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Film 168 Week 6 Reading Response

Manthia Diawara, *African Cinema Today:*

1. Diawara discusses *Yaaba* (and Ouedraogo's other film, *Tilai*) as examples of the "return to source" tendency in Francophone African cinema. Name one other film and filmmaker that Diawara mentions as sharing this style. Then discuss what kind of formal characteristics the "return to source" films share.

Another "return to source film" is Yeelem by African filmmaker Souleymane Cisse. This is the film that Diawara uses to start to explain "return to source" films. The characteristics that are used to describe a return to source film is (1) the films are less overt in their political message to avoid censorship, (2) search for precolonial African traditions that can contribute to the issues that they have today, and (3) to search for a new and unique film language.

2. How have critics approved of that tendency, and how have they criticized it?

Some critics call the "return to source" films an end to what they call "miserabilism", shifting towards the perfect image, sound, and editing. Others say that the films are nostalgic and portray Africa in an exotic way.

Ukadike, *Black African Cinema* **(especially 246-254; 279-83)**

3. Why is *Yaaba* "exceptional...in the history of black African cinema," according to Ukadike? What is significant about its reception?

Yaaba is considered to be "exceptional… in the history of Black African Cinema" due to its popularity amongst international viewers. It is one of the very few African films that has made it onto international screens. It has reached "large and enthusiastic" audiences across the globe.

4. Ukadike carefully analyzes the film's style, trying to isolate what is distinctive about it. What are some of the elements that he thinks are most important in its form?

Ouedrago uses a fusion of neorealism with the African narrative tradition of the story teller. He creates an expressive rhythm within the characterization of his cast, pays meticulous attention to detail, and uses nonprofessional actors for a more realistic narrative.