



QUEST

Philosophical Discussions

An International African Journal of Philosophy
Un Journal International Philosophique Africain

QUEST

Dept. of Philosophy University of Zambia

Mailing address: Quest, PO Box 9114, 9703 LC Groningen, The Netherlands.

Editors: John A.I. Bewaji, Pieter Boele van Hensbroek and Issiaka-Prospër Lalèyè.

Regional editor East Africa: Prof. E. Wamba-dia-Wamba (Dar-es-Salam)

Editorial Board: Prof. Paulin Hountondji (Univ. of Cotonou, Benin), Prof. Gatian Lungu (Univ. of Zambia), Prof. Lolle Nauta (Univ. of Groningen, The Netherlands), Prof. Henry Odera Oruka (Univ. of Nairobi, Kenya) and Prof. Kwasi Wiredu (Univ. of South Florida, USA)

Production: Laurence Charpentier, Sarah Lewis and Willem Storm

QUEST: Philosophical Discussions is an African Journal of Philosophy. It intends to act as a channel of expression for thinkers in Africa, and to stimulate philosophical discussion on problems that arise out of the radical transformations Africa and Africans are undergoing.

QUEST includes materials on both current subjects related to Africa, and subjects of general philosophical interest, serving an international public of professional philosophers and intellectuals in other disciplines with philosophical interests. Original articles written in either English or French will be published, each with a summary in the other language.

QUEST appears twice per year in June and December.

Contributions: Articles should normally not exceed 6,000 words in length and should be accompanied by an abstract of no more than 200 words. The latter should preferably be in French where the article is in English, and vice-versa. Manuscripts should follow the citation format of the journal. Contributors should provide a short biographical note.

Subscriptions: see details on the last page of this issue.

CONTENTS

Henle Lauer	
<i>Saying is not Believing: Some Fallacies of Fundamentalism</i>	4
Godfrey B. Tangwa	
<i>Colonial Legacy and the Language Situation in Cameroon</i>	24
Issiaka-Prosper Lalèyê	
<i>Temps et Développement</i>	44
Mogobe B. Ramose	
<i>African Democratic Tradition: Oneness, Consensus and Openness: A Reply to Wamba-dia-Wamba</i>	62
Julius O. Ihonvbere	
<i>Is Democracy Possible in Africa? The Elites, the People and Civil Society</i>	84
Notes on Contributors	109
Cumulative Index: Vol.I - Vol.VI	111
Publications of Interest	118

EDITORIAL

Pour clore la sixième année de Quest nous voulons instituer un débat à la suite de l'article "Au delà de la politique de démocratie d'élite en Afrique" du professeur Wamba-dia-Wamba (Quest, juin 1992). Le docteur M. Ramose d'Afrique du Sud et le professeur Ihonvbere du Nigère ont commencé ce débat. Nous espérons que leurs collègues n'hésiteront pas à se joindre à cette discussion. Leurs contributions sont attendues avant le 1 avril 1993.

De la même manière que Wamba questionne les prétentions universalistes des concepts courants 'politique' et 'démocratie', le professeur Lalèyê discute du concept usuel du temps. Lalèyê, tout comme Wamba, choisit pour cela non pas un 'retour à l'obscurantisme' et un culturalisme, mais un courageux 'réalisme clairvoyant' qui se tourne vers les problèmes actuels de l'Afrique.

La discussion sur l'appréciation de l'héritage linguistique du colonialisme en Afrique s'est enrichie d'une analyse claire et d'une prise de position de Godfrey Tangwa du Cameroun. H. Lauer questionne par une analyse subtile les inconséquences des argumentations fondamentalistes.

EDITORIAL

We conclude the sixth volume of QUEST by starting off a discussion based on the article "Beyond Elite Politics of Democracy in Africa" by Wamba-dia-Wamba (QUEST, June 1992). Dr. Ramose of South Africa and prof. Ihonvbere of Nigeria open this debate. We hope that other colleagues will not hesitate to take part in this discussion. Contributions are expected before April 1st 1993.

Prof. Lalèyè questions our common understanding of time in much the same way as Wamba discusses the universalist pretensions of the common conceptions of politics and democracy. For Lalèyè this criticism does not entail a return to obscurantism, but the practice of a courageous visionary realism that is focused on problems of Africa today.

Godfrey Tangwa of Cameroon contributes to the discussion on the assessment of the linguistic heritage of colonialism in Africa with a lucid analysis and thesis.

Henle Lauer contributes to this issue with a subtle analysis of the inconsistencies in fundamentalistic argumentation.

Résumé

Dans cet article le concept de la "vraie foi" est analysé. Les fondamentalistes affirment que

- (1) il n'y a qu'une seule juste manière d'interpréter la bible et que*
- (2) la croyance en cette interprétation forme l'essence de la vraie foi.*

L'auteur soutient la thèse que la "vraie foi" peut être la foi en quelque chose qui n'est pas entièrement compris et donc, à forteriori, que la foi ne consiste pas en croire en des affirmations dont la vérité soit contrôlable. Pour défendre cette thèse les points suivants sont portés en avant:

- la possibilité ou l'impossibilité d'une interprétation littérale*
- l'histoire du contenu de la bible et de son interprétation*
- la différence entre la foi religieuse et la conviction scientifique.*

SAYING IS NOT BELIEVING SOME FALLACIES OF FUNDAMENTALISM

Henle Lauer

Hard-sell Christianity has hit Ghanaian academic communities with a vengeance. It emerges in many forms, not solely as the gross materialism and *me-first* competitiveness so prevalent in the current wave of evangelist ministries. More insidiously, there is a rigid intolerance towards Christians trying to synthesize traditional African allegiances with their new born-again mandates: If you pour libations with your elders in the village rather than sit in church with your nuclear family, then you will not be saved. For halfway measures do not suffice, when it comes to steering a camel through a needle's eye.

This essay is an analysis of the notion of *true faith*. The question I will address is whether having true faith necessarily entails holding to a particular set of expressed beliefs. This question is posed specifically as a challenge to the fundamentalist who claims that

- (i) there is an exclusive, uniform way to interpret the Bible which conveys a fixed set of propositional beliefs and that
- (ii) adherence to that set of beliefs constitutes the essence of a true faith in Christ.

I argue on the contrary that *true faith* involves a belief in something that may not be fully understood, let alone articulated in statements assertible as *true*. I support this anti-fundamentalist view by examining briefly the nature of religious beliefs in contrast with scientific beliefs, and the different ways in which one's beliefs can be expressed and understood. I also touch on some issues regarding the nature of literal meaning, that the staunch literalist would have to overlook in order to maintain his position.

I discuss the Bible and the Christian faith as a case in point. The arguments presented may, however, be seen as exemplary for any type of fundamentalism involving claims regarding literal meaning of sacred texts stated above as (i) and (ii). Most of the discussions on the Bible are restricted to passages about or alluding to Creation. But again the

arguments may hold for other Biblical themes besides the Creation. However, universal application is not the aim of my thesis; I mean only to criticize (i) and (ii) above.

Reasons for literalism

I begin by stating reasons why one might find it compelling to link literal Bible interpretation very closely to faith in Christ¹. One might regard reading the Bible as an act of commitment, a decision to embrace God's word as one's primary authority or one's absolute and ultimate source of understanding eternal truths. It follows then that this commitment ought to be made without reservation. Arbitrary interpretations of the Scripture, that only take those passages literally that appear to match one's present needs and circumstances, are clearly not a convincing articulation of this commitment. One cannot rely upon a schedule of beliefs that shifts to suit the occasion, in the interests of convenience and momentary preference.

Secondly, the word of God must mean the same to every believer regardless of where it is read or spoken. Having true faith is not a matter of having refined aesthetic tastes which differ depending upon the contingencies of one's upbringing. Tastes are acquired. In contrast, the true meaning of God's word cannot depend upon circumstances that accidentally determine who shall be baptised as a Methodist, a Roman Catholic, or not at all. Surely such differences are merely a superficial overlay of God's truth, which is eternal and universal. Nor is the living, urgent truth of the Bible likely to be shrouded coyly in symbolism and allegory, accessible only through artful speculations and the expertise of literary scholars. Understanding the Bible is not like appreciating a Shakespeare sonnet, a Bach oratorio or a eulogy poem.

If faith is to be urgent, yet reliable and steady, then one's reading of the Bible must not be diluted with scholarly opinion and sophisticated conjecture. The meaning of scripture is co-opted if attention is deflected by the accidental details surrounding authorship of the

physical texts. Moreover, the collage of opinions that results from treating Bible history as central to one's understanding of Scripture yields uncertainty and indecisiveness. The difficulty is that any well-argued scholarly speculation *might* be correct; hence no interpretation can be called definitive. This is fine for academic exercise but one needs something more secure to build one's life upon.

A true, simple faith demands a straightforward, guileless interpretation of the Scripture. One's beliefs in the statements of the Bible should be as secure as one's beliefs in the statements of a current textbook on classical physics. Otherwise, one's faith in Christ would be more shallow than one's faith in the apparent regularities of the physical world. Such a shallow faith is readily compromised; it cannot maintain a firm hold against the apparent threats of adversity and crisis in everyday life.

If one takes the Bible as the foundation of one's faith, then vacillations about the Bible's meaning are like cracks in this foundation. Whenever one needs to lean on faith, one puts stress on this weak foundation and in the end it is likely to collapse altogether. It follows that one should accept one interpretation of the Scripture. For this purpose one can rely on literal interpretation. It must do, for no other interpretation can serve as **the** single, final meaning of Biblical text.

As convincing as these remarks seem, they may appear less so on closer inspection of what is seen as *literal meaning* in practice.

Literal meaning

There is a troublesome amount of analyses of the notions of the *literal meaning* of a declarative sentence. Interpreters of sentences from one language into another readily use the term *literal* as in contrast with *free* translation. It is assumed that the successful translator is fluent in the target language, whether translating freely or literally. Fluency here means the translator is ideally competent at participating in the target language; she understands the cultural

practices, values and nuances of the world-view shared by the people using that language everyday. And this takes us immediately to the heart of some commonly mistaken assumptions about literal meaning, assumptions that may underlay the view that every single statement in the Bible has one literal meaning revealed by uniformly applying a single method of interpretation throughout the whole Book.

To begin discussing what may have gone wrong for the literalist, consider that the meaning of a distinct sentence is not given directly to one who perceives the sentence on the page at least not in the way that the colour or shape of a distinct object might be said to be given directly to its perceiver. By itself, the string of marks or sound pattern constituting a sentence can have no meaning in isolation from the context in which it was produced. The interpreter must in some sense know not only grammatical rules and vocabulary, but also many background beliefs tacitly held by those whose language she is translating.

For instance to make correct sense of *Today is Friday* in English, one must assume the speaker has a conception of *today* that applies to consecutive, fixed intervals of time, designated by seven different names in cyclic order. In other words, to find the correct meaning of a **single** sentence, whether it was produced 2,000 years ago or in the last twenty seconds, one hypothesizes a whole cluster of beliefs related to each other in the background of assumptions held by the speaker or writer.

To test if a conjectured meaning is the correct one, the interpreter provisionally adopts these background beliefs and then decides if the meaning proposed is something she could have intended to say in the relevant type of circumstances. In short, a sentence has no meaning at all except as it fits into some relevant chunk of a whole belief system., whose full expression requires the resources of the entire language. The literal meaning of a single sentence cannot be discovered independently of the interpreter's own reconstruction of the relevant portions of a belief system shared by those who understand the sentence in question.

A second common point of confusion about meaning should be avoided here. When an interpreter is deciphering the meaning of a sentence, she is not engaged in extracting something psychological that was put into the marks or words by the individual author. The meaning of a written text was not initially the private property of its author, hidden in his mind before he divulged it through writing symbols to represent it.

For an individual author to express some thought or idea by producing a pattern of marks or sounds, he needs some system of expression already in place to do it. He needs a repeatable procedure for association distinct patterns with different sorts of things. This association must be transparently systematic because it must be learnable by others. However natural language may have come into practice, language is essentially a public activity.

These few considerations are much more widely accepted in philosophy of language than they are convincingly presented in these cursory remarks. However, one point on the received view of meaning that does stand out as controversial is also crucial for this discussion. We noted that language is necessarily public. But the following question might be raised: Is it necessary to speak some language in order to think and hold any beliefs at all?

Clearly a dog can think he senses his master's can approaching. He can believe there is a dangerous snake under the bush. The dog can correct his belief by sniffing and discovering the snake is not dangerous after all but dead. Yet the dog cannot chide himself for confusing a dead snake with a live one. He cannot reprove himself for feeling overly anxious waiting for his master, or for feeling lonely or lustful; nor can he resolve to be more obedient in the hope this will keep the master at home more. He cannot contemplate the significance of his own death [Dobzhansky (1974, p.334)].

In the 17th century, Descartes initiated the modern tradition of distinguishing between men with souls and mere brutes by arguing that animals are incapable of *real speech*. Accordingly humans are moral agents because they can hold beliefs and opinions about the merit of

their own thoughts and existence². This is possible because we humans can talk to ourselves. We can talk to ourselves because we talk to each other, that is, because we have language. However, for Descartes, speech is the **only** sign of having beliefs. And in this respect he seems to be wrong. The activities of writing and speaking are not the only ways we make our beliefs known. To interpret any act done intentionally, not just writing or speaking, one has to assume the agent holds certain beliefs and related types of thought (desires, hopes, fears). If you see me going to a tap with an empty bucket, you can assume I believe that water will come out of the tap; attributing this belief to me gives my action meaning but only by also assuming that I want to fetch water, that this bucket hold the water I fetch, and so on. Alternatively, you could assume that I think the tap needs to be repaired, and so my going to the tap is made reasonable to you by your also assuming that I think it is my duty to put this bucket over the tap while it is out of service. The point of the illustration is this: In every interpretation of a single act done intentionally, the action must represent a cluster of beliefs and desires or other thoughts, just as is the case with interpreting a single sentence (an act of speech). Sometimes sentences can express the content of the motivating action of these thoughts. But the point here is that just as often, non-verbal actions reveal thoughts that do not fit neatly into sentence-shaped packets. It is important to see this clearly.

Imagine that you witness two people hugging and smiling, or a blind person being helped across a street, or an expert sculptor at work on a potter's wheel. You attribute feelings of affection and gladness to the hugging couple, a sense of compassion or duty or a sense of kinship between the helper and the blindman, aesthetic taste and skill to the sculptor at his work. Attributing distinct propositional (sentence-shaped) beliefs to any of these agents in these situations would be artificial at best.

Many times it is evident that an articulable belief or desire or duty are motivating an action but the precise content of such thoughts or principles are unclear. One can fast for world peace, or work for

the good of the nation or of the Church, without having a very clear sense of what world peace or the good of the nation or of the Church exactly involves, that is, without knowing exactly what statements to assert or subscribe to regarding these very goals. Nonetheless one may believe strongly in them and fast long or work hard in pursuit of them. For another example, consider that a moral dilemma can arise between one's beliefs in acting in the name of justice or out of compassion. Yet one's beliefs in these virtues may be vague, leaving one uncertain how to manifest them in a given situation. That is, one doesn't know which of several sentences about being just or compassionate would apply correctly to the case at hand. Still one can act and be understood to have acted (rightly or wrongly, as may be) just because of one's convictions about justice or compassion, such as they are. Indeed it is on the strength of such convictions that one may go and seek advice. But the content of such consultations would be logically specious if it were the case that having a genuine conviction required having clear and distinct beliefs about what it is one is committed to.

Notice then how mistaken it is in general to insist that the allegiances of moral agents can be recognized only through the medium of distinct sentences such as a creed.

Here is a list summarizing the points made about literal meaning so far. They have been stated as the received view, unadorned. In order to move the discussion, let us take for granted that language is essentially a public activity; that every sentence depends for its meaning on the broader context of its occurrence or its recurrence in translation.

So every correct interpretation of a sentence depends upon background beliefs assumed to be held by the speaker or writer, and recognized as reasonable to hold by the interpreter. The meaning of any single sentence reflects no single belief in isolation, but whole clusters of shared beliefs and related attitudes, recognizably coherent by the interpreter. Meaningful expression is necessarily communicable or public, but does not necessarily require sentence formulation. A person's beliefs can be recognized through his actions, not just by the

statements he makes or agrees with. And lastly, one can act because one has a belief in something or someone (like justice, or Christ) even though no particular statements convey exactly what it is that one believes to be true.

In light of these considerations about literal meaning of declarative statements, it is useful to review a very few historical facts regarding the statements depicting the Creation story in the Bible and the history of their interpretation.

Bible history

The beginning of the Old Testament was compiled and edited by different authors within a time span of about five centuries, starting around the 4th century B.C.. Exactly who wrote which chapters of these first five books is a question that is still open to controversy among Bible scholars [Sproul (1979, p.13)]. In Genesis, the Creation story occurs twice; these two versions are sufficiently characteristic in style to have been assigned decisively to different authors writing about 500 years apart.

The work of reconstruction itself has also been cumulative. Since the late 1800's, fractured remains of Genesis have been excavated at different times and pieced together into 3/4 of a narrative poem. Within the same intellectual era, Darwin's theory of evolution was first printed in 1859, and the fossil record quickly became a provoking source of controversy. During the late 19th century two attempts were made to reconcile the Creation story with the newly publicized geological data. According to one account (Genesis 6-9) global flooding occurred after the week of Creation, killing and covering over all the animals that did not escape with Noah on the Ark. According to another interpretation (Job 38 and Psalm 104) the earth existed for an indefinitely long period of time before the Creation, accounting for the evidently very old age of rock formations [Gilmore (1909, pp.296-304)]. This theme traces back to Babylonian and possibly Persian

legends, long before fossils in rocks were regarded as evidence of some prior organic process leading to the fossils' inert existence.

There are contrary claims in the Bible about the material used for Creation. In Genesis God used dry land; in Romans 4 He used matter; in Hebrews 11-3 He used the chaotic waters and in Genesis 1 He worked with chaos. The occurrence of the word *chaos* is itself ambiguous. As in Genesis 1-2, its use has led one encyclopedia writer to wonder, at the turn of the 20th century, whether the "Priestly writer really believe(d) in a pre-existent chaos or whether the retention of *chaos* should be read as (a pedagogical device)" to make accessible the new monotheism in the old terms of established Babylonian, pantheist legends [Encyclopedia Biblica (1899, p.954 (Vol.1, Creation))].

The Creation story is referred to or depicted for different purposes in 18 books of the Bible. In Psalm 104 it is a hymn calling to worship and giving reason for praise. In Psalm 33 and in Jeremiah, it offers reassurance regarding current political affairs; in John it affirms Christ's place in the Logos and God's continual protection of human life [Dodd (1960, pp.281-285)].

