Market Access Initiative. Mobilising Resources is divided into The Capital Flows Initiative and The Environment Initiative.

After being accepted by the OAU, NEPAD was presented to the G8 at their summit in Italy in July 2001. The G8 demonstrated support for NEPAD and pledged to partner Africa in the implementation of NEPAD (SAPA 2001) and the World Bank and IMF have also given their approval of the project (Mills 2001b).

4.5.4 Re-evaluating the Renaissance in the light of NEPAD

What are the implications of the adoption of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)? Has the adoption of this new plan, based on MAP and the Omega Plan, changed the way that the Renaissance is perceived?

It is necessary to ask whether NEPAD is part of the Renaissance, whether it replaces the Renaissance or whether it is separate from, but complementary to, the Renaissance. This is a difficult question to answer. The MAP is clearly related to the Renaissance. As discussed earlier, one of the many names given to the MAP is the Millennium African

Renaissance Programme, clearly linking the MAP to the project of bringing about Africa's rebirth. The MAP appears to have grown out of and followed from the African Renaissance. The Omega Plan was conceived of separately from the African Renaissance and does not include any discussion of this Renaissance, although some of the Omega Plan's goals may be considered similar to some of the goals of the Renaissance. NEPAD is clearly linked to the MAP and Omega Plan, but the official NEPAD document (Department of Foreign Affairs, South Africa 2001d) mentions the term 'African Renaissance' only once. It seems that the idea of an African Renaissance led to the development of some kind of implementation strategy for the Renaissance - MAP - which in turn led to the adoption of a continental strategy - NEPAD - which aims to achieve some of the goals articulated by the Renaissance. This understanding leads to the conclusion that while NEPAD can be seen as part of the Renaissance project, it is different from the Renaissance. It is likely that the official line would be that NEPAD compliments the African Renaissance and will assist in its achievement, but it is also likely that NEPAD can be criticised for overemphasising some elements of the Renaissance at the expense of others.

NEPAD is part of the broader movement for African renewal, but can be distinguished from the African Renaissance. Several distinctions between the two can be identified. Firstly, the African Renaissance is clearly about the rediscovery of something, whereas NEPAD seems to aim to achieve something new. The African Renaissance aims to recover Africa's history and to restore pride in being African. It aims to retrieve past glory and then to use this pride in past achievement to build a proud future. NEPAD on the other hand, is not retrospective at all. It looks at the current global situation and assesses how best Africa can use this situation to its advantage.

A second difference is in the extent of the project. The African Renaissance aims to renew Africa politically, economically, psychologically, socially and culturally. NEPAD appears to focus on the economic and political. It has little to say about restoring dignity, or promoting African cultural and moral traditions. The goals of the African Renaissance are wider and more broadly conceived. NEPAD gives practical, empirical goals relating to the political and especially, the economic situation in Africa.

A third difference relates to the leadership of the project. As discussed earlier, there is tension in the African Renaissance about whether it is an élite or mass-driven project. However, there is no such uncertainty with regard to NEPAD - it is clearly an élite-driven process. The goals of NEPAD are not goals that can be realised by ordinary citizens, but are goals that depend upon the activities of African and non-African leaders.

A final difference relates to attitudes towards globalisation. Because of the multiplicity of conceptualisations of the African Renaissance, it is not possible to identify exactly what the African Renaissance's position regarding globalisation is - some statements indicate opposition to globalisation while others imply support. NEPAD, however, clearly regards globalisation as being a good thing, although not without reservations (see Mahatey 2001).

These differences entail a shift in the focus of the project of African renewal. It seems that the path to Africa's renewal has been decided upon and that the drivers of the process of renewal have been chosen. When addressing the Association for African Central Bankers, Mbeki made this clear, telling them that NEPAD should be their focus in promoting African development, and calling on them and Africa's other political and economic leaders to be the midwives of the Renaissance. It seems that Mbeki and other prominent African leaders have decided that the path to the Renaissance will be an economic and political one along the lines of NEPAD, and that the drivers of this Renaissance will be Africa's political and economic élites.

4.6 CONCLUSION: THE RENAISSANCE PACKAGE

This Chapter has explored the content of the African Renaissance, the roots of this concept and the related concepts which have grown out of the idea of a Renaissance. This overview has shown that the idea of Africa being reborn is not a new idea, nor is it a simple idea. African renewal has been called for several times over the last century, and the current articulation of the African Renaissance must acknowledge this history and learn from it. Recently, it has been felt that conditions are right for the rebirth of the African continent to finally take place. This has led to the current popularity of the term 'African Renaissance'. While there is agreement that a Renaissance is needed, there is much disagreement about the nature of this rebirth and how it is to take place. It was shown that there is no single conceptualisation of the African Renaissance, and that the

different understandings of the African Renaissance are sometimes conflicting. The last few years have seen the development of projects that identify practical plans to bring about the realisation of the Renaissance. Included here are Millennium African Renaissance Programme (MAP), the Omega Plan, the New African Initiative (NAI) and, most recently the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

The overview of the African Renaissance, its predecessors and branches makes a critical examination of the Renaissance and a response to the research questions posed earlier possible. The subsequent discussion will explore whether or not the African Renaissance challenges Western discourses, based upon the overview of the African Renaissance provided above.