

Felwine Sarr (Drew Burk, trans.). 2022. *African Meditations*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 125 pp.

Felwine Sarr's *African Meditations* is a wonderful masterpiece. The book invites readers to reflect and meditate on varied activities, conversations, narrations, and the author's journal entries and personal reflections. Our individual thoughts, as the author describes them, are meditations in action that can infuse with music, arts, etc. to produce "intellectual and artistic masterpieces of humanity" (p. 5). The author presents an intriguing introduction to the formation of the planets through a confluence of vibrations, astral materials, attractions, and particles.

Sarr begins with a chapter titled "African Meditations," which contains numerous reflections. It starts with a reflection on a journey to Saint-Louis, Senegal. The atmosphere on arrival at Saint-Louis blends tradition, joy, and seriousness with children freely expressing themselves. The true value of amenities is realized here in Saint-Louis when the lack of what one might refer to as "basic" amenities in the Western world [water, power, internet] brings a realization of its worth, resulting in their judicious use and appreciation. Another interesting reflection in this chapter on personal photosynthesis reveals how proximity can rob us of inhaling fresh air which is critically needed by another. Other reflections include: some people sometimes create chaos as a necessity to redirect their woes temporarily; love is sometimes tumultuous and occasionally beautiful; we are transmitters of light, and as such, duty demands that we carry out simple courtesies and pleasantries such as greeting others, returning smiles, and welcoming the day with a burst of joy.

The journal entry on November 28th in this same chapter about the life of a former Senegalese policeman (Mahawa Sylla) effectively portrays what true happiness and contentment in life mean. Sylla's ability to meticulously plan his life while on earth and even beyond, taking all necessary steps to ensure no one (especially his family members) experiences any discommod with his death, is outstanding. Living such an irreproachable life that impresses on those closer to him, causing them to attempt to emulate his exemplary life, is heroic.

Such riveting reflections and journal entries continue in the next chapter, "Journal of my hastened steps." In the journal for 1 April 2007, the author intriguingly describes happiness and wisdom as accepting and finding satisfaction in the natural occurrences in life without one's expectations or control rather than having desires that breed fear and anxiety in their fulfillment. Unlike the previous reflection, the May 09/10 journal entry is somber. It describes the author's new routine, which begins at 4:30 in the morning and continues throughout the day with arduous tasks that affect every muscle and part of his body yet endures while appreciating the morals of the process. Still on somber entries is the journal entry on Sesshin (2007), which sheds light on the wisdom of four great thinkers on alleviating suffering. These thinkers posit that "psychological suffering is the result of a denial of reality" (p. 53). This journal entry elucidates how the author has learned how this wisdom has been valuable in helping him embrace and accept painful circumstances and challenges, viewing them as tools necessary for life that cannot be acquired from books. An inspiring reflection amid the somber reflections is that true joy is a boundless feeling that brings blessings and expresses itself without limitation to all persons.

The following chapter, "One day, a man from the Island of Niodior told me so!" unlike the previous ones, is filled with aphorisms on varied themes such as "Of Truth"- the truth should be spoken only when necessary and lived; "Curious Age"- It's a curious age when people can be tolerated without being recognized, kindness is beneficial, faithful players are barred. Nevertheless, former troubadours will realize in the end that life is transient; "Loyalty (Fidelity)"- "it rarely resides where one thinks...and every loyalty is first a loyalty to oneself" (p. 106). The concluding chapter, "Uninterrupted Developments," contains journal entries and reflections similar to the previous ones.

The sketches, reflections, and aphorisms that fill the pages of this book cause one to pause and reflect on daily occurrences, finding meaning and attaching value to these occurrences. The book, however, contains some phrases and words in French, for which the author's notes at the end of the book are not sufficient, leaving readers with no francophone background in blankness. Nonetheless, *African Mediations* is an exceptional, univocal book.

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