The Creation story has been compared with primal myths of many oral religious traditions. Thus the term *Creation* might not refer to any historical sequence of events. The term might refer instead to the absolute priority of God's presence over everything visible in the sky and on earth. The story of Creation might depict God allegorically as "unique, independent and eternally valid and unconditionally valuable" [Sproul (1979, p.13)].

The allegory technique is a useful reminder to human beings who recall occurrences with respect to time. The object of faith in God exists out of time altogether. As a truth to be recalled, God's absoluteness is the first and foremost thing to remember; so temporally it is the first occurrence of all. One contemporary commentator has likened this allegory to our everyday manner of describing what is dearest and most precious to us personally by recalling how long ago it came to be part of our lives [Sproul (1970, p.13)].

In his decree of 1907 Pope Pius X explicitly denounced all such allegorical interpretations [Nemesszeghy and Russell (1971, p.33)]. For the important point in the creation story is the assertion of the believer that God directly supplied the human body with a soul and that He did this at a fixed point in historical time. This is a factual occurrence recorded as a *confession of faith*; to observe that it is recorded many times, in many ways for many purposes, does not detract from the brute fact itself. It is not an allegory which is the object of the believer's confession of faith. The mechanics of exactly how God endowed man with a soul at a fixed point in time have been worked out in different ways by theologians, for instance by Karl Rahner and Teilhard de Chardin³.

We seem to be left with a variety of possible answers to the question of what exactly the original writers intended by their statements about Creation. This is not surprising if our earlier reflections about meaning are true in general. Notches in stone tablets or ink marks on parchments cannot mean anything independently of the context and purpose for which they were produced and again reproduced in translations. But this point needs clarification, quite apart from the vagueness of *context* and *purpose*.

It would be wrong to infer that the meaning of a Bible passage is wholly indeterminate because the appropriate original context is passed out of reach now, far behind us in antiquity. We do contrast and select the best among competing interpretations of a Biblical text. But we do so only because our own and borrowed belief systems function as a "common coordinate system on which to plot" the contrasts between rival interpretations⁴. Correlatively, it is unfounded to claim that only one interpretation, given directly by the text itself, exists purely and independently of the interpreter's background beliefs about what is coherent and worthy of contemplation. Interpretation is impossible without the interpreter's background principles of feasibility and conceivability [Quine (1965, chapter two)].

Examples of relevant background principles presupposed by interpretations of the Creation story, are the definitions of original sin

and the meaning of the human spirit. From the definitions of these notions that one selects, certain beliefs about the scenario of creation may be deduced. Here appeals to theological principles of the nature of original sin, and human spirit are essential for interpretation of the passages in the Bible depicting the origin of mankind. But then the preference for those same principles cannot be justified by claiming that they **follow** from the one and only correct reading of a given Biblical text. For any reading of the text requires some principles or other already presupposed, in order for an interpretation to be possible and proffered as **the** exclusive one or as one among alternatives.

A resolution to this circularity, between theological principles and Bible interpretation, was suggested by Popes Pius X and XII in 1907 and 1947 respectively [Nemesszeghy and Russell (1971, pp.35-48)]. They decreed the Bible should be regarded as a *confession of faith* as noted earlier. Hence the Bible's statements are beyond refutation. When given formal expression as one's commitments in a confessional sense, principles can not be refuted, except as one's own subsequent actions may betray the sincerity or depth of one's professed commitment to the Words.

It follows from these considerations that textual interpretation may not be an **essential** component of religious faith. Getting **the** right meaning of a Biblical passage cannot be a **test** of faith if the Bible is a *confession* or *expression* of one's faith. Sacred scripture can only be one avenue for faith's transmission and expression; there must be other avenues in virtue of which a believer's faith is expressed and exposed. Believing or wanting to believe need not imply having or wanting to have a particular set of beliefs that can be asserted as statements with verifiable truth values, truth values discernible independently of the believer's actions and other responses to the world beyond the Bible's text. Verification of true faith can not wholly consist of inspecting the statements that an individual professes to believe. Indeed, faith might be most evident in one who is unable to articulate in words exactly to what it is he is being faithful.

Testing faith

There may be no single formula for testing faith. Yet it is testable. True faith is surely not just an oceanic feeling or sensation of enchantment or serenity [James (1925, p.246 and p.506)]. If faith is a commitment of attitude and response, then faith is necessarily communicable. However, people communicate in other ways besides making statements. Expression of a principle of faith, as with expressions of moral virtues such as reverence, steadfastness, and loyalty, may have nothing essential to do with articulating or interpreting sentences. Recall here that actions may emanate from convictions (about justice, or Christ, say) that are not always readily asserted in statement form.

There are figures in the Bible personifying powerful faith at moments when they did not fully understand what it was they themselves believed in. The prophet Jeremiah worried over the falsity of his inspired predictions for forty years⁵. His uncertainty exhibits rather than detracts from the depth of his faith and of its quality, for he revered his God as the very source of his prophetic impulses, all the while he lacked confidence in the propositional content of what he was inspired to declare.

Another example is in the rapture of Jesus' transfiguration, recounted at least three times in the New Testament. The commentator in Luke repeats what the disciple Peter said at the peak of devotional transport. And he adds that in that very moment Peter did not know what he himself was saying. The disciples are depicted later in Luke as witnessing Jesus heal a small boy. They believed in Jesus no more vividly than in such moments; and yet they could not understand in that moment what Jesus was telling them about the very near future [Luke 9: 32-33].

This lack of full understanding about the object of one's faith is not restricted to religious devotion and faithfulness. One can believe in a political figure, a project, an ideal, with an incomplete understanding of what one believes in. Indeed we always must act on the strength of

what we believe in without knowledge of the consequence to come. Thus we can contrast believing **in** something with believing **that** a certain set of propositions is true. Here the echo of Ryle's famous *knowing how vs. knowing that* should be heeded.

The best example of this testing of one's belief in something inarticulable that I know of first hand, was being woken at knifepoint by an intruder in my own bed in the middle of the night in New York City. Without any plan or strategy, and certainly without recall of any Biblical text, faith took over the initial shock instantly. In complete confidence, there was nothing but to fully focus attention in loving witness of two inspired creatures, equal in value, equal in suffering and equal in need of divine attention, protection and care. In this altered reality the poignant irony of all violation and human conflict outweighed the conflict and violation immediately at hand.

It would be inaccurate to describe what occurred as a testing of a **theory** about faith-healing or active prayer. The beliefs that were indeed tested were not conjectures or hypotheses; they were confident affirmations and so the believing altered the reality. The beliefs were affirmed not in statements of creed but rather in reaction, response and attitude of faith. The experience was of intense amazement rather than outraged terror, concern for the intruder rather than indignation at his action. The beliefs were affirmed through a momentary shift in awareness, a reorientation which manifested in responses that transformed what was to happen. Statements involving the terms of this shift in orientation cancel statements containing the ordinary terms describing what happened between a victim and an aggressor. Yet both sorts of description report correctly what happened. They report different but complementary truths. They describe coordinate axes of the human condition: body and spirit, violence and resurrection.

Religious faith vs. scientific 'faith'

It is therefore a tragic irony to press religious convictions into the formalisms and trappings of scientific theory, to render the convictions

more attractive in a contemporary secular belief-system. This is the mission of several fundamentalist groups throughout the United States, where allegory and poem are not gracefully interwoven in the basic fabric of everyday discourse as in Akan culture. In the United States of America, fundamentalism has redrafted the Creation story so that it can compete in the schoolroom with Darwin's theory of evolution. And the fundamentalists have lobbied successfully for legislation that requires biology teachers in many state schools to select textbooks and give lecture time to include Creationist Science [Kitcher (1983, pp.166f)]. This is a sanitized version of Genesis that omits terms like *God* that are not subject to operational definition and consequently drag against the current of scientific jargon. The justification for the *equal time for religion* statute was anticipated in a 1968 Federal Supreme Court hearing. In this separate opinion, Chief Justice Warren Black stressed that Darwin's theory has never been proven with absolute certainty. So it has no business overriding the Bible as the ultimate source of authority about the origin of man⁶.

Justice Black's remarks reflect astonishing ignorance of very basic principles of scientific faith in empirical theorizing. By scientific faith here I mean the tradition initiated by Francis Bacon's 16th century reflections on the idea of science as an inductive method that "arrives at degrees of certainty" through the accumulation of evidence [Cohen (1989, pp.5-7)]. Alternatively, the term *science* has meant variously organized bodies of accepted beliefs. To the medieval Renaissance scholars, science meant that body of knowledge already collected and assembled by [the] authorities as Galen and Aristotle. *Science* could mean differently again, as it did to Descartes, dismissing all authorized texts in order to venture independently down paths of deduction that follow from "self-evident first principles" [Cohen (1989, pp.5-7)].

In contrast, the Baconian tradition inspired divergent fields whose researchers and theorists have varying methods, while they share certain fundamental tenets of scientific 'faith': Given any theory, the

more it is aesthetically pleasing to mathematical sensibility, the more likely it is to reveal ultimate truths of nature⁷.

The better a theory, the more susceptible it is to being repeatedly challenged by experimental test [Popper (1963, pp.256-257)].

The better a theory is, the more specific the picture it gives of results to expect from experiment or field investigation.

The better a theory is, the more elegantly it unifies different types of events explaining diverse regularities with fewer starting assumptions than any of its rivals.

The better a theory is, the more links and connections it reveals with other fields of inquiry, and the more experiments it inspires.

The better a theory is, the more alternatives it suggests in the event that such experiments one day prove it false.

Testing an empirical theory is altogether different from testing religious convictions. For theory requires formulation in a statement or in a mathematical formula. Otherwise it cannot yield deductions of specific results to expect from experiments run in order to confirm or undermine the theory. If expected results transpire and confirm the theory, then more tests are run for further confirmation. If results refute the theory, then it is revised accordingly and the version that emerges is in turn subject to test. Scientific 'faith' relies on experience to shape and revise and refine theory. Conjectured hypotheses can improve **only** through partial or wholesale refutation by experiment and then consequent revision of theory. Of course the analysis here given by Popper of scientific method has undergone refutation and revision in its own right [Feyerabend (1976, pp.290-294)]. But all parties to the dispute over how scientific 'faith' operates agree on this much: a theory is empirical because it bows to the dictates of experimental observations, however refined those observations may become in doing service for a specialized domain of theorizing.

Religious faith is tested the other way round. Religious beliefs not only dictate how to organize one's experience, but also what to see. Religious beliefs dictate one to observe pain and ignorance where one would otherwise perceive threat and danger. They dictate

sensations of triumph and joy within defeat and despair. And the faithful one can experience both of these at once, though he may not be able to express such a contradiction in words unless he is trained to articulate it [Kierkegaard (1955, p.46)]. Likewise he may not be prone to use certain idioms when interpreting the Scripture unless he has adopted certain customs and slogans acquired by establishing and maintaining certain social connections.

It certainly does not follow that serious, intensive Bible study is a vapid or futile past-time. It may be the surest and firmest way to develop and refine faith and fellowship. But then its worth is inherent in the act of pondering and studying Scripture, not in the final attainment of one exclusive exegesis that strikes out the validity of every other.

Notes

1. I am grateful for conversations with J. Engmann and F. Phillips, University of Ghana, Legon.
2. This point is due to Frankfurt [1971]. Malcolm [1990, p.461 note 33] quotes from René Descartes, "A letter to Thomas More", in his article inspiring this criticism. See also the particularly seminal themes in Ryle [1951 and 1971] on this point and the initial model for *believing in* vs. *believing that*, essential to my argument against fundamentalist definition of 'faith' depicted as (i) and (ii) of this piece, page.
3. Rev. J. Osei-Bonsu in conversation, University of Ghana, Legon.
4. For this and other points herein about *meaning holism*, correctives to conceptual relativism, and the interdependence of belief and meaning. I am indebted to Donald Davidson [(1984, p.184 (essay 13 and also the essays 9-12)) and (1982, pp.301-303)].

5. This and the following reference emanates from guidance of Rev. J.R. Kudadjie, University of Ghana, Legon.
6. US Supreme Court Reports [1968, 393 US 97 pp. 228-243] Epperson vs. Arkansas; this reference was made possible by F.S. Tsikati, University of Ghana, Legon.
7. Akyeampong [1992] and in discussions at the University of Ghana, Legon.

Bibliography

Akyeampong, Daniel A.

1992 "Truth and Beauty in Science" in The Two Cultures Revisited: Interactions of Science and Culture, Lecture II out of the J.B. Danquah Memorial Lecture series, no.25, Accra.

Cohen, Jonathan L.

1989 An Introduction to the Philosophy of Induction and Probability, Oxford, Clarendon.

Conant, James B.

1947 On Understanding Science, New Haven, Yale University Press.

Davidson, Donald

1982 "Paradoxes of Irrationality" in Philosophical Essays on Freud, eds. Wollheim, R. and Hopkins, J., Cambridge University Press.

1984 "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme" in Enquiries into Truth and Interpretation, Oxford, Clarendon.

Dhobzhansky, Theodosius

1974 "Chance and Creativity in Evolution" in Studies in the Philosophy of Biology, Ayala, F.J. and Dhobzhansky, T., London, Macmillan.

Dodd, C.H.

1960 The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, Cambridge University Press.

Encyclopedia Biblica

1899 Eds. Cheyne, T.A. and Black, J.S., London, Hutton.

Feyerabend, Paul

1976 "Rationality of Science" in Can Theories Be Refuted?, ed. Harding, S., Amsterdam, Reidel.

Gilmore, George

1909 "Creation" in SChaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, Volume III, New York, Funk and Wagnall.

Hacking, Ian

1981 "Introduction" in Scientific Revolutions, ed. Hacking, I., Oxford University Press.

Hempel, Carl G.

1959 "The Empiricist Criterion of Meaning" in Logical Positivism, ed. Ayer, A.J., New York, Free Press.

James, William

1925 Varieties of Religious Experience, London, Longman, Green and Co. (1st edition 1902).

Kierkegaard, Søren

1955 The Gospel of Sufferings, London, Clare (1st edition 1847).

Kitcher, Philip

1982 Abusing Science, Milton Keynes, Open University Press.

Malcolm, Norman

1990 "Thoughtless Brutes" in The Nature of Mind, ed. Rosenthal, D.M., Oxford University Press (1st edition 1968).

Nemesszeghy, Ervin and Russell, John

1971 "The Theology of Evolution" in Theology Today Series. no.6, ed. Yarnold, E., Cork, Mercier Press.

Newmark, Peter

1991 About Translation, London, Multilingual Matters.

Popper, Karl

1963 Conjectures and Refutations, London, Routledge.

Quine, Willard V.

1965 Word and Object, Cambridge, MIT Press.

Ryle, Gilbert

1971 "Knowing How and Knowing That" (original version 1946) and
"Thinking and Language" (original version 1951) in Collected
Essays, Volume II, London, Hutchinson.

Sproul, Barbara C.

1979 Primal Myths, San Francisco, Harper & Row.

Tribe, Lawrence

1985 Constitutional Choices, Cambridge University Press.

Underhill, Evelyn

1928 The Life of the Spirit and the Life of Today, London,
Methuen.

Résumé

Aucun autre continent ne connaît une situation linguistique comparable à celle de l'Afrique. Le Cameroun est souvent considéré, à bon escient d'ailleurs, comme une "Afrique en miniature", mais aussi, à mauvais escient, comme "le seul pays africain bilingue". Cependant si l'on peut, dans un certain sens, légitimement parler du "bilinguisme camerounais", cette assertion soulève pourtant bon nombre de questions et de problèmes qui ont besoin d'être soigneusement étudiés au moyen d'une analyse conceptuelle.

Cet article apporte "la contribution du philosophe" à la recherche sur la problématique linguistique au Cameroun et, par ricochet, en Afrique. L'argumentation s'adresse indifféremment aux linguistes, aux chercheurs en linguistique, aux hommes politiques, aux enseignants de langues et autres experts, bref à ceux à qui il incombe de prendre les décisions, et comprend trois volets.

- (a) Le fait que les langues étrangères venues d'Europe en même temps que le colonialisme aient éclipsé les langues indigènes ne doit pas nous inciter, tout bien pensé, à porter le deuil.*
- (b) Les langues étrangères, qui nous ont été imposées au cours d'un processus historique irréversible, peuvent, si elles sont bien maîtrisées, être mises à profit comme véhicules de l'unité nationale, de l'intégration nationale, du développement et du dialogue universel.*
- (c) L'idée sentimentalement attrayante d'une langue nationale indigène et les recherches en vue d'y aboutir ne sont pas nécessaires pour le moment et sont politiquement à déconseiller.*

COLONIAL LEGACY AND THE LANGUAGE SITUATION IN CAMEROON

Godfrey B. Tangwa

Introduction

The language situation in Cameroon raises a plethora of problems and issues that stand in need of very careful theoretical analysis. Today Cameroon is often referred to as the only bilingual African Nation. But any discussion of *bilingualism in Cameroon* calls for some prefatory terminological clarification and prescriptivity. The concept of bilingualism in this context is not as univocal as might, at first glance, be supposed. Ordinarily, the adjective *bilingual* describes the state of having or being characterised by two languages, while the noun *bilinguist* refers to any one who speaks any two languages. *Bilingualism* should therefore refer to any single condition, state or situation involving two languages. In this sense, bilingualism is involved in any situation where a mother tongue (which we can here understand liberally as that language in which the child first learns to communicate with the parents verbally) and any other language. There is no identifiable group of human beings without a mother tongue since communication among human beings is indispensable. It would thus seem to follow that someone who speaks, say, *Nooni* as a mother tongue and also *Lamnso* should be described as *bilingual*. And if the same person also speaks English, then *trilingual* and if French in addition, then *quadrolingual*, etc.. But such putative analysis is jeopardised by the fact that deep seated prejudices originating in colonial attitudes and sanctified by academic practice have denied indigenous African tongues the title of *languages* according them only the status of *vernaculars* or *native dialects*.

Dialect in its etymological purity refers to the manner of speaking a language peculiar to an individual or group or to a variety of one and the same language arising from local peculiarities. *Vernacular*, similarly, means domestic, native or indigenous. In this sense, English

is vernacular to the British Isles but not to North-America or India. *Lamnso* is vernacular in Nso, *Mungaka* in Bali, etc..

The reluctance to call African languages 'languages' is similar and, in fact, related to the reluctance to call African religions 'religions' but rather *ancestor worship*, *fetishism*, *paganism* or *idol worship*, etc.. The attitude derives ultimately from cultural prejudices. Christian worshippers, for example, do almost exactly the same sort of things that traditional African worshippers do; but insist that there is a world of difference. In their case they don't *worship* but only *venerate* their ancestors, according them an honour due to God alone. According to Christians, things like statues, medals, etc. are, for them, only external *symbols* whereas for their African counterparts they are not merely symbols but the real thing - what the symbols are supposed to symbolize.

This recalls Michael Novak's remark: "In order to identify the myths of one's own culture ... it suffices to ask: what constitutes my culture's sense of reality?" [Novak (1970, p.16)] According to Novak men are never fully aware that their own values are shaped by myths. Vis-a-vis other cultures, words tend, in this view, to have different meanings depending on their referents. When speaking of others, terms such as *myths*, *illusions*, *delusions*, etc. tend to be used, he argues, in contexts and places where ordinary sense of reality performs the same function when speaking of one's own culture. Novak's remarks are, of course, more appropriate for the dominant western cultures rather than say, African cultures which seem to be completely non-proselytising even in the sphere of their religions.

Bilingualism in Cameroon therefore should be further specified in order to avoid ambiguity and confusion. Bernard Fonlon, who first charted and mapped out the entire problematic of bilingualism in Cameroon, was half-way through his celebrated paper "A case for

Early Bilingualism" [Fonlon (1963)] when he realized the equivocality of his title term.

I must confess (Fonlon writes) that the expression Cameroon Bilingualism, is a misnomer. It would be more correct to speak of Cameroon trilingualism, because, ever before the Cameroon child comes to school to learn English and French, he should have already learnt his own native language [Fonlon (1963, p.68)].

Fonlon goes on, loc. cit., to make a distinction between French and English, on the one hand, as *officials languages* and, on the other, the native languages which he terms *national languages*. This terminology has usually been maintained by other writers, researchers and scholars.

However, the expression *national language* is unsuitable in this context because it is misleadingly imprecise. The expression *national language* gives the impression of a language that is used throughout the national territory. None of the so-called native languages enjoys such a status. The expression 'indigenous Cameroonian language' would seem to be more appropriate. One of these indigenous languages could, of course, conceivably be raised to the dignified status of a National language by political *fiat*. Such would then become a national language *de jure*. But such a conceivable political decision would both unwise and impractical inasmuch as it is *de facto* clearly impossible for any of the over 240 indigenous Cameroonian languages to gain the status of a national language in any humanly foreseeable future. *De facto*, there is no national language in Cameroon. *De jure*, there are two official national languages, English and French. Whenever the expression *Cameroon Bilingualism* is used, it is usually meant to refer to this official juristic situation which is still only a magnificent prescriptive ideal at this time.

The adoption of French and English as official national languages in Cameroon is only a point of departure for the language problematic. What I have done in this paper is only to provoke various consider-

ations that are directly related to and interwoven with that problematic. In this paper, I will make the following arguments:

- (1) that even though the foreign European languages that came with colonialism overshadowed the indigenous languages, there is no reason, all things considered, to regret this fact.
- (2) that the foreign languages imposed on us by irreversible historical accidents can be properly domesticated and used to great advantage as vehicles for national unity, integration and development as well as for global dialogue.
- (3) that the search for an indigenous national languages is unnecessary and politically inadvisable, for the time being, no matter how emotionally compelling this search may be.

Language as beneficial by-product of the colonial experience

One thing to note is that the imperialist languages imposed on Africans were an unintended but inevitable by-product of other important objectives. The main objective of colonialism was economic exploitation and domination. Colonial education became necessary as a supporting structure of colonial aims and European languages were the vectors of that education. A Lamnso proverb says that the hand cannot rub the lap without the lap at the same time rubbing the hand. This is equivalent to the English proverb which says that you cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs. The colonial system of education and the colonial languages in particular were imposed on the colonized for colonial purposes. But this could not be done without at the same time handing over the necessary weapons for the liberation of the colonized. By learning to speak, write and especially to read the language of the colonial master a whole new world of ideas, theoretical entities, abstract meanings and the possibilities they signified suddenly opened up for the colonized. The hitherto limited *Weltanschauung* of the colonized, with underpinnings mainly in oral tradition became violently violated and began expanding at a remarkable rate. The difficulty with an oral tradition in the absence of writing is that it

depends almost entirely on memory. Human memory is, however, demonstrably weak and fallible. Writing is, without doubt, one of the greatest inventions of human culture in general.

Very soon, the colonized, the enslaved, would discover in the colonizer's very own literature, in the slaver's very own language, such very dangerous (for the coloniser) ideas as liberty, equality, fraternity, etc.. He would even become acquainted with the secrets of the superior technology that had facilitated his subjugation and enslavement. It is significant that nationalism which eventually led to political independence, was initiated and led by the beneficiaries of colonial education in all African countries, especially those who had actually studied in the colonizer's own country. As Professor Ali A. Mazrui observes:

It is arguable that for Africa the experience of colonialism itself was at once a political bondage and a partial mental liberation. The colonial impact might well have been the greatest liberating factor that the African mind had ever experienced, if by this we mean liberation from excessive subservience to ancestral ways. At the heart of this mental liberation was the world of new ideas. Of course, once the stream of African thought was let loose, it was beyond the powers of the colonizers to determine the direction of its flow. Nor could the process of intellectual liberation be reversed [Mazrui (1974, pp.85-86)].

Scholars on African languages

Many African scholars and thinkers both recognize and bemoan the fact that the use and spread of European languages in Africa seems to be an irreversible process. Tanla Kishani Bongasu, for instance, in a paper published in an archaeological anthology observes:

On balance, the present ardent and massive use of European languages to the total or partial exclusion of African

languages within the framework of African writing by Africans and/or non-Africans alike, seems irreversible. As such, it calls for a special concern [Bongasu (1989, p.99)].

Bongasu goes on to observe that the African colonial educational system "offered little or no opportunities for a large scale practice and development of writing in African languages" since they were considered incapable of promoting and transmitting science and *civilisation*. But to even imagine that the colonizer could promote the language of the colonized for its own sake is to fundamentally misunderstand the whole nature, end and purpose of colonialism. It is to entertain the possibility that colonialism was an altruistic venture.

Even the present renewed interest in African indigenous languages, catalyzed as it is from the West, should not be mistaken for a belated overture of altruism. African languages are not about to be promoted for their own sake by former imperial masters. The renewed interest in African indigenous languages which, in fact, is chiefly felt only on the pages of western archaeological journals and during anthropological conferences, mainly satisfies a western need: the occasional need for the exotic as a respite from boredom and monotony. The renewed interest in African languages, African philosophies, African histories, African religions, etc., all of which were either derided or blatantly denied existence not so long ago, is simply because they now serve as delicate desserts in the panoramic smorgasbord of the Western intellectual banquet.

Europeans and their North-American cousins are now chasing after African languages, philosophies, histories, etc., the same way they used to chase after species, curiosities and raw materials around the world. They are equally prepared to pay for them. The sudden interest has not arisen from any local African needs or demands. The researches now being funded from abroad in the manner of cash crop cultivation are for the consumption of the western *literati*. It is not without a touch of irony that Bongasu claims in the work mentioned above that "it is impossible to use a different culture or language fully

to comprehend the languages of other peoples and culture" [Bongasu (1989, p.100)]. All of motivation, language, medium, vehicle and style he is using in defence of African languages are clearly foreign to African culture. It may be difficult but certainly not impossible to use a different cultural background and language to comprehend other people, cultures and languages. Bongasu might have realized this by carefully considering his own collection of poems: Konglanjo. These poems are written in English and can be appreciated by users of the English language anywhere in the world and yet their *Nso* background is very evident. In some of them, in fact, one can almost hear the idioms in *Lamnso*. But if he had written his Konglanjo poems in *Lamnso*, not even a significant number of the *Lamnso*-speaking peoples would be able to read them. This does not, of course, mean that he should not write poems in *Lamnso*. He should, for those who can read *Lamnso*. But there are certain clear advantages writing in English even if one might wish it were otherwise.

In an address delivered at the 15th Convocation Ceremony of the University of Ife, on January 26th 1985, Professor Wande Abimbola, the University's Vice Chancellor, dwelt on this language problem within the Nigerian context. *Inter alia* he observed:

It is sad to observe that after a quarter of a century of independence, Nigerian languages are not accorded the status which should be naturally theirs in our educational system.

Our successive educational policies either avoid addressing themselves to the issue of the role of Nigerian languages or confine them to a lower status. Indeed, it can safely be said that Nigeria has no national language policy since no systematic effort at formulating and implementing a new orientation that negates the colonial policy has been attempted. Our languages are confined to the first two or three years of primary education, the implication being that they are intrinsically inept for serious and scientific

thinking. Nowhere is a Nigerian language used as a medium of instruction in post primary education. The consequences of such a situation are economically costly and culturally devastating. Despite large sums invested in education, the number of drop-outs is still alarming, the reason being that our children find it difficult to reconcile the language of the family with the imposed official language of education, i.e. English. Besides, the exclusive use of English as a medium of instruction is a source of psychological complexes and contributes to further widen the gap between rural and urban areas.

All in all, failure to systematically encourage the use of Nigerian languages in our educational system creates at best split and shaky personalities. At worst - and the worst is fast becoming the rule - it transforms our educational system into a factory for the production of Eurocentric and mimetic citizens [Abimbola (1985, pp.15-16)].

The main thrust of Professor Abimbola's Convocation address is quite in order although some of his claims are disputable. Nigerian languages ought to be accorded their **rightful** status within the educational system. But it is doubtful that this alone can stop the alarming rate of drop-outs. It is also doubtful that the hitherto neglect of the indigenous languages necessarily implies their intrinsic ineptness for serious and scientific thinking. It is also disputable that the use of English widens the rural-urban gap or is the source of any complexes at all. And the Professor, who is certainly also a product of the educational system he is so seriously criticizing, can in no way be described as a *Eurocentric* or *Mimetic* citizen. Ditto for millions like him who received the same education but who have no particular problem transcending the inevitable limitations of that education. There is, certainly a slight touch of irony in the fact that the Professor's address was written and delivered in English. Being not only a Yoruba but an outstanding scholar of the Yoruba language, the learned Professor could easily have written and rendered his entire speech,

salva veritate, in Yoruba. In that way he would already have started practising symbolically what he was preaching. But if he had done that, he would have not only been cutting himself off from about half of his audience that day, but stirring a political hornets' nest as well.

The Nigerian situation

The Nigerian situation is very similar to that of Cameroon and what has or has not been achieved there may be seen as an indicator of the possibilities here. Like Cameroon, Nigeria is a veritable babel of indigenous languages; what Bernard Fonlon described as *a patch-work of linguistic and ethnic groups*. Unlike Cameroon, however, some of Nigeria's indigenous languages are not only spoken by several millions of people but are also developed well enough to be studied as living languages up to university level not only in Nigeria but also elsewhere in the world. Such is the case with *Hausa*, *Yoruba*, and *Igbo* languages. Nigerians are also ultra-nationalistic, culturally proud and sensitive. They changed their national anthem simply because it had become common knowledge that the music was composed by a foreigner. Another example of this pride is their refusal to link the national currency, the *Naira*, to any foreign currency despite severe economic problems due to its weakness. One gets the impression that Nigeria is one of the very few countries in the world where the black man is in complete possession of his racial pride and full dignity. Nigerians make their own policies without any consultation or teleguidance from anywhere else; they control the commanding heights of their own economy and are completely in charge of their own security. In short, they are in charge of themselves, their affairs and their destiny, even if sometimes they seem to make a mess of things.

In spite of all this, however, Nigeria has not succeeded in her search for an indigenous language as a *lingua franca*. And from the look of things, this search cannot succeed in the foreseeable future if Nigeria is to remain intact as a single political entity. According to the

very perceptive verdict of Chuks Ihoegbunam: "No one dare foist one of the so-called major languages on the nation without facing the wrath of the others and the minority groups" [Ihoegbunam (1989, p.16)].

The reasons that Nigeria cannot adopt an indigenous *Lingua franca* are political. These political reasons are sufficient to justify the continued use of the English language which has become the official national language due to historical circumstances.

What is true of Nigeria in this respect is, *a fortiori*, true of Cameroon. With a population of scarcely 12 million against Nigeria's nearly 100 million, Cameroon has nearly as many indigenous languages as Nigeria. Furthermore, none of Cameroon's languages possesses a comparable status as *Hausa*, *Yoruba*, or *Igbo*. In both countries an indigenous *lingua franca* can only emerge through evolutionary development. But evolution takes time and can neither be hurried nor teleguided. For those who speak a dominant indigenous language which stands a good chance of being imposed as a national *lingua franca*, things are likely to appear very differently than for those who speak only minority languages.

Advantages of French and English

The advantages of having English and French as our twin national languages are many and sundry. We can single out the following.

First and foremost, these two languages have made it possible for the geographical entity known as Cameroon today to become a single political entity on the way to nationhood. Take away this political reality and we may be left only with a myriad of antagonistic, if not openly warring tribes and linguistic groups struggling for survival, if not domination.

Secondly, as Bernard Fonlon has pointed out, because none of these two languages is indigenous to Cameroon, we can adopt a frankly utilitarian attitude towards them without undue emotions.

None of the languages is our own. I can hardly see any reason for any emotional involvement on the part of any Cameroonian with regard to English or French. And anybody who artificially tries to stir up such feelings here for one language against the other is either a fool or a knave; in my opinion he can hardly be excused of ill-will. It would be a Cameroonian queer in the extreme who would feel so strongly for English or French as to riot in its defence. Our bilingualism, therefore, has the big advantage that, because we can approach it with natural objectiveness and detachment, it is able to pursue its firm, energetic course in calm and tranquil weather [Fonlon (1963, p.91)].

Thirdly, and as already mentioned, these two languages open up whole new worlds of inexhaustible ideas, paradigms and philosophies etc. of which indigenous Cameroonian languages are destitute on account of being grounded mainly on oral traditions. This is not to belittle **oral tradition**. Oral tradition certainly has an important place within African systems and civilizations. But oral tradition has its limitations. As Ali Mazrui has pointed out:

Ideas articulated in countries that do not reduce their thoughts to writing can be very perishable indeed. There is no reason to doubt that Africa had great philosophers, great mystics, even great eccentrics trying out new ideas. But much of that old intellectual activity perished, without leaving a foundation for future augmentation and possible refinement. It is true that some of Africa's wisdom has indeed been transmitted, from generation to generation, by word of mouth. But oral tradition tends overwhelmingly to be transmission of consensus rather than heresy, of accepted ideas rather than innovative intellectual nonconformity [Mazrui (1974, p.65)].

And we might here add that in the process of the growth of knowledge, eccentric, heretical and nonconformist ideas have always been more catalytic in their impact than generally accepted conformist ideas. I am in full agreement with Ali Mazrui in his submission that the linguistic heritage of Western imperialism ought not to be renounced by African countries but rather domesticated for local purposes.

... the spread of English and French as world languages is itself a great step towards a global system of federated cultures. A renunciation of the European imperial languages by African countries would be a retrograde step What may be needed is a systematic taming of the European imperial languages to suit local conditions. This would be an exercise in linguistic *domestication*, as the *alien beasts* from England and France are familiarized with the needs of black people and the boundaries of the black predicament [Mazrui (1974, p.89)].

In thus making use of foreign languages and the store of knowledge encoded in them, there is absolutely no need to be apologetic or even overly self-conscious about it. We owe no apologies to anybody. Neither the English nor the French invented an alphabet; neither had a system of numerals of their own. Yet they each borrowed both (without any apologies) from other civilizations and made them the vehicle of their own development and culture. In any case, cultures form interlacing concentric circles and no human culture can claim total exclusivity from others. Without necessarily neglecting its myriad indigenous languages, therefore, Cameroon can adopt English and French which historical circumstances have imposed on her and use them as vehicles of her national integration, development and emergent culture. The foreignness of these two languages, as already mentioned above, permits a purely utilitarian and pragmatic approach to them devoid of undue emotional involvement. Also, and closely related to the above, is the fact that their neutrality makes it possible for rival, if not antagonistic tribal/linguistic groups to use them to foster unity and integration. Furthermore, English and French are the two main doors

into the hall where African Unity and integration can be fashioned and fostered. And this is in addition to the fact that they are powerful international languages which render possible what Ali Mazrui has termed "a global system of federated cultures" [Mazrui (1974, p.89)]. English is, after Chinese, the second most spoken language in the world; French is the fifth. Apart from that, the two languages, especially English, are the languages of modern science and technology which no part of the world can either escape or ignore. It is, of course, mistaken to claim, as some people do, that African languages are not amenable to expressing scientific or technological or philosophical ideas. African languages certainly can be adapted to these uses. The point, however, is that they generally have too few speakers to warrant the task of such adaptation, and no convincing reason has yet been given for first labouring to translate into an indigenous language what can be easily and straightforwardly grasped in the original by speakers of that indigenous language. In a situation such as Cameroon's, any attempt to attain self-sufficiency for every linguistic group would certainly be an extreme and unnecessary, if not unwise, form of cultural autarchy.

Domesticating English and French

In adopting English and French as the linguistic media for her development and integration and for communication with the world at large, Cameroon must also, inevitably, adapt them to her emerging personality. As Bernard Fonlon has stated: "Unless it is forged anew by Africans, a foreign language ... cannot be the genuine authentic expression of African culture" [Fonlon (1963, p.91)]. This process of adaptation, when complete, would amount, *mutatis mutandis*, to a domestication of these foreign tongues.

The domestication of English and French in our context would involve, *inter alia*, Africanizing and de-racializing them. As the native languages of the leading imperial nations on earth, both English and

French, are replete with negative expressions and assumptions about Africans and black people in general. African users of these languages have often, unconsciously or uncritically, adopted such negative expressions and usages as if they were indispensable idioms, metaphors, similes, proverbs, etc.. Such, for instance, are expressions in both languages which imbue *black* with all that is satanic, evil, depraved or otherwise objectionable or undesirable. The practice whereby some black writers routinely use such expressions as *white market* (for *black market*), *whitemail* (for *blackmail*), *whiteleg* (for *blackleg*), etc. is not just an amusing eccentricity but a necessary first step towards ridding the English language of deeply rooted racialistic prejudice and negativity *vis-a-vis* people of black complexion. Such usages may be supplemented with the practice whereby white or some other dressing is substituted for black during funerals and death ceremonies. As Ali Mazrui prescribes:

The saturation of the English language with this metaphorical negativeness associated with the black colour imposes on the new black users of English the lingering obligation to tame and domesticate the language, in the direction of greater compatibility both with black dignity and black experience [Mazrui (1974, p.99)].

When talking about Africanizing English or French, it is necessary to dismiss a widespread fallacy. Namely the claim that it is impossible for a non-native to have as good a grasp of any language as the native user. Very often, for instance, people excuse, say, their very poor or incorrect English by saying: "Well, I'm not an Englishman". It is simply incorrect to think that a non-native cannot speak any language as well as a native, or that a native-speaker necessarily speaks his/her language better than all non-natives. I know a Bali woman here in Yaounde, who speaks my native language, *Lamnso*, better than many Nsos, including myself. And for her, *Lamnso* must be chronologically her third, if not her fourth language, after *Mungaka*, English and perhaps French. I know some English

people who speak English as if with water in their mouths, making it difficult for both their compatriots as well as outsiders to understand them. I have once met an English lady-anthropologist who spoke *Lamnso* as fluently as myself and also wrote it with the greatest ease, which I myself cannot yet do.

It is therefore quite untrue to claim that a non-native can never gain as good a grasp of any language as the indigenous users. Such a claim is likely, more often than not, to be a cover-up for laziness, shoddiness and lack of thoroughness. Yet such a claim has been taken as the justification for some weird forms of English. I am not talking about Pidgin English, whose development and usage can be fully justified. Here are some rather extreme examples of the type of English I am talking about. Less extreme examples can be found on Cameroon Radio or in the Cameroon Tribune. This type of English is confident but shows a very poor grasp of the grammar and syntax of the English language. The following sentences, which all occurred in students' English essays, generated a heated debate, in which I was a participant, as to whether their grammatical incorrectness should be overlooked because the ideas expressed are, nevertheless, fairly clear and the students in question not native users of the language.

"I very regret the die of that girl because she was a close friend of I"

"My mother is fat of body, tall of height and yellow in colour and myself speaking is the first born of she"

"Since my mama borned me I nefa weakness a thing like that"

"The man lives just a thro stone from our house"

"Love is really a nice game that requires patient and diplomercy"

The necessary and inevitable task of Africanizing English and French, has been well recognized by African writers. Even those who do not consciously recognize this need to achieve it when they write honestly and earnestly without impersonating or imitating, so that their African background is naturally and unconsciously reflected in their

writing. In this process, the foreign language is inevitably enriched with African proverbs, similes, metaphors, expressions, etc..

One of the foremost African writers of English expression who has given careful thought to this issue is the Nigerian novelist and academician Chinua Achebe. In fact, the works of Achebe and those of other African novelists, playwrights and poets are, with few exceptions, paradigms of how to Africanize English or French. Achebe's conclusions and recommendations on this issue seem to me quite unassailable. He recommends an African domestication of the English language that does not sacrifice the need for **universal intelligibility**. Universal intelligibility can be achieved by making sure that the domesticated versions do not diverge too widely from what may be called *Standard English*, whose paradigm, in my opinion, could be taken to be the English of the B.B.C news readers.

The price a world language must be prepared to pay is submission to many different kinds of use. The African writer should aim to use English in a way that brings out his message best without altering the language to the extent that its value as a medium of international exchange will be lost. He should aim at fashioning out an English which is at once universal and able to carry out his own experience But it will have to be new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings [Achebe (1965, pp.29-30)].

As already mentioned, Achebe's own works, especially his novels, are paradigmatic examples of how an African can domesticate the English language. He uses it to express his thoughts and feelings in a way that no non-African can express himself, but he uses it in such a way that he is nevertheless perfectly intelligible to all users of English world-wide. In other words, his use may be idiosyncratic, but certainly not eccentric.

Now, how do Achebe and other African writers manage to combine particularity and universality in this way that would, from a global perspective, lead to diversity in use without jeopardising unity? I cannot be very confident of my answer to this question. My hypothesis here is only a sketchy outline, which I am submitting as a preliminary and provisional suggestion for the consideration of the linguistic experts.

It seems to me that in domesticating any language what should remain standard and sacrosanct in the **grammar** and the **syntax** of that language. What can be altered at will is the **form** or **manner of expression**, that is to say, the **style of usage**.

Stylistic differences stand out very clearly in the use of idiomatic expressions, proverbs, similes, metaphors, etc.. Where an Englishman would say, for instance, "I am sending you there as a witness", an African, using idiom, is more likely to say "I am sending you there to be my eyes and ears". Both sentences are grammatically and syntactically correct. But an Englishman would not, under normal circumstances, express himself using the second form.

It appears to me then that we must distinguish three levels here: on the one hand the level of grammar and syntax, and on the other, the level of expression, form and style, and in between these two, the level of spelling, pronunciation, intonation, stress. At the first level no deviations can be permitted without the danger of the language collapsing into something quite irre recognizable and unintelligible to other users elsewhere. This level may be compared to **tools** as such. The second level, comprising spelling, pronunciation, etc. is comparable to the manner of handling the tools. Here both flexibility and rigidity must be combined. Different individuals may handle, let's say, a knife, in slightly different ways. But there is not much that can be done with a knife handled by the blade. So there is such a thing as the correct way of handling a tool, but this is to a large extent relative to the use to which it is to be put. To be put to any meaningful use, a knife needs to be taken by its handle even if there are several ways of gripping it. The third level of expression, form and style, is compar-

able to the use to which tools are put. Here there is freedom and flexibility and much depends on the user, on his needs and intentions as well as on his capacities. Whether a knife is used for peeling potatoes, slaughtering a ram, scratching the back or stabbing it etc., depends on the user.

Conclusion

Irreversible historical accidents and political realism of the present moment have imposed official bilingualism on Cameroonians. This situation is, on the one hand, fraught with problems and, on the other, impregnated with numerous positive possibilities. One Cameroonian to have shown great sensitivity and sensibility to this problematic is the late Bernard Fonlon, whose masterpiece: "A Case for Early Bilingualism" remains an incomparable blueprint for Cameroon bilingualism. It is not surprising that this work aroused immense interest in other countries such as Canada and Switzerland and that it has been adopted as a policy document for the United Nations School in New York. Cameroonians may ignore it for the time being, but will certainly come back to it if Cameroon bilingualism is ever to transcend the level of official platitudes and expediency. For now, the vast majority of the younger generation of Cameroonians seem to be mastering neither their indigenous languages nor any of the adopted foreign languages sufficiently well. This should be a cause for concern.

Bibliography

Achebe, Chinua

1965 "English and the African writer" in Transition, no.18, Kampala.

Bender, Frederick L. (ed.)

1972 Karl Marx: The Essential Writings, New York, Harper & Row.

Bongasu, Tanla K.

1989 "The Role of Language in Africa. Perceptions of the Past: an Appraisal of African Languages Policies and Practices" in Conflict in the Archeology of Living Traditions, Robert Layton (ed.), Unwin & Hyman Ltd.

Bret, E.A.

1973 Colonialism and Underdevelopment in East Africa, London, Heinemann.

Fonlon, Bernard

1963 "A Case for Early Bilingualism" in ABBIA: Cameroon Cultural Review, no.4 (December).

Iioegbunam, Chuks

1989 NEWSWATCH magazine, volume 9, no.12 (March 20).

Mazrui, Ali A.

1974 World Culture and the Black Experience, Seattle/London, University of Washington Press.

1980 The African Condition: The Reith Lectures 1979, London, Heinemann.

1986 The Africans: A Triple Heritage, London, BBC Publications.

Nkrumah, Kwame

1964 Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-Colonisation, London, Panaf.

1965 Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism, London, Panaf.

Novak, Michael

1970 The Experience of Nothingness, New York, Harper & Row.

P'Bitek, Okot

1970 African Religions in Western Scholarship, Kampala, East African Literature Bureau.

Rodney, Walter

1974 How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, Washington DC, Howard University Press.

Summary

*In the world of today, **development** is dominant as a concept, tiring as a paradigm, and unfortunate as a slogan. The example of the burdens of debt of the Third World countries may suffice to demonstrate the European concept of time is today's measure that has subjugated all other concepts of time and it is in relation with this dominant concept of time that the backwardness of other societies in the world is established, proclaimed and sanctioned.*

Confronted with such an observation, the following five components constitute a possible reaction:

- (1) to block obscurantism*
- (2) to practice a balanced and courageous visionary realism*
- (3) to use for this reconquest-reconstruction the millions of even billions of years that as yet separate us from the regrettably scientifically probable if not certain end of the world.*
- (4) and, in all that, to practice plenty of humility.*

TEMPS ET DEVELOPPEMENT

I.-P. Lalèyè

Avec votre permission, je commencerai mon exposé par une affirmation que j'ai délibérément voulue nette et tranchante: "Le développement est, aujourd'hui, un concept dominant, un paradigme fatigant et un slogan porte-malheur."

Comme *concept*, le développement règne dans nos intelligences et dans nos productions théoriques. C'est là qu'il exerce son impérialisme et souvent même sa tyrannie. Nos colloques le célèbrent. Nos discussions le vénèrent. Les plans et les programmes d'action de nos gouvernements le magnifient sans cesse et prennent les moindres préceptes énoncés par ses experts pour autant de lois sacrées par rapport auxquelles la moindre désobéissance serait sévèrement punie.

Quelque complexe qu'elle paraisse de prime abord, la fonction de la théorie me semble comporter trois volets principaux. Le premier est d'exprimer le réel en nous et hors de nous, pour nous permettre d'y voir plus clair. Le second est d'étudier les théories pré-existantes en les confrontant au réel, pour permettre d'en apercevoir les diverses lacunes. Le troisième, enfin, est de construire de nouvelles théories en tenant compte, d'une part de l'expression fraîchement faite de la réalité, et, d'autre part, de ce qui, dans les théories léguées par le passé, aura été jugé digne d'être ré-utilisé. Si la première de ces fonctions de la théorie doit être dite descriptive, la seconde est critique et la troisième est constructive.

Or, lorsqu'on considère la production théorique du tiers monde en général, et de l'Afrique en particulier, et que l'on observe les trois fonctions de toute théorie telles que défines ci-dessus, comment ne pas s'apercevoir que le concept de développement résiste à la fois à une description adéquate, à une critique objective comme à une reconstruction théorique substitutive ou alternative?

De même si l'on entend par *paradigme* un modèle présidant à l'action, le développement se révèle être un paradigme particulièrement fatigant. Nul, en effet, ne peut nier que depuis l'accession de nos pays à l'indépendance, la tâche qui leur fut assignée ou qu'ils ont eux-mêmes choisi, on ne sait comment, de réaliser, n'est pas autre chose que le développement. Or, après trente années d'effort de développement, que constatons-nous? Sinon que nos ressources de tous ordres et nos énergies de toutes sortes s'épuisent en vain au moment même où les nombreux problèmes globalement dits du développement ne cessent de s'aggraver ou de se compliquer? Il y aurait donc lieu de dire au sujet du développement, et donnant à ces propos toute leur résonance africaine: "le développement nous fatigue!"

Enfin, le développement apparaît aujourd'hui comme un slogan porte-malheur. Certes, les deux autres mots d'ordre qui l'ont précédé dans notre histoire récente ne nous ont pas été particulièrement bénéfiques. Faut-il le rappeler, les deux prédécesseurs du développement étaient l'esclavage et la colonisation. Mais ce qui caractérise ces deux devanciers du développement, et qui pourrait être utilisé, jusqu'à un certain point, comme une excuse, est que ces deux fléaux s'abattirent sur nous en grande partie de l'extérieur. Par contre, aujourd'hui, c'est de notre propre initiative, semble-t-il, et c'est en tout cas en jouissant de la plénitude de notre souveraineté politique, que nous sommes engagés dans le développement et que nous y persistons. Or, qui pourrait contester que sur ce troisième point aussi, le développement n'a fait que rendre plus évidents nos souffrances, nos malheurs et nos incapacités de tous ordres? La simple évocation de l'épineux problème de la dette des pays du tiers monde en général, et de l'Afrique en particulier, pourrait suffire pour justifier l'affirmation selon laquelle le développement est aujourd'hui, pour nous, un slogan porte-malheur.

C'est en vertu d'une sorte de sphéricité que le développement oppose de la résistance à notre action théorique comme à notre action

pratique, sur les trois plans où mes propos viennent brièvement de le présenter; c'est-à-dire comme concept, comme paradigme et comme mot d'ordre ou slogan. Le recours à l'image de la sphère pour essayer de mordre sur le mystère onéreux et épuisant du développement, n'est pas uniquement destiné à nous permettre d'éviter l'image du cercle dit vicieux. Car le cercle, on le sait, est une figure plane. Tandis que le développement est loin de limiter son influence à un seul plan. C'est à la fois dans notre intelligence, dans notre mémoire récente, notre imagination, notre volonté, nos souhaits et nos rêves autant que dans nos actions, que se trouve le développement. Et je nomme, pour l'instant, *sphéricité*, cette vertu qui permet au développement de se soustraire à nos diverses tentatives et de s'ériger en nous et au-dessus de nous en un maître tout puissant, omniprésent et tyrannique.

Disons donc que la mystérieuse sphère qu'est le développement glisse au-dessus de nos têtes, et au-dessus de nos efforts, nonobstant ou à travers le temps. Et pourtant, pour ce qui est des rapports du développement et du temps, un nouveau facteur est désormais rendu évident dont la judicieuse étude serait capable d'ouvrir une brèche dans le développement comme tel, et comme il vient d'être dit ci-dessus.

Certes, au début de notre engagement dans le développement, des voix s'étaient élevées dont la référence au temps aurait dû éveiller notre attention et notre sens critique. L'Afrique, disaient certains, était mal partie [cf. Dumont (1962)]. L'image de la course était alors présente et aurait dû être plus évidente, puisqu'une voix amie nous avertissait de notre mauvais démarrage et que mal partir, c'est se préparer à mal arriver. A quelques années de cet avertissement, on nous prévint aussi que nous en étions à notre *dernière chance* [Guernier (1968)]. Mais nous n'écoutâmes pas davantage cet autre avertissement qui aurait dû orienter nos efforts de pensée vers la dimension temporelle de ce à quoi et dans quoi nous nous engageons. Il m'importe de signaler, avant d'aller plus loin, que je ne suspecte pas les auteurs (René Dumont et Maurice Guernier) des deux avertis-

sements auxquels je viens de faire allusion d'avoir été de mauvaise foi. J'affirme, au contraire, que nous aurions dû prendre leurs propos plus au sérieux.

La punition que nous subissons aujourd'hui pour être restés si longtemps sourds à ceux qui désiraient nous avertir de l'importance du temps dans le développement, c'est que ce temps nous est désormais vendu. Je m'explique.

Ce n'est en effet un secret pour personne que nos différents pays gémissent sous le poids de leurs dettes. Et chacun sait que le service de la dette comporte deux volets principaux dont l'un est destiné au remboursement du capital, et l'autre, à celui des intérêts. Or, les intérêts, qu'est-ce que c'est? Sinon ce que nous coûte le capital au fur et à mesure que le temps s'écoule? Et n'est-il pas ainsi évident que, pour nous, chaque jour qui passe doit être désormais payé en dollars?

Ce n'est donc pas dans un souci ou dans une atmosphère essentiellement philosophique que je désire procéder au rapprochement que suggère le titre de mon exposé entre le temps et le développement; même si, comme nous savons, d'Aristote à Kant et à Piaget, en passant par Saint Augustin et Descartes, pour ne citer que les cas les mieux connus, les philosophes ont toujours éprouvé le besoin de consacrer dans leur métaphysique ou dans leur morale, une partie importante de leur méditation au temps en tant que notion, concept ou phénomène.

Par rapport à la technicité des analyses philosophiques du temps, ce que je propose est à la fois plus banal et plus élémentaire. Car, ce n'est qu'une enquête sans prétention soucieuse d'acquérir une opinion susceptible d'élaboration ultérieure, grâce à un servol des événements et des idées, dans ce qu'ils ont d'immédiatement perceptible. Je procéderai, par conséquent, à une brève phénoménologie de notre expérience actuelle du temps. Et, reflétant la principale donnée de

cette phénoménologie de la temporalité dans les tâches aujourd'hui constitutives du développement, j'indiquerai l'attitude la mieux apte à nous permettre de commencer à soumettre comme concept, comme paradigme et comme mot d'ordre, le **développement** à notre volonté commune, au lieu de faire de nous ses esclaves.

Ce n'est pas en Afrique seulement que la vision du temps était circulaire. Ici comme ailleurs, la communion assez profonde dans laquelle vivait l'homme des premiers moments de la civilisation lui a fait calquer sa vision du temps sur le rythme régulier des saisons soumises à la loi de l'éternel retour. Néanmoins, cette vision circulaire ne correspondait pas à un parfait recommencement des événements qui aboutirait à une non moins parfaite monotonie, par une pure et simple suppression de l'histoire. La notion de fait individuel, unique, irréversible et incapable de se reproduire, était parfaitement connue de la conception traditionnelle du temps qui était ainsi rendue compatible avec une authentique vision de l'histoire¹.

Néanmoins, certains phénomènes bien circonscrits permettent, aujourd'hui encore, de réaliser à quel point le temps traditionnel conçu comme circulaire, et donc en grande partie éternel, était maîtrisable et maîtrisé.

D'abord, ce n'est pas parce que l'homme traditionnel concevait le temps comme circulaire que la notion d'empressement lui échapperait. Car la circularité du temps annuel n'empêche pas la distinction, dans ce cercle, d'unités partielles plus ou moins rigoureusement délimitées par les termes que sont le **commencement** et la **fin**. La meilleure de ces unités partielles étant la saison, il est simple et facile de s'imaginer de quelle façon l'imminence du terme d'une sous-unité est capable, par elle seule, de créer et d'entretenir l'empressement, pendant que l'éloignement de ce terme possède la caractéristique de détendre l'action, de la ralentir et de lui imprimer une nonchalance faussement assimilée à de la paresse. Mais si la saison est le meilleur exemple de

sous-unité, elle est encore une grande unité par rapport au rythme journalier dont les sous-unités que sont la nuit et le jour possèdent, à leur tour, des unités encore plus petites dont la prise de conscience suffisait et suffit encore pour provoquer et entretenir le ralentissement ou l'accélération du temps.

Ensuite, le domaine de la religion traditionnelle est, certainement, celui où se révèle la maîtrise du temps à laquelle l'homme traditionnel avait pu parvenir. Car l'**homo religiosus** donne l'impression de commander littéralement au temps, par les actes plus ou moins profondément ritualisés qu'il entreprend à des fins précises. C'est lui qui décide souvent de l'instant où ce temps devient sacré, en même temps que des frontières spatiales et/ou géographiques du sacré comme tel. Et l'on peut citer comme exemple de maîtrise du temps, la série complexe des manipulations destinées pour une part à faire revenir le temps d'un péché ou d'un manquement, et, pour une autre part, à exploiter ce temps rénové pour expier le péché et ainsi l'effacer, purifiant du même coup un temps redonné à son libre cours et comme à l'éternité.

Le religieux ne pouvant être distingué du magique que d'une façon que l'on pourrait toujours qualifier d'arbitraire, il y a lieu de citer parmi les exemples de maîtrise traditionnelle du temps, les rituels en grande partie secrets à la faveur desquels, en agissant sur certains phénomènes, l'homme traditionnel s'efforçait de reculer ou de rapprocher une limite temporelle, ce qui a pour effet de dilater ou de contracter le temps. Pour illustrer cette catégorie de rituels, on peut mentionner ce qui avait pour effet d'accélérer ou de retarder la tombée de la pluie, la naissance ou même la mort. Ce sont là, évidemment, des domaines de nos cultures encore mal ou insuffisamment pénétrés par une recherche anthropologique rigoureuse. L'une des raisons en est que les croyances y sont plus nombreuses que les connaissances, et que les confidences ne s'y font que tout auréolées de mystère. Cependant, même réduits à leur matérialité verbale ou imaginaire, les

comportements présentés comme propres à retarder ou rapprocher la pluie, la naissance et la mort n'en recouvrent pas moins - ne serait-ce que sous la forme du *possible* - les éléments d'une maîtrise du temps par phénomènes interposés. Car, croire que l'on est capable de faire tomber la pluie maintenant ou un peu plus tard, faire porter à une femme sur le point d'accoucher un simple objet qui retardera ledit accouchement jusqu'à ce que les conditions requises pour que l'enfant attendu puisse être convenablement accueilli, ou procéder à un rituel magico-religieux permettant à l'initié de mourir l'année et le jour de son choix, ou bien, ce qui revient presque au même, de connaître l'année et le jour de sa mort, c'est croire et affirmer que le temps est manipulable et c'est s'exercer à le manipuler; et cela, même si la question demeure ouverte de s'assurer du degré de réussite des comportements choisis à cette fin ou de connaître avec précision le mécanisme selon lequel le succès est obtenu lorsque c'est le cas.

Il reste à ajouter que cette maîtrise traditionnelle du temps par la manipulation avertie de certains phénomènes vitaux s'opérait, le plus souvent, en groupe. En sorte que ce n'était pas seulement la temporalité intérieure ou subjective qui était manipulée; c'était le temps social dans son ensemble que la société, réunie autour de son prêtre ou de son chef, s'efforçait de maîtriser en agissant plus ou moins directement sur certains phénomènes bien choisis.

Par rapport à cette expérience traditionnelle de la temporalité qui n'était pas le propre de certains esprits primitifs ou attardés, les grandes religions monothéistes qui, pour la plupart, ont vu le jour sur les bords de la méditerranée, ont provoqué une révolution colossale. En effet, le judaïsme, le christianisme et l'islam, ont chacun à son tour et à sa manière, rompu avec la circularité du temps. Ils ont, l'un et l'autre, déroulé le temps et rendu sa marche rectiligne, en lui assignant un terme. Peu importe que ce terme soit la venue du messie, le jugement dernier ou la fin de temps. Le principal est que la marche du temps étant désormais linéaire, tout le comportement de l'homme vis-

à-vis de lui s'en trouve soumis à une véritable accélération. Daniel Halévy a écrit en son temps (1961) un essai particulièrement suggestif à cet égard et intitulé: "Essai sur l'accélération de l'histoire." [cf. Halévy (1961)]

Ce ne sont pas les sociétés africaines traditionnelles seules qui ont été soumises et bouleversées par l'accélération du temps elle-même provoquée par l'ouverture et le redressement de l'anneau de la temporalité. C'est la société traditionnelle comme telle, où qu'elle se trouve, et quelles que soient les formes de modernité sous lesquelles elle se dissimule. On connaît, dans le christianisme, le retour périodique du sentiment très fort selon lequel la fin des temps serait imminente. Mais, si les diverses sortes de millénarisme en succédant les unes aux autres, repoussent sans cesse la fin tant proclamée, en accroissant, de ce fait, la part faite à l'éternité, la science elle-même, de nos jours, semble emboîter le pas aux religions, en renforçant l'idée-même sinon d'une fin des temps, mais tout au moins d'une fin de l'univers; ce qui, pour les êtres vivants que nous sommes, revient presque à la même chose.

En effet, que la fin du monde soit rendue probable et même certaine par l'épuisement assuré de l'énergie solaire qui équivaldra à l'extinction pure et simple de l'astre illustre, ou que ce soit, au contraire, le rapprochement progressif de la satellite naturelle de la terre qu'est la lune qui soit destiné à provoquer un déluge qui fera disparaître toute vie, l'idée qui semble désormais recevoir l'unanimité de tous les astrophysiciens est que notre monde finira et qu'en conséquence, le temps nous est compté; et cela, même si c'est en des milliards d'années.

La problématique du développement telle que nous nous y attelons en ce moment, ne me paraît pas séparable de l'accélération du temps prophétisée par les grandes religions, et désormais confortée par l'étude scientifique de l'univers qu'habite la terre qui nous porte. Au

moment où les religions non-africaines et la science entravée, tolérée puis encouragée par ces religions ont touché la mentalité africaine dans son ensemble, ces religions et cette science ont imprimé à cette mentalité l'accélération de l'histoire dont elles portaient en elles le germe, sous la forme d'un temps déroulé.

Mais, au-delà du temps psychologique, il existe un temps social dont la maîtrise et la manipulation passent nécessairement par des institutions au sens rigoureusement sociologique du terme. Il faut entendre par là que la conception du temps qui caractérise une époque est littéralement gérée par des institutions sociales propres à cette époque et à la société qui les a produites. Or, il ne fait aucun doute que ce sont aujourd'hui, toutes les sociétés humaines de la planète qui sont soumises à la conception du temps, à sa mesure et à sa gestion telles que les sociétés européennes les ont progressivement élaborées, d'abord soutenues par les religions et ensuite aidées par la science. C'est cela qui explique que le temps européen soit, aujourd'hui, la mesure à laquelle tous les autres temps sont soumis, et que c'est par rapport à ce temps dominant que les retards sont constatés, proclamés et sanctionnés.

Face à un tel état de choses, qu'y-a-t-il lieu de faire?

Tout en laissant à chacun le soin de répondre à cette question, sur la base des considérations faites ci-dessus, je regrouperai, quant à moi, mes éléments de réponse en cinq points distincts; autant pour leur assurer une compréhension aisée que pour me permettre d'en reprendre les éléments afin d'en poursuivre l'élaboration.

1. Je commencerai par affirmer la nécessité de barrer la route à l'obscurantisme sous l'une des formes les plus anodines et les plus courantes que ce fléau peut revêtir et qui n'est autre que la valorisation globale ou inconditionnelle du passé, ou d'un certain passé. En effet, mes considérations relatives à la maîtrise par l'homme traditionnel, de

la temporalité intérieure et subjective, et de la temporalité objective et sociale, ne visent pas à recommander un retour pur et simple à la gestion passée du temps et de la temporalité. Si, comme j'ai tenu à le souligner, ce ne fut point l'africain traditionnel seul qui s'est exercé à maîtriser son temps en le manipulant, plus ou moins efficacement, et que ce fut au contraire l'homme de la tradition d'une façon générale, il faut pouvoir considérer cette forme traditionnelle de maîtrise du temps comme une *étape* dans le processus long, complexe et inachevé de la maîtrise du temps par l'être humain.

Ce que suggère ici la notion d'*étape* dont celle de stade peut être tenue pour synonyme, n'est pas seulement le dépassement en ce sens que, pour atteindre l'étape suivante, toute étape doit être dépassée et comme abandonnée. C'est aussi et surtout la conservation. Car, ce n'est qu'en apparence que l'étape dépassée peut être considérée comme abandonnée. Si l'on évite de penser abusivement dans l'espace et que l'on prend en compte comme il se doit, la temporalité intérieure, on comprendra aisément et l'on admettra sans peine, qu'une étape dépassée n'est jamais rejetée; elle n'est même pas rejetable. Pour notre conscience, chaque nouveau jour nous trouve vieilliss de tous les jours précédents, et quelle que soit la puissance de notre mémoire et de notre imagination, aucun homme n'a encore découvert le moyen de se rajeunir d'un jour ou même d'une seconde. La manipulation traditionnelle de la temporalité ne peut donc pas être substituée, par simple décision, à celle à laquelle l'humanité actuelle s'exerce péniblement sous nos yeux. Mais, étant donné que cette maîtrise traditionnelle de la temporalité ne peut pas davantage être rejetée en bloc, il nous faudra consentir aux analyses grâce auxquelles les acquis de la tradition pourront être intégrés aux efforts de construction de la modernité sur ce point précis de notre maîtrise du temps.

2. Au même niveau que la nécessité de barrer la route à l'obscurantisme se trouve, à mon sens, celle de pratiquer un réalisme clairvoyant, équilibré et courageux. Ce réalisme doit porter sur la configuration que présentent aujourd'hui et désormais, les différents groupes

humains qui vivent sur la planète *terre*. La pluralité et la diversité de ces groupes d'hommes n'équivalent pas seulement à une égale pluralité et à une égale diversité des sociétés humaines. Cette pluralité et cette diversité signifient surtout que de nombreuses et diverses cultures, longtemps tenues isolées les unes des autres et chacune refermée sur elle-même, contemplant son nombril, sont aujourd'hui obligées de composer les unes avec les autres, et de trouver le moyen de construire un monde où il fasse bon vivre pour chacun et pour tous. Or, chacune de ces cultures et plus exactement chacune des sociétés qui les ont produites, n'a pas manqué de s'exercer à maîtriser son temps durant les périodes plus ou moins longues de son isolement plus ou moins total.

A grand renfort de mythes, de conduites religieuses et/ou magiques autant que d'infrastructures idéologiques et d'édifications institutionnelles au sens sociologique, chacune des cultures traditionnelles a patiemment tissé son cocon à l'intérieur duquel elle a structuré son temps. Aujourd'hui, c'est la crevasse plus ou moins brutale de ce cocon et l'éjection plus ou moins douloureuse hors de ses frontières qui explique, en partie tout au moins, les souffrances et les gémissements de notre humanité. Car, parmi tous ces nombreux temps jadis isolés les uns des autres, un temps fort s'impose à tous les autres, les soumet à sa loi et les oblige à s'y conformer.

Le réalisme dont je parle ne consiste pas à accepter, les bras croisés, cet état de fait et à se laisser broyer par le temps dominant. Le mouvement qui déjà se dessine en faveur de la reconnaissance de toutes les cultures quelles qu'elles soient, devra, tôt ou tard, s'accompagner de la revalorisation des maîtrises de la temporalité construites par ces différentes cultures. Le réalisme, sur ce point, n'est donc pas démission et renoncement à soi; il est, au contraire, perception calme et sereine du nouveau cadre offert aux cultures du monde et aux hommes que ces cultures ont pétris; et il est surtout volonté de co-construire le temps universel favorable à l'épanouissement de nos sociétés, de nos cultures en même temps que de nos

personnes, en limitant autant que faire se peut, les déchirures et les souffrances.

3. Si les deux éléments de ma réponse à la question posée que je viens d'exposer en 1 et en 2 peuvent être considérés comme des préliminaires, l'espace que tels préliminaires dégagent devant notre effort de réponse est celui d'une reconquête. De quoi s'agit-il? J'ai laissé entendre que chaque société traditionnelle avait dû procéder, plus ou moins habilement, cela va de soi, à la maîtrise de son temps. La maîtrise du temps est donc une fonction fondamentalement sociale. Aucune société n'y échappe. Les sociétés dans lesquelles nous vivons aujourd'hui sont donc, elles aussi, tenues de et non pas simplement invitées à maîtriser le temps. Or, lorsque nous regardons autour de nous, que constatons-nous sur ce problème précis du temps? D'abord, force nous est de reconnaître que les groupes humains à l'intérieur desquels nous vivons ne sont unifiés que de l'extérieur. Sur de nombreux points de la vie humaine concrète, ces groupes ne constituent pas encore des sociétés. Tout au plus doit-on reconnaître que certains d'entre eux semblent avoir pris conscience de l'impérieuse nécessité d'une unité construite de l'intérieur au lieu d'être reçue, parce que donnée ou imposée de l'extérieur. Aussi n'est-il pas étonnant - et c'est la deuxième chose qu'on constate - que ces groupes à la socio-construction inachevée reçoivent aussi de l'extérieur la temporalité à laquelle ils se soumettent.

Il n'est que de regarder la façon dont les pays africains, dans leur majorité, subdivisent l'année et s'efforcent d'y vivre, pour voir à quel point notre mimétisme est avancé sur la question de la temporalité. Nos écoles ouvrent leurs portes au même moment que celles de l'hémisphère du nord, alors que le rythme de nos saisons impose à notre existence concrète un rythme différent de celui des gens du nord. Nous faisons démarrer nos activités journalières à 8 heures du matin, les interrompons à 12 heures pour les reprendre à 14.30 ou à 15 heures et les arrêter définitivement vers 17 ou 18 heures. Ce faisant, nous nous contraignons à travailler durant les heures les plus chaudes

de nos journées tropicales et équatoriales, et nous négligeons les heures les plus fraîches de ces journées qui auraient pu contribuer à accroître notre productivité et à diminuer notre souffrance. De même, nous articulons les différents moments de la vie de nos jeunes en formation selon les mêmes découpages que l'on constate dans les sociétés industrialisées des zones tempérées du globe. Alors que rien ne nous empêche de découvrir la façon originale de modeler le profil de formation de nos enfants en ayant comme souci de ne pas aggraver leur déracinement, pour ne pas dire leur déculturation, et d'éduquer leur volonté et leur caractère, tout en leur faisant prendre, dans la production des biens nécessaires à leur existence, une place et une importance qui auront pour effet d'accroître leur confiance en eux-mêmes.

En conséquence, l'espace qui se dégage devant les groupes humains dans lesquels nous vivons n'est autre que celui de la reconquête de notre droit à gérer notre temps social, à maîtriser notre temporalité dans les sens de nos intérêts et compte tenu des conditions concrètes d'existence qui nous sont offertes.

4. Si l'on évite de se laisser accaparer par une attitude mythique vis-à-vis du temps, la reconquête par nos sociétés de leur droit à la gestion de leur temporalité se fera par l'exploitation rationnelle de l'intervalle, pour ne pas dire de l'espace temporel, qui nous sépare d'une fin par ailleurs scientifiquement assignable. J'entends par là qu'il est parfaitement possible que la connaissance scientifique soit, un jour, en mesure de déterminer avec une précision suffisante le moment où interviendra sinon la fin de l'univers, mais tout au moins la fin du monde dans lequel nous vivons. Déjà, le vaste mouvement écologique que nous connaissons depuis deux décades à peine, enseigne à chacun de nous, la manière dont nos différents comportements plus ou moins réfléchis peuvent, à terme, épuiser nos différentes ressources, condamnant ainsi notre monde à une fin prématurée. Nous avons, par ailleurs, que l'humanité à laquelle nous appartenons est désormais capable, si une guerre mondiale était déclenchée, de détruire d'une

façon peut-être irréparable, le milieu dans lequel nous vivons. La fin du monde est donc de moins en moins une notion mythique, par le simple fait qu'à la fin qui pourrait nous être infligée par le Créateur, nous ajoutons désormais celle que nous pourrions nous infliger nous-mêmes.

Cependant, bien que le temps jadis circulaire soit désormais déroulé, devenant ainsi une ligne dont la fin est plus que probable, l'intervalle qui nous sépare de cette fin n'en est pas moins extrêmement grand. C'est en des millions ou peut-être même en des milliards d'années qu'il se laisse évaluer, dès qu'on se donne le courage de faire abstraction de la folie humaine et des conséquences meurtrières qu'elle pourrait avoir. C'est donc cet intervalle considérable que nos sociétés doivent se mettre en devoir d'exploiter pour maîtriser leurs temporalités.

5. Le cinquième et dernier des éléments de la réponse que je donnerais, pour ma part, à la question de savoir ce qu'il y aurait lieu de faire en réaction au temps dominant qui, aujourd'hui, nous contraint de l'extérieur, est qu'en matière de maîtrise du temps, une certaine humilité s'impose. Ce ne sont pas seulement les sociétés soumises au temps d'autrui qui devraient observer cette humilité. Ce sont aussi et surtout celles qui imposent leur temporalité à d'autres cultures et les soumettent ainsi à une dégénérescence accélérée. Ce sont, ai-je dit, les grandes religions monothéistes qui ont vu le jour sur les bords de la méditerranée, qui ont fortement contribué à ouvrir et à étaler le cercle ou l'anneau du temps. La science leur a emboîté le pas; mais elle a encore besoin d'être lestée et comme modérée par l'humilité foncière qui faisait et fait encore professer par les grands maîtres des grandes religions, que le monde a certainement une fin, mais qu'il n'est donné à aucun homme de savoir exactement quand cette fin se produira.

La connaissance humaine, malgré ses grandes conquêtes, donne des preuves de son incapacité dans tant de domaines qu'il ne peut pas lui être reproché d'être ignorante sur notre fin dernière. Car cette impuissance n'est que le rappel de notre finitude, et la pensée de

l'absolu n'étant pas sa possession, l'être humain s'en trouve renvoyé aux limites restreintes de sa nature et donc à la modestie et à l'humilité.

J'ai commencé cet exposé en affirmant que le développement est, aujourd'hui, un concept dominant, un paradigme épuisant et un slogan porte-malheur. Les considérations que j'ai ensuite faites, tant pour illustrer ces propos introductifs que pour décrire, dans les grandes lignes, le temps également dominant qui enserre toutes les cultures du monde et les contraint de l'extérieur, auront permis, je l'espère, de commencer par apercevoir quelques unes au moins des raisons qui font du développement le concept, le paradigme et le slogan que j'ai tenu à affirmer.

Le contraire d'un concept dominant, c'est un concept dominé et maîtrisé. Car il importe de rappeler qu'un concept est, avant tout, un instrument de la pensée. Comme tel, il doit être soumis à la réflexion du penseur et comme tout instrument, c'est à lui d'obéir au lieu de s'ériger en tyran, d'asservir et de brimer.

Le contraire d'un paradigme usant et fatigant, c'est un paradigme qui facilite ou faciliterait l'investissement de nos énergies et leur fructification, compte tenu des objectifs qui nous soient propres. Le développement ne doit pas consister, comme jadis l'ont été l'esclavage et la colonisation, à nous faire travailler pour d'autres, au prix de notre sueur et de notre sang, au prix de notre vie.

Et enfin, le contraire d'un slogan porte-malheur, c'est un mot d'ordre qui soit capable d'organiser nos efforts, de décupler nos énergies et de nous propulser dans la réalisation de nos projets librement décidés et organisés.

Que sur les trois points sur lesquels le développement est, ainsi, considéré nous soyons encore en attente et en souffrance, c'est ce que personne ne peut aujourd'hui nier. Il nous faut donc, sans plus tarder, entreprendre à nouveaux frais l'étude, la critique et pourquoi pas, le rejet et le remplacement du développement à la fois comme concept, comme paradigme et comme mot d'ordre. Parmi ceux des Africains auxquels la fréquentation de l'école a permis de renouer avec la pratique réflexive interrompue par les péripéties de notre histoire récente, ceux de formation philosophique me semblent être des plus aptes à entreprendre ce travail de critique reconstructive. Et c'est pour que la philosophie africaine s'engage dans cette voie que j'ai tenu devant vous ces propos pour lesquels je tiens à vous remercier de votre aimable attention.

Notes

1. On pourra lire, à cet effet, les actes d'une table ronde qui s'est tenue, à Paris, les 21 et 22 février 1986, et qui furent publiés sous le titre, fort suggestif au demeurant: "Les ethnies ont une histoire". On y lit notamment: "L'idée fondamentale qui est ressortie de cette réunion, et dans un esprit réellement transdisciplinaire, est celle de la dimension historique de la question, c'est-à-dire de l'historicité non seulement du concept d'ethnie, mais aussi des contours et du vécu de la réalité ainsi désignée". [cf. Chretien et Prunier (1989, p.8)]

Bibliographie

Chretien, J.-P. et Prunier, G

1989 Les ethnies ont une histoire, Karthala-ACCT, Paris.

Dumont, R.

1962 L'Afrique noire est mal partie, Ed. du Seuil, Paris.

Guernier, M.

1968 La dernière chance du Tiers Monde, Robert Laffont, Paris.

Havély, D.

1961 Essai sur l'accélération de l'histoire, Librairie Arthème
Fayard, Paris.

Résumé

Dans son article "Au delà de la politique de démocratie d'élite en Afrique" Wamba expose la thèse que les pratiques démocratiques importées en Afrique forment encore aujourd'hui une manifestation concrète du mimésis de l'épistimologie sociale de domination, imposée par le conquérant d'origine européenne, des peuples africains indigènes. Cette épistimologie continue à être opprimante et répressive et empêche ainsi l'émancipation authentique du peuple indigène conquis de l'Afrique. En conséquence elle doit être délaissée au profit de la poursuite d'une libération authentique.

Parallèlement à cette thèse l'auteur soutient l'idée que la culture politique indigène traditionnelle d'Afrique demeure une source indispensable pour la reconstruction de politiques émancipatoires en Afrique. Pour soutenir cette idée il apporte des arguments qui montrent la relevance et la signification de la culture politique indigène traditionnelle d'Afrique pour la recherche contemporaine de politiques émancipatoires en Afrique.

**AFRICAN DEMOCRATIC TRADITION:
ONENESS, CONSENSUS AND OPENNESS**
a reply to Wamba-dia-Wamba

Mogobe B. Ramose

In his article, "*Beyond Elite Politics of Democracy in Africa*" [Wamba-dia-Wamba (1992)] Wamba-dia-Wamba posits the thesis that "the content of democratization is determined by modes of politics.... its content is shaped by the dominant mode of politics. The transition must, therefore, be redefined in terms of the change from a mode of politics in crisis towards a new mode of politics." The main reason for this thesis is to underline the necessity to have "emancipative politics" in Africa. Thus the theme of emancipation or liberation is the regulative principle on the basis of which Wamba assesses the experience of imported "democracy" in Africa and the prospects for a political praxis "beyond elite politics of democracy."

According to Wamba, the quest for emancipative politics in Africa must be informed by a new philosophical paradigm capable of refuting and dislodging the "social epistemology of domination" [Wamba-dia-Wamba (1991) p.9] from the centre of African politics. Without this the praxis of politics in Africa - even if it might claim to be an alternative to the vision of truth prescribed by the European conqueror [Williams (1990) p 67]- will remain misguided and unsuccessful precisely because it will be unauthentic: a veritable expression of mimetic philosophy [Wamba-dia-Wamba (1991) p. 12]. Here Wamba's philosophical position is identical with that of liberation philosophy enunciated in Latin America [Roig (1986)]. For example, Bondy argues for the necessity of an emancipative and authentic epistemological paradigm in these terms:

"I am convinced also, however, that the strict theoretical character, which is the highest contemplative requirement indispensable to all fruitful philosophy, is merely another way of condemning ourselves to dependency and subjection. In philosophy, as in science, only he who has the key to theory can appropriate the

advances and powers of civilization. Our philosophy should be, then, both theory and application, conceived and executed in our own fashion, according to our own standards and qualities. Just as science, which in spite of its declared objectivity, tolerates, particularly in the social disciplines, an ingredient of interpretation and ideology, so too, should philosophy be elaborated by us as theory according to our own standards and applied in accord with our own ends." [Bondy (1986) p.243]

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that in pursuing this line of reasoning Wamba also argues that "we must, therefore, move away from the process of *moving away from* traditional society and internalizing *the colonial state*." [Wamba-dia-Wamba (1992) p.32]

In this essay I propose to reaffirm the above philosophical insight that the indigenous conquered people of Africa must construct an epistemological paradigm on their own as a means of expressing their authenticity and in order to attain true liberation. No doubt, this is equally applicable to all the conquered peoples of the world especially at this time of our history when the so called discovery of the Americas five hundred years ago is celebrated more in terms of the West's achievements and less in memory of the unjust conquest of the Amerindians and its consequences right up until our times [Williams (1990) p.236-7]. It goes without saying, therefore, that my observations on the African condition apply, with due modification, to the Americas, Australasia and all other parts of the Earth affected by unjust conquest. My reaffirmation of the philosophical insight on hand will focus upon the significance of Wamba's thesis that Africa should move towards "traditional society" and away from the mimetic internalisation of "the colonial state." In doing this, I will proceed from the standpoint of philosophy of liberation. Here I shall limit myself to the democratic tradition of the indigenous conquered people of Africa.

I conquer, therefore, I enslave

Wamba's argument for the return to African traditional society can hardly be construed to mean that since everything in the pristine tradition of the indigenous conquered people of Africa was good, it is therefore necessary and desirable to readopt that tradition *now*. On the contrary, the imperative to return to this tradition means that the tradition must function as a source from which to extract elements that will help in the construction of an authentic and emancipative epistemological paradigm relevant to the conditions in Africa at this historical moment. This interpretation is borne out by the fact that Wamba places traditional African society in an antithetical relationship with "the colonial state." The antithesis means that "the colonial state" is both the symbol and the reality of an alien culture injected into the indigenous African tradition. This alien culture has become part and parcel of the African experience. As such it has affected and even conditioned the cultural perspective of the indigenous conquered people of Africa. Accordingly, it is simply wishful thinking to pretend that contemporary Africa can just ignore this alien cultural experience and proceed with the search for an emancipative epistemological paradigm.

"In the new African renaissance, we place great emphasis on the presentation of history. Our history needs to be written as the history of our society, not as the story of European adventures. African society must be treated as enjoying its own integrity; its history must be a mirror of that society, and the European contact must find its place in this history only as an African experience, even if as a crucial one. That is to say, the European contact needs to be assessed and judged from the point of view of the principles animating African society, and from the point of view of the harmony and progress of this society." [Nkrumah (1970) p.63]

In the light of the foregoing, it is suggested that Wamba's perspective is historically and philosophically justified.

Historically, the fact of unjust conquest - by the people of European origin - of the indigenous original people of Africa is the necessary starting-point for the construction of "the colonial state." Morally and politically unjustified conquest of the indigenous original people of Africa is the foundation of "the colonial state" which continues to be a burden of servitude to the indigenous conquered people of Africa. This historical fact of unjust conquest is by no means proof that the indigenous conquered people of Africa were ill-fated just because they were in a weaker position militarily [Vambe]. The military defeat of the indigenous original African people was an indispensable step in (i) breaking the resistance of the indigenous original African people; (ii) subjugating them in order to prevent a reversal of fortunes, and thus, (iii) to impose and sustain a condition of sameness according to the will of the European conqueror. This latter aspect leads to the reason why Wamba's antithesis is philosophically justified as well. Without the imposition and sustenance of the condition of sameness according to the will of the conqueror, there could hardly be any meaningful talk about the "social epistemology of domination." Consequently, the autochthonous African epistemological paradigm would have evolved without reference to the historical fact of unjust conquest. However, this fact and its organic relation to the dominant epistemological paradigm of the conqueror may not be ignored or trivialised in the search for an authentic and emancipative epistemological paradigm. In his philosophy of liberation, Enrique Dussel emphasises this point in these terms:

"The claim that philosophy of liberation is post-modern is grounded in the following thesis: modern European philosophy, even before the *ego cogito* but certainly from then on, situated all men and all cultures-and with them their women and children-within its own boundaries as manipulable tools, instruments.

Ontology understood them as interpretable beings, as known ideas, as mediations or internal possibilities within the horizon of the comprehension of Being.... Before the *ego cogito* there is an *ego conquirō*; "I conquer" is the practical foundation of "I think". [Dussel (1985) p. 2-3]

There is abundant evidence to substantiate the claim that the European conqueror has imposed the condition of sameness in Africa and is constantly trying to defend and maintain that condition. It would therefore be idle to argue the point by way of substantiation. Rather, I propose to pursue the philosophical significance of this state of affairs. To say that the European conqueror imposed the condition of sameness in Africa is to say that the conqueror had, and still has, a specific understanding of what it means to be a human being and to live in a relationship with others in the context of the universe as a wholeness. In a word, the European conqueror subscribes - like all other human beings - to a specific concept of the human being and proceeds on that basis to organise inter-human relations as well as relations between humans and other entities in the universe. The crucial point of dispute in this connection is that the European conqueror's understanding of the human being and the universe (i) has been forcibly imposed upon the indigenous conquered people of Africa, and (ii) it is radically opposed with regard to these same matters to the understanding of the indigenous conquered people of Africa. The central question then is whether or not this dispute can be settled by (a) the complete throwing overboard of the centuries old indigenous African tradition of social organisation [Williams (1976) p. 171-186; Diop (1987) p.47-128]; (b) the total and comprehensive abandonment of the European conqueror's epistemological paradigm; (c) reconciliation of the radically opposed epistemological paradigms, or; (d) enlightened coexistence of the two paradigms. In dealing with these four options the initial fact of unjustified use of violence (armed force) to create this condition should be accorded a central place precisely because other forms of violence continue to be used in order to maintain this condition. Of course, the

European conqueror does resort to the use of military force if this condition of sameness faces the threat of being replaced. It is therefore academic and hypocritical to rule out *aprioristically* resort to the use of armed force in order to achieve political ends.

"For this reason political love must also share in very different ways - in the struggle of the poor, which takes place on the ideological and social level but also the political level and - in strictly limited cases - the military." [Sobrinó (1988) p.82]

A matter of choice

With regard to the first option - (a) - many African philosophers are at one with Wamba that it would be imprudent and philosophically unjustified to reject indigenous African tradition completely and replace it with the alien culture of the European conqueror. Although I do not agree with Wiredu on many points, I do not hesitate to cite him with approval on this particular insight.

"It would profit us little to gain all the technology in the world and lose the humanist essence of our culture." [Wiredu (1980) p. 21]

Accordingly, African tradition should remain the source for innovative paradigmatic reconstruction. Of course, the sceptic would retort that one can hardly speak of indigenous African tradition in the face of the reality of mimetic philosophy and the overall dominance of the conqueror's way of life. I should like to ask the sceptic to consider, for example, the precarious loyalty to Christianity on the part of indigenous African people, even by the most devout indigenous African Christians, and their almost instinctive refuge to African traditional religion at very crucial moments of their existence.

"Only when we shall present God not as an elite figure but as a Father to the Africans, one who can be turned to on occasions such as those enumerated above, only then will He be an African God. It is not surprising that while the people go to church on Sunday they have an attitude of praying for what they call 'decent' problems, fit to be presented to a God who belongs to the upper class. He is so high that He has no time for the petty problems of an African who hardly knows the proper language to use as he speaks to Him, and who thinks he will never have a chance to hear His voice." [Milingo (1984) p.77]

Furthermore, it would be non-sense logically to argue for the retrieval and preservation of African tradition if there were indeed nothing at all to retrieve or preserve. Since to all appearances there certainly is something to retrieve and preserve it is both logically sound and empirically justified to talk about the African tradition.

With regard to option (b) above, I have already stated that the alien European culture has become part and parcel of the contemporary way of life in Africa. Accordingly, the alien culture of the European conqueror cannot simply be wholly thrown overboard as if by so doing we would restore the distorted African image to its original shape. Therefore, it is an imperative of practical realism to situate the alien culture of the European conqueror in fundamental dialogue with African tradition. The aim of this dialogue should be to determine if the two radically opposed epistemological paradigms can be reconciled. If the path of reconciliation proves to be increasingly problematical and elusive then the possibility for a voluntary peaceful coexistence between the two paradigms must be explored. However, it must be recognised that options (c) and (d) are not mutually exclusive and so they can be pursued concurrently. On this basis, the practical realism I have referred to assumes particular significance precisely because politically, the alien European culture has become an African way of life in the sense that most post-colonial sovereign independent

African states have finally accepted the view that the Western-style democracy, symbolised by the existence of plural political parties, is the best answer to the problem of political organisation in Africa. The question arising in this connection is the following. *Is the multi-party political system as an integral element of the Western democratic culture a necessary and sufficient condition for the political emancipation of Africa?*

By way of answer to the above question, I shall consider both affirmative and negative replies pertaining to the question. My argument is that the necessitarian position that the Western-style democracy is the answer to the question of political organisation in contemporary Africa is fundamentally flawed. This position is ontologically erroneous for it does not take serious issue with the principle of contingency in being. By so doing it ascribes determinism to the process of history. This historical determinism is untenable since one cannot realistically argue that it was predetermined long ago that the Western-style democracy would reach Africa at point X in history and, having arrived there, it would have to be adopted and accepted by the indigenous African people. Of course, theocratically minded thinkers would find nothing odd in this kind of reasoning. This notwithstanding, I submit that this line of reasoning is philosophically unjustified and historically unfounded [Westerman (1989) p.72]. A corollary to my argument is that the Western-style of democracy is an inauthentic expression of African political culture precisely because it is an imposition which continues to resist dialogue with traditional African political culture. As such it is a political monologue leading a solipsistic life in the midst of a suppressed African indigenous political culture. Consequently, the Western-style democracy is neither emancipative nor is it an authentic expression of contemporary African political culture.

Traditional African Political Culture and Human Emancipation

Many prominent African political philosophers have argued strongly in favour of the Western-style democracy. The arguments have ranged from the critique of the one-party system of politics to the critique of state domination. These thinkers proffer the same solution to the problem of political organisation in Africa: allow the free formation of many political parties in Africa and then democratic politics is assured.

"It will always be the way our governments react to opposition that will guarantee the stability of the state. On the other hand if you ask me about the best way to guarantee these rights and freedoms, I would say make sure they are guaranteed in the constitution and defend them with a multi-party system." [Kabooha (1988) p.10]

Evidently, the multi-party system is seen here as an integral part of democratic politics. While pleading for "an issue-oriented movement" in Zimbabwean politics, Moyo turns to make a subtle appeal for the multi-party system without actually using this latter phrase.

"The next general elections are not scheduled until 1995, but if the opposition forces should then come to power with the support of various social movements which are currently in formation, that eventuality might mark an important beginning in the development of an effective party system in Zimbabwe, not least because the defeat of Zanu-P.F. would bring to the opposition a relatively well organised party with considerable experience in national politics. ... This prospect suggests that party politics in Zimbabwe is still a thing of the far future." [Moyo (1992) p.329]

Moyo's argument for multi-party politics in Zimbabwe purports to be a critique of strands such as "Afro-Marxism, welfarism, statism, and

ethnicity" all of which tend "tend to create templates that bring any piece of work about state politics to the desired shape, despite a number of unexamined or self-contradictory presuppositions" [Moyo (1992) p.305]. Moyo's critique is certainly assailable on many points but here I will confine myself to one basic flaw of his argument. This relates to the fact that it is more than apparent that Moyo relies heavily and exclusively on Max Weber to anchor his argument. My thesis is that there is no convincing evidence that he has examined the presuppositions of Max Weber. Since these latter remain "unexamined", I submit that Moyo cannot escape the criticism that he is involved in mimesis. He has adopted Weber's epistemological paradigm without a serious argument first, to justify such an adoption and, second, to show why and how it is relevant to the situation in Zimbabwe. Like Kaboha, he argues in favour of the multi-party system from the standpoint of the epistemological paradigm of the European conqueror. Since this latter standpoint has so far proved to be enslaving and oppressive for Africa, I submit that thinkers like Moyo and Kaboha are far from enunciating the politics of the emancipation of Africa. The standpoint from which they argue is certainly inconsistent with the deconstructive and the reconstructive tasks of contemporary African philosophy. [Outlaw (1987)]

Furthermore, it is an unwarranted absolutisation of the multi-party system. Kaboha argues against the absolutisation of this kind of democracy [Kaboha (1988) p.5]. Yet, he oddly speaks in contradiction of this argument as soon as he declares his personal position on the matter. This apparently inadvertent self-contradiction underlines not only the need to move away from dogmatism and absolutism but it also reveals the thinkers' tacit acceptance of historical determinism. This philosophical perspective can hardly be emancipative since it is known in advance that the results of human action are unalterable no matter what we do.

To speak in terms of the conqueror's political discourse without at the same time engaging such discourse in dialogue with traditional

African political culture is to assume that traditional African political culture is, at the very minimum, unlikely to make any meaningful contribution to the quest for a solution to the political problems of the continent. Indeed both Gyekye and Wamba are engaged in the refutation of this assumption by showing that traditional African political culture can still speak authoritatively on finding an emancipative African solution to African political problems. In fact, Wamba's essay referred to in the beginning of this article revolves around this thesis. I now turn to consider this observation.

Most African languages have in their vernacular the saying which is synonymous with the following one found in the **Sotho** language. The saying is that *Motho ke motho ka batho*. This means that to be human is to affirm one's humanness by recognising the same in others and, on that basis, establish humane relations with them. Here it is *botho* understood as being human and having a humane (respectful and polite) attitude towards other human beings which constitutes the central meaning of the aphorism: *motho ke motho ka batho*. (It is pertinent to suggest that one may pursue the meaning of this concept - *botho* - in the **Shona** language of Zimbabwe by referring to S. Samkange's **Hunuiism**.) This aphorism rests upon two organically interrelated philosophical principles. One is that the individual human being is an object of intrinsic value in its own right. If this were not so, it would be senseless to base the affirmation of one's humanness on the recognition of the same in the other and respect therefor. It is meaningful to state that to denigrate and disrespect the other human being is in the first place to denigrate and disrespect oneself only if it is accepted that oneself is an object worthy of dignity and respect. The other principle is that *motho* (a human being) is truly human only in the context of *actual relations* with other human beings. This is not to be construed to mean that relations with so called physical nature or the overall environment are unimportant. These two philosophical principles show that *motho* is never a finished product in the sense that the relational context always conceals and reveals the potentialities of

the individual. The concealed potentialities become revealed whenever they are actualised in the practical sphere of human relations. Outside of this sphere *motho* remains a frozen fossil indistinguishable from a *res aliena*. Discussing human rights from the point of view of African culture, Zvobgo made the apposite observation that:

"Rights ... do not exist as an integral part of human nature. They arise from a person's destiny of living in a relationship with family, friends, ethno-linguistic groups, and nation. They are incidental, unavoidable, and necessary, but not an attribute of being human. No rights can be exercised apart from one's relationship with another." [Zvobgo (1979) p.93]

The relational context speaks to two important philosophical perspectives which will be shown to be significant elements of traditional African political culture. These elements are: (i) the recognition of the **oneness** rather than the unity of being. Oneness precisely because one human being is deemed to be the same thing, namely, a human being, in relation to another human being. This is another way of expressing the principle of human equality. For this reason, reciprocity will be pivotal in the sphere of human relations. In the particular sphere of political relations the principle of reciprocity will crystallise into the principle of solidarity. This latter is manifested by the almost infinite quest for **consensus** in traditional African political culture.

"The communal ethos of African culture necessarily placed a great value on solidarity, which in turn necessitated the pursuit of unanimity or consensus not only in such important decisions as those taken by the highest political authority of the town or state, but also in decisions taken by lower assemblies such as those presided over by the heads of the clans, that is, the councillors." [Gyekye (1988) p.12]

Thus adversarial politics - the hallmark of the Western-style multi-party system of democracy - is rather foreign to African traditional political culture. The oddity of adversarial politics is emphasised even more by the fact that quite often this kind of politics degenerates into opposition for the sake of opposition. No doubt the protagonists of this system will retort that the aim of opposition is to accede to the position of political power by displacing the ruling party. Without denying this rather egoistic aim, I still argue that understood in this way adversarial politics undermines the principle of solidarity in traditional African political culture. Having undermined the principle of solidarity, the political party in Africa has come to be seen as an instrument of power and domination [Moyo (1992) p.312-313]. Hence the constant banning and unbanning of political parties; their replacement with military governments and again their precarious reinstatement. Underlying this undesirable state of affairs is the quest of the principle of solidarity which neither the contemporary political party nor the military regime in Africa can provide.

The blowing of *lepatata* was a solemn call summoning every qualified male adult - not qualified adult males of a particular political party - to come and participate in the deliberations of the *kgotla* (*kgoro/lekgotla*). There a particular issue was to be discussed freely and openly in common with a view to arriving at a common solution. By presenting the specific issue as a matter of common concern, unconstructive partisanship and puerile divisiveness were checked in advance and brought under reasonable control. What purpose could these positions serve in a political culture which was communally based and geared towards oneness rather than division or fragmentation? Even the emerging solution was to be seen not as a triumph of one group over another but rather as the achievement of all concerned. This is exemplified by the somewhat indelicate idiomatic expression which underlined both the freedom of debate and the unrelenting quest for oneness. The expression, not unfamiliar in the deliberations of the *kgotla*, is that **Le seke la mo thlakola pele a fetsa go nyela**. Literally,

it means that *the unclean anus of someone defecating may not be cleaned until the person has completed the process*. We can therefore see that one were simply not to be summarily silenced on the ground that one was talking nonsense. Important lessons, for example, in reasoning and rhetorics, could be drawn even from nonsensical talk. The *kgotla* as a traditional parliament was thus a forum for free and serious discussion aimed at making laws and finding communal solutions to the problems on hand. The reincarnation of the indigenous African traditional principle of solidarity in contemporary African politics can be a significant step towards the emancipation of the indigenous conquered people of Africa.

Furthermore, it is a misconception to argue that without the multi-party system traditional African political culture is defective. Traditional African political culture embodied and invited opposition in the very principle of consensus. Surely, one cannot speak of consensus where there is no opposition at all [Gyekye (1988) p.8]. The question then is not so much the one- or multi-party system of politics is appropriate for Africa. Rather the issue is, as Wamba has correctly suggested, the purposive construction of a mode of politics responsive to the political problems of contemporary Africa.

But oneness should also be understood ontologically to mean that human relations are not and cannot be defined and determined once and for all time. From the African point of view, life is an incessant ingress and egress of forces and in this process the individual is necessarily placed in a position to receive from others and to give to them.

"The altar gives something to a man, and a part of what he has received he passes on to others, ... A small part of the sacrifice is for oneself, but the rest is for others. The forces released enter into the man, pass through him and out again, and so it is for all... As each man gives to all the rest, so he also receives from all. A perpetual exchange goes on between men, an unceasing movement of invisible currents. And this must be so if the

universal order is to endure. The Word is for everyone in this world, it must come and go and be interchanged, for it is good to give and to receive the forces of life." [Griaule (1965) p.137]

This realisation leads to the second interrelated element, namely, (ii) **openness** to being. This has frequently been misinterpreted as the African tendency to have no sense of the future: to simply let things happen without planning ahead the outcome of particular situations. This misunderstanding is sometimes discussed under the significant title, "the African concept of time." The various arguments pertaining to this point of discussion are well-known. Suffice it to state, therefore, that as an ontological question the issue revolves around the distinction between ontic and ontological time. Those who understand the African perspective as openness to being have rightly argued that Africans would prefer to **live time** and not to **live in time**. The former simply means that openness to being is the readiness to expect the unexpected and to deal with such an eventuality when it arises. Surely, this has nothing to do with inability to plan ahead.

Yet another African saying is that *feta kgomo o tshware motho*. This means that if and when one is faced with a decisive choice between wealth and the preservation of the life of another human being then one should choose to preserve the life of another human being. The central meaning here is that mutual care for one another as human beings precedes concern for the accumulation and safeguarding of wealth as though such a concern were an end in itself. While we see that *motho* is once again the primary reality in traditional African culture, here we have also the principle of sharing as the regulative element of social organisation. This is the principle animating the much talked about African communalism.

"Communalism is the doctrine that the group constitutes the main focus of the lives of the individual members of that group, and that the extent of the individual's involvement in the interests, aspirations, and welfare of the group is the measure of that

individual's worth. This philosophy is given institutional expression in the social structures of African societies." [Gyekye (1987) p. 208]

Like the principle of solidarity, the principle of sharing has also been undermined in contemporary multi-party politics in Africa. It is essential to underline the fact that this principle covers the whole range of human relations. Thus it refers to the sharing of the joys and sorrows of life; of the goods of the earth and even the personal property that we might have. The principle of solidarity is further underlined by the saying that *Go ya ka magoro gase go tswana, melatore a rerisana*. This means that even if we may go our own way, whenever urgent and vital issues arise we still have the obligation to come together and try to find a common solution to those issues. Alas! the practice of multi-party politics in Africa, and indeed elsewhere, is a far cry from this. Now that the principle of solidarity is undermined in contemporary multi-party politics in Africa, nepotism, corruption and lack of sympathy for the other have become widespread. The erstwhile peaceableness engendered by the principle of sharing - in relation to the other principles so far mentioned - is now replaced by the warlike condition based on greed and dishonesty [Sobrino (1988) p.14-15]. The suffering and oppression characteristic of this condition are well-known. In order to reverse and correct this situation it is crucial to reincorporate the principle of sharing in the construction of an emancipative mode of politics in contemporary Africa. Clearly, this will be consonant with the saying that *feta kgomo o tshware motho*. Here we must recognise that this aphorism runs directly counter to one of the underlying philosophical elements of the Western-style democratic tradition, namely, that goods and even human feelings may be made available and distributed provided doing so will yield monetary profit. Remove the egoistically-oriented profit-making motive from the activities of a Western democratic political party then the starving people in Asia, Africa and Latin America will die preventable deaths precisely because even a so called Christian democratic party in the

West would rather have the "butter mountain" or the "milk lake" deposited into the sea. One should not forget that even so called humanitarian aid flowing from the Western democracies is still subject to the egoistic calculus of profit-making. Of course, the "green parties" are a rather recent phenomenon and it remains to be seen if and how they will be fundamentally different from the traditional political parties in the West.

The aphorism mentioned above are implied and related to yet another saying pertaining to traditional African politics. The saying is that *kgosi ke kgosi ka batho* [Zvobgo (1979) p. 93-94]. A king without the people is neither the symbol nor the reality of kingship. To be a king is to accede to that position because of the consent of the people and to remain so for as long as the people have not withdrawn their consent. This is a fundamental element of traditional African constitutional thought. The king was king by grace of the people and not by the grace of God as medieval Western political thought held. The concept of a king with absolute power is somewhat odd to traditional African constitutional thought precisely because the king's orders to the nation derived their validity from the fact that they had previously been discussed and agreed to between the king and his councillors.

"It appears that the most important injunction was the chief should never ever act without the advice and full concurrence of his councillors, the representatives of the people. Acting without the concurrence and advice of his council was a legitimate cause for his deposition. Thus the chief was bound by law to rule with the consent of the people." [Gyekye (1988) p.11]

There seems to be little doubt, in the light of the above, that human freedom was a living reality in the democratic political culture of traditional Africa. The same cannot be said about contemporary politics in Africa feeding as it does on the alien Western tradition of democracy. This is precisely why the search for an emancipative

politics is the imperative to be obeyed by all African philosophers who wish to see the indigenous conquered people of Africa a liberated and dignified people within their continent and beyond. I am convinced that in presenting us with "these brief reflections" Wamba is inviting us to make a contribution towards the authentic liberation of the indigenous conquered people of Africa. I have accepted the invitation without pretending to have given the final answer to this vexed question. I am sure that this is not simply a philosophical challenge but it is a praxeological demand as well. If we should be guided by the traditional principles of **oneness**, **consensus** and **openness**, and, I should like to add humility, then the day of the true liberation of Africa might not be too far away. After all,

"the Western institutional paradigm, which has evolved over the centuries, need not be the only viable one in terms of the achievement of the ideals and goals of democracy." [Gyekye (1988) p.9]

Bibliography

Bondy, A.S.

1986 'The Meaning and Problem of Hispanic American Thought',
in [Gracia 1986]

Diop, C.A.

1987 Precolonial Black Africa, (trans.) Salemon, H., Africa World
Press, Trenton, NJ

Dussel, E.

1985 Philosophy of Liberation, (trans.) Martinez, A. and Morkov-
sky, C., Orbis Books, New York

Gracia, J.J., (ed.)

1986 Latin American Philosophy in the Twentieth Century, Prome-
theus Books, New York

Griaule, M.

1965 Conversations with Ogotemmêli, Oxford University Press,
Oxford

Gyekye, K.

1987 An Essay on African Philosophical Thought: The Akan
Conceptual Scheme, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

1988 'The Idea of Democracy in the Traditional Setting and its
Relevance to Political Development in Contemporary Africa',
paper presented to the First International Regional Conference
in Philosophy, Mombasa, Kenya 1988

Kaboha, P.

1988 'The One-Party vs the Multi-Party Option of Government. A
Crisis in African Political Philosophy', paper presented to the
First International Regional Conference in Philosophy,
Mombasa, Kenya 1988

Milingo, E.

1984 The World in Between, C. Hurst & Co, London; Mambo
Press, Gweru, Zimbabwe

Moyo, J.N.

1992 'State Politics and Social Domination in Zimbabwe' in The Journal of Modern African Studies, 30, 2 1992

Nkrumah, K.

1979 Consciencism, Panaf Books Ltd.: London

Outlaw, L.

1987 'African "Philosophy": Deconstructive and reconstructive challenges' in Floistad, G. (ed.) Contemporary Philosophy, Volume 5 African Philosophy, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, Dordrecht

Roig, A.A.

1986 'The Actual Function of Philosophy in Latin America' in [GRACIA 1986 p. 247-259]

Sobrino, J.

1988 Spirituality of Liberation: Toward Political Holiness, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York

Vambe, L.

1972 An Ill-Fated People, Zimbabwe before and after Rhodes, London, Heinemann

Wamba-dia-Wamba, E.

1992 'Beyond Elite Politics of Democracy in Africa' in Quest Vol. VI No. 1 June 1992. p. 28-42

Wamba-dia-Wamba, E.

1991 'Philosophy and African Intellectuals: Mimesis of Western Classicism, Ethnophilosophical Romanticism or African Self-mastery?' in Quest Volume V No. 1 June 1991

Westerman, P.

1989 'The European Example A Contingent Path Towards Democracy' in Quest, Vol. III No. 1 June 1989

Williams, C.

1976 The Destruction of Black Civilization, Third World Press, Chicago

Williams, R.A.

1990 The American Indian in Western Legal Thought: The Discourses of Conquest, Oxford University Press, Oxford

Wiredu, K.

1980 Philosophy and an African Culture, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

Zvobgo, E.J.M.

1979 'A Third World View', in Kommers, D.P. and Loescher, G.D. (ed.) Human Rights and American Foreign Policy, University of Notre Dame Press

Résumé

Cet article est une réaction à l'article de Wamba "Au delà d'une politique de démocratie d'élite en Afrique". L'auteur décrit la situation politique et économique dramatique de la plupart des pays africains et défend la thèse que la démocratisation en Afrique n'est possible que sous les conditions suivantes:

- (1) les élites dominatrices ont disparues,*
- (2) les institutions et structures à l'aide desquelles elles oppriment la société ont fait place à de nouvelles organisations,*
- (3) le peuple a un pouvoir réel au sein d'actions politiques massales,*
- (4) le désintégrement économique peut être éliminé.*

Les programmes d'adaptation économique du Fonds Monétaire International et de la Banque Mondiale ont justement favorisés une politique autoritaire. Dicter un modèle de démocratie à plusieurs partis n'apportera pas non plus de démocratie.

IS DEMOCRACY POSSIBLE IN AFRICA? THE ELITES, THE PEOPLE AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Julius O. Ihonvbere

...given the socio-economic conditions of Africa and the fact that up to 80 per cent of Africa's working people are peasants, multi-partyism is more likely than not, in the first instance, to lead to conservative victories, and a multi-coloured cloak of legitimacy. Thus the multi-party state is unlikely to be any more responsive to either the needs or expressed wishes of the majority of Africa's population than the one-party and military states have been. [Bing (1991, p.61)]

...nations cannot be built without the popular support and full participation of the people, nor can the economic crisis be resolved and the human and economic conditions improved without the full and effective contribution, creativity and popular enthusiasm of the vast majority of the people. [ECA (1990, p.17)]

The article by Ernest Wamba-dia-Wamba in QUEST Vol. VI Number 1, of June 1992 [Wamba-dia-Wamba (1992)] was a powerful movement away from the euphoria currently surrounding the so-called democratization movement in Africa. This is because the paper had the courage to draw attention to the excessive focus on personalities, superficialities and institutions, while focusing on the apparent neglect of sub-structural issues, the people themselves and the growing alternative forms of mobilization and struggle for empowerment at the grassroots. The African condition today is very pathetic, to say the least. As Lance Morrow put it recently, Africa is in a "scramble for existence" [Morrow (1992)]. Though Wamba-dia-Wamba's paper overlooked the salience of economic contradictions and crisis, it is quite obvious that conditions of deepening crisis, increasing marginalization in the global system and increasing vulnerability to external penetration, manipulation, domination and exploitation, have had three main consequences: Firstly, it has exploded the invincibility

of the state and opened it up to challenges; secondly, it has made the state, its agents and agencies more desperate and repressive in some instances, and willing to make concessions to civil society in other instances; and thirdly, it has made Africa more of a pawn in the hands of international finance institutions like the IMF and the World Bank and thus created a major opening for the political and ideological manipulation of the continent, the imposition of models of democracy which are clearly out of tune with the realities and aspirations of Africa and the manipulation of political forms and regimes to make the world a safe place for capitalist domination and exploitation. Hence "democracy" today means political and economic restructuring in line with the dictates of credit clubs, the IMF and the World Bank via the imposition of orthodox structural adjustment packages. In the midst of the confusion, instability, conflicts and contradictions generated and/or accentuated by the policies of the IMF and the World Bank, attention has shifted from the struggles of the people at the grassroots level, the limitations of the so-called pro-democracy movements, the required pre-conditions for the survival of democracy and the urgent need for a strengthened civil society. Rather Western governments, donors and creditors have drawn a direct linkage between democracy and development, sung the praises of the market, imposed political conditionalities of African states and assumed that regimes which had spent decades suffocating civil society and oppressing their peoples during the implementation of structural adjustment can be expected to open up civil society, respect human rights and cultivate democratic traditions. As Wamba-dia-Wamba has rightly noted:

The structural adjustment programmes...give no historical references in which the process of transition...has led to social and political self-emancipation of the People. It is merely assumed that the process will eventually lead to self emancipation. No satisfactory explanation has been given as to why the African experiences with multi-partyism in the early sixties led to authoritarian regimes, rather than social and politi-

cal self-emancipation of the people [Wamba-dia-Wamba (1992, p.29)].

In fact, there is not a single example in Africa where orthodox structural adjustment has led to more democracy, increased political stability, national unity, the provision of basic needs for the masses, growth and development. In spite of vitriolic propaganda and the determination to pronounce Ghana as a successful case through the massive infusion of loans and other financial support, adjustment has deepened class antagonisms and conflicts, delegitimized the state, marginalized the masses from the elites and created conditions for the strengthening of neo-colonial relations and further marginalization in the global capitalist system [Ihonvbere (1993) and Ankomah (1990)].

In this short piece, we try to address this critical issue raised by Wamba-dia-Wamba by showing the continuing trend of elite decadence, corruption, waste, repression of the people, suffocation of civil society, mismanagement and general inhibition of the democratic process which have culminated in the current conditions of decay, subservience and poverty. Our main contention is that democracy in Africa will remain a mirage as long as the custodians of state power remain in power, in as much as the institutions, structures and social relations with which the elites dominated and repressed society remain unchanged, in as much as the masses of the people are not empowered and society is not opened up for mass political action and in as much as the economic dislocation and crisis inherited at political independence in the 1960s continues. Prescriptions of democratic forms and models by Western nations, and the forced adoption of orthodox structural adjustment packages will not create the required changes that will move Africa from its current pathetic conditions on to the path of development and democracy.

African elites and the subversion of the democratic process in the 1960's

The struggle against colonial domination and exploitation involved a wide spectrum of African people. Workers, students, peasants, women, professionals and fractions of the elite combined to confront the political and military machine of the colonial powers. It was relatively easy for the elites to mobilize the masses by pointing at the inequalities, discrimination, spatial distortions, limited investments and general backwardness of society. Comparisons were often drawn, as well, between the quality of life in Europe and the generally backward living conditions of colonized peoples. It was argued that the colonial rulers had the mandate of a foreign government and had not been elected by the people, that its commitment was to a foreign country, that it did not believe in democracy and relied on violence, intimidation and manipulation and that the only way it could raise funds to finance its goals was to impose excessive and unjust levies, taxes and fees. These arguments and more gave impetus to the anti-colonial movements culminating in political independence for most African states from the late 1950s and the 1960s.

This was actually the beginning of the break between African peoples and the elites. As soon as political independence was granted, African elites began to initiate complex and ingenuous methods to appropriate and rationalize the privileges, powers and institutions created and left behind by the colonial powers. They reneged on all the promises of the nationalist struggle. They began to see the masses of the people as "trouble-makers", "insatiable and restless villages", "illiterate and lazy people" and so on. The repressive and violent military machine created by the colonial state was mostly retained and in some cases, made more repressive. The bureaucracy which had played a major role in the domination and exploitation of the masses was not restructured or decentralized. A general state of repression, manipulation, intimidation, harassment and suffocation of civil society was imposed on society. Human rights were wantonly abused.

Students, workers and social critics were defined as "extremists" and "communists" and subjected to all sorts of harassments. In the name of the one-party state, African leaders set themselves up as presidents for life and banned opposition parties. Scarce resources meant to confront conditions of dependence, underdevelopment and marginalization in the international division of labour were diverted to defence and the personal security of the president-for-life. Corruption, waste and mismanagement became institutionalized as resources were wantonly looted and diverted to foreign banks in Europe, North America and other parts of the world. The conditions of unequal exchange, subservience to the West and general vulnerability to foreign penetration, domination and exploitation were consolidated and given legitimacy through so-called joint venture, and Africanisation programs which only legitimized foreign domination of African economies. The new regimes continued to concentrate power, resources and opportunities in the urban centres, neglected the rural majority, retained the exploitative marketing boards for the extraction of surpluses from the rural areas and remained largely aloof from the masses. Finally, having given up its alliance with the people, the political elites resorted to the manipulation of primordial loyalties- ethnicity, region, religion and personality- in order to keep the opposition divided and divert attention from its own failings.

At the economic level, the unequal linkages developed since the 1940s were simply consolidated. African leaders remained content to serve foreign economic interests as advisers, political consultants, legal representatives, major distributors, board members and so on. These positions entailed very generous salaries and allowances but very limited power regulation, control and displacement of foreign capital in the interest of the national economy. Public economic policy became susceptible to the control of foreign interests directly or to manipulation by the agents of these foreign interests who controlled the state and its agencies. Thus, the dependent elites remained incapable of using state power to effectively restructure control over the economy, attract serious investors, promote industrialization, generate employ-

ment, encourage the use of local resources in the production process, protect the environment and use the location of industries to develop infrastructures and redress inherited spatial inequalities.

The record therefore was one of consolidating and legitimizing neo-colonial and unequal relations and of reproducing underdevelopment and backwardness. Since the 1960s, Africa has simply moved from one crisis to another. Politics became warfare. Conditions of instability, corruption, waste, poverty, uncertainty, disillusionment and violence have encourage military adventurists to hijack popular struggles in the majority of African states. Democracy was thrown out of the political terrain in virtually all African states. In countries like Senegal, Kenya and Zambia where the military had not terminated the democratic processes, the state was simply privatized by individuals, their proteges or a clique of elites simply in the "interest of the nation," relying on bogus "ideologies" like Humanism, Nyayoism, Uhuru and the like. This general condition of political cynicism, economic vulnerability and decay, social dislocation and peripheralization in the global capitalist system deepened the African crisis and made it vulnerable to dictates from the outside on political and economic matters.

The recolonisation of Africa and authoritarian politics

By the late 1970s, it had become obvious that African elites had not benefited much from their unequal alliance with Western powers. The relationship between some African states like Angola, Mozambique and Ethiopia with the former Eastern Europe did not fare any better. While nations like South Korea, Taiwan and the Philippines benefitted from the Cold War, there is not one nation in Africa that emerged as a Newly Industrializing Country by even the most liberal definition of that category. Wars and local conflicts that could have been resolved through simple negotiation at OAU level were turned into international conflicts and African leaders were too blind to see that they were being used. Outdated technology was dumped in the

region, the latest guns but not the latest agricultural equipment and because of assured support from the East and the West, African leaders became all the more repressive, arrogant, corrupt and irresponsible. The consequence was a total refusal to operate by the rules- even their own rules- and a refusal to reach accommodation with popular groups and respond to the yearnings of the vast majority.

There is today a reasonable level of agreement on the specifics of the African crisis; the consequences of the break between the elites and the people, the containment of democratic possibilities after political independence and the squandering of opportunities for mobilization, growth and development. The North South Round Table noted in its review of the African economy in 1990 that "Africa's economic and social performance during the 1980s...was predominantly negative. This was manifested within Africa by severely depressed economic growth rates, stagnant agricultural production, deteriorating social services and a decline in living standards. Externally it was marked by a rising debt burden, inadequate resource flows and a sharp fall in commodity prices for Africa's key exports" [North South Roundtable (1991, p.3)]. This assessment is similar to those of the OAU, the Economic Commission for Africa(ECA), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund(IMF). The World Bank even goes further in arguing that "Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole has now witnessed almost a decade of falling per capita incomes, increasing hunger and accelerating ecological degradation. The earlier progress made in social development is now being eroded. Overall Africans are almost as poor today as they were 30 years ago" [World Bank (1989, p.1)]. Specifically, the region's foreign debt stands at about \$300 billion. This equals 102.3 per cent of Africa's GNP. The region uses between 30 and 45 per cent of its export earnings to service its foreign debts. Today, Africa is the most "debt-distressed" region in the world. Excluding the disasters in Somalia, Mozambique and the Sudan, it is estimated that about 1000 children daily die from avoidable diseases. 32 of the 47 least developed nations in the world are in Africa. Nations like Ghana and Nigeria, once booming economies, are now

classified as low income countries by the World Bank. Universities have largely become glorified high schools as scholars have deserted them for the private sector and foreign universities. The attacks on academic freedom by African governments such as the Moi regime in Kenya and the Babangida junta in Nigeria have sniffled originality, research, critical thinking and holistic and dialectical thinking. According to Fantu Cheru "seventy out of every 100 Africans are destitute or at the verge of poverty, with annual per capita income ranging from \$59 to \$115. One out of every four Africans has access to clean water. Of the 33 million people added to the work force during the 1970s, only 15 million found remunerative employment" [Cheru (1989, p.2)]. Life expectancy, adult literacy levels, contribution to global trade, level of industrialization and degree of national control over national resources, remain the lowest in the world. Half of the world's refugees are African and the region's GNP is roughly equivalent to that of Belgium which has just 10 million people compared to Africa's 600 million people. The ECA has shown that throughout the 1980s export volumes, foreign investments, foreign exchange earnings as well as gross fixed capital formation declined precipitously, leading to economic dislocation, economic crisis and further marginalization in the global market [ECA (1990)]. The 1990s are witnessing a rapid deterioration of the political and economic situation in Africa. Transitions to democracy are being manipulated by the elites- Ghana and Nigeria are typical examples. Foreign investors are diverting their attention and interest to Eastern Europe and other parts of the world. International finance institutions and the Western powers are imposing new political conditions on the region. Creditors are insisting on the adoption of orthodox IMF/World Bank stabilization and structural adjustment packages. New trade blocs in North America and Europe as well as in the Pacific Rim will further marginalize Africa and erode previous agreements on global trade. Donors are complaining of "compassion" and aid fatigue! The disintegration of the Soviet Union as nation and as super power has removed the checks on Western imperialism and the source of some assistance, even if mostly

military. The "new" United Nations appear to be responding more to the dictates of the sole super power in the global system, the United States [Ihonvbere (1992)].

The net implication of these developments within and beyond the region is increasing desperation of already desperate regimes in Africa. No longer able to play off the East against the West, without foreign aid to buy off opposition and soften the harsh edges of conflicts and without resources to meet the demands of non-bourgeois forces, African elites are practically left high and dry by the new global economic and political arrangement. Thus, Africans are asking new questions, posing new challenges and insisting on alternative approaches to politics, growth and development. We are witnessing increasing cross-national awareness and alliances among popular organizations in Africa. The already tenuous hegemony, control tactics and defensive ideology of the elites are under attack.

The elites, faced with declining foreign aid, foreign military support and shrinking investments and, of course, increasing challenges from within became more repressive in their relations with civil society. Most African leaders - in Kenya, Zaire, Togo, Zambia before the victory of the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy(MMD) - resorted to defensive radicalism, bribery, lies, intimidation of opponents, abuse of human rights, political posturing and a search for foreign scape goats and local subversives. Elite security services like the Republican Guards in Nigeria were hurriedly created to contain mounting political pressures. In some cases, like Rawlings in Ghana, the military dictator, civilianized himself but organized the transition in such a way that he would remain in power in a "democratic" context. In other instances, as with Babangida in Nigeria, the leader subverted popular efforts, created his own political parties, thought up names for them, drafted their manifestos and constitutions, built their local and central secretariats, banned (at least initially) old politicians and radicals, paid party members to attend party conventions and so on and continued to create conditions which were bound to generate crisis in order to provide a justification for some unwritten agenda. A typical

example was the unbanning of the so-called "old brigade" halfway through the transition program. Their re-entry into the political campaigns and into the power structures of the two government-created and government-sponsored political parties has now created conditions propitious for another military coup or counter-coup.

It is instructive to note that the conditions of mismanagement and the concentration of resources and efforts on defence and security matters which accentuated the region's crisis created ample room for the complete recolonization of the region. With credit lines closed, lack of funds to buy food and essential commodities and unable to service growing debts, African leaders were forced by creditors, donors and Western governments to practically go down on their knees to sign stabilization and structural adjustment packages with the IMF and the World Bank. This development opened the door for the dismantling of all social, economic and political achievements of the post-colonial era. National policies were discarded for IMF and World Bank policies. The Central Banks were practically taken over by lenders and foreigners. Development plans were restructured to fit the Western development agenda as interpreted by the Bank and the Fund. African bureaucrats and leaders became beggars at international organizations, while they received lectures on the virtues of free trade, the market and market forces. Policies of devaluation, desubsidisation, deregulation, liberalization/commercialization, debt-equity swap, floating interest rates, massive retrenchment of able-bodied workers without compensation, decreasing state influence and the imposition of new levies, fees and taxes were forced on desperate African leaders and governments. In spite of the demonstrations, riots, political opposition, alienation, poverty and the dislocations created by these largely inappropriate policies, the donors and lenders continued to insist that there was a direct linkage between democracy and development. If African states removed all obstacles to foreign trade, dismantled tariffs and trade restrictions, devalued their currencies by over 100%, laid off hundreds of thousands of workers, imposed new economic and financial burdens on their people, removed all limita-

tions to the repatriation of profits and conducted themselves in ways acceptable to creditors and donors development, i.e. capitalist development, was assured. Even when the implementation of these policies failed to show any appreciable improvements in the economic conditions of these countries, the Western nations and Japan quickly added more political conditions.

African states were required to restructure their political environments along lines dictated directly or indirectly by the West. It was argued that only such a restructuring of political conditions would enable the market to thrive and attract investors and donors. Countries like Nigeria not only accepted these misguided prescriptions, which completely overlooked the specificities of Africa and the realities of Western capitalist development, but also tried to imitate Western political forms in the crudest possible ways. For instance, after the Babangida junta refused to register any of the independently formed political parties, it simply created its own two parties - The Social Democratic Party(SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC) - in an attempt to reflect the American reality as much as possible, even in name. At these levels, African states lost the economic and political autonomy to determine the content and context of the political and economic restructuring processes in their respective nations. The long discredited spirit of modernization ideologues of the 1960s took hold, with efforts to define democracy as an instrumental process which can be made to fit Western models in spite of different historical experiences, different contradictions and conflicts, and different locations in a highly exploitative and unequal global capitalist order. The corrupt and desperate regimes and elites currently in power, presiding over foreign-dictated economic and political programs and participating in an international division of labour which is structured to marginalize the continent. The subservient and weak position of African states has created not just a new colonialism, but has reduced African elites to "ignorant school boys", to be constantly educated by Western and Japanese bureaucrats and politicians on the

meanings and virtues of democracy and adjustment [Ihonvbere (1991)]. One example will suffice.

At the review of the United Nations Programme of Action on African Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD) in New York in September 1991, the OAU took the position that:

During the life-span of UNPAAERD, African economies did not witness any significant change for the better...from all economic indicators, the continent of Africa appeared to have been by-passed by (the) positive developments in the world system. African economies were required to make...adjustments and achieve economic growth in the face of severely compressed incomes and rising debt over-hang. This is an impossible dilemma... [Okongwu (1991)]

The donors and lenders, particularly the European Community, Japan, the IMF and the World Bank took a completely different position on the African predicament. The United States contended that most African states had not implemented "serious and sustained" economic reform, that there must be a "shift from a government dominated approach to development to a private sector-led approach" and that "democratization...will lead to better governance and fiscal accountability." [Spangler (1991)]. Even the United States, the world's largest debtor nation has a trade deficit of over \$4 trillion and on practically all counts, its economy is in serious crisis in spite of its democracy. The Savings and Loans scandal which is costing the nation over \$500 billion reflects the fact that "fiscal accountability" cannot always be guaranteed even in a Western-style democracy. More importantly, it is wrong to pressure African states to reduce state influence while in the West the state is still a major actor in economic matters- bailing out businesses, conducting research and development for businesses, seeking foreign markets for private business, subsidizing health care, education, public transportation and guaranteeing and subsidizing local businesses who invest in certain parts of the world.

The West continues to subsidize farmers and also controls prices. It provides social insurance and all sorts of assistance to the poor such as Food Stamps. Thus to give the impression that Western capitalism has developed only because the state does not participate in the economic sphere is simply incorrect. It is equally a very dangerous prescription in an underdeveloped economy, where the dominant elites are weak and non-hegemonic and where the economy is under foreign domination. It would appear that it is more of a strategy to promote the interests of the dominant actors in African economies- foreign capital. In any case, it is a historical fact that none of the present developed nations, not even the successful Newly Industrializing Countries (NICs), developed democratically. The rights of people, especially women, children and minorities were only guaranteed after the market was consolidated and after the institutions to sustain the market and democracy were established and consolidated and legitimized. It is therefore also incorrect to give the impression that the West was always democratic, that its current state of development is the precipitate of its democratic history, and that it has resolved the problems of democracy. Development cannot occur without surplus extraction, the development of the factors and forces of production, the strengthening of the institutions and structures of production, and exchange. In social formations that are already underdeveloped, dominated and marginalized, it is doubtful if these can be done by following the prescriptions of the very same forces that underdeveloped the societies, that presently dominate them, and that have a very visible interest in their underdevelopment and marginalization in the global system.

Failed economic and political policies have thus increased repression, political desperation and intolerance and violence in Africa. Regimes have now devised ingenuous ways of getting around the growing pressures for accountability, democracy and social justice. In other instances, elites are engaging in a struggle to penetrate political institutions in order to domesticate on-going struggles for democracy. There is a need to be cautious in how we embrace the new political

parties. There is obviously a massive disjunction between pronouncements and documents on the one hand and practices and praxis on the other. In Nigeria, for instance, the methods, goals and instruments of politics are in no way better than those of the now defunct first and second republics. In most instances, the new parties are more disorganized, more corrupt and more violent. It becomes necessary to be cautious as to how we translate the emergence of new political parties into the arrival of the democratic era.

The national conference, which has already been called in several African countries is a major development which opens up new opportunities for confronting the power of the dominant classes. Yet we need to be very cautious in determining the forces behind these conferences, the goals that are established and the methods for pursuing them. If such conferences are meant merely to attack the incumbent president, elect another potential life president, deal with political and not economic issues, its relevance will be tenuous. Furthermore, if the conference is merely a tool in the hands of political opportunists and those marginalized from the centre of current politics, it will eventually be hijacked and controlled by elements who are only marginally different from the current custodians of power. Finally, if the national conference is merely designed to create another political party dominated by political elites, intellectuals and second level politicians, then it will be unable to mobilize the people on a long-term basis or to provide an opportunity for strengthening civil society and thus ensure the survival of democracy. The only way in which the national conference can be relevant is if it is summoned by popular and grassroots organizations, visibly dominated by these organizations, focuses on issues beyond the dictator and the elites, organizes around popular issues, empowers the people and their organizations, addresses environmental, political, social and economic issues and works for short- and longer-term structural changes in the political economy. The new authoritarianism is therefore more subtle and more complex than the old, but quite unlikely to survive the onslaught of non-bourgeois forces.

Strengthening civil society in Africa: constraints and possibilities

It is true that the wind of change is blowing everywhere in the world. In Central America and Africa, the struggle for democracy, popular participation, social justice and accountability remains intense. Eastern Europe is perhaps the most dramatic manifestation of the ongoing struggles to restructure political and economic relations. Unfortunately, in all regions mentioned above, the process and pattern of restructuring is being dictated and directed by the IMF and the World Bank, Western nations and donors. This is unfortunate because the prescriptions of these institutions and western nations do not reflect the realities and specificities of the regions affected and are informed by the overall global objectives of the donors and lenders in the first instance. Of course, there is a visible bias in the patterns of support for restructuring around the world. The USIAD, the international finance institutions, aid agencies, western nations and Japan have given more assistance and made more pledges to Russia alone than to the 47 nations in sub-Saharan Africa in the past three decades! It is this biased pattern of support that compelled Ibrahim Babangida, as Chairman of the OAU in his address to the 46th Session of the UN General Assembly in October 1991 to note that:

Economic development nurtures democracy. On the other hand, under-development is a threat and obstacle to democracy. We commend the peoples of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union for their decision to build democratic societies. We also note the significant financial and economic assistance which the Western industrialized countries and Japan have decided to offer them. This...is in direct contrast to the virtual neglect of African affairs. If this neglect and this indifference continue, disillusionment may arise with democracy in the face of persistent and extreme economic hardship.

Babangida might not be quite correct in his analyses of the African situation. In the first place, the "virtual neglect" Africa is probably what the region needs right now. This will create a fertile ground for Africans to reconceptualise development and political models, re-consider theoretical positions, re-align the content and context of politics, and restructure society along lines dictated by African experiences and realities rather than Cold War or Western positions and dictates. Secondly, the neglect of African efforts at restructuring will not lead to disillusionment among African as Babangida has contended. Perhaps it will among the elites, because they will not have the foreign aid to sponsor political parties and candidates, to plunder and put on foreign bank accounts and to bribe the opposition. But among the people, it will be very propitious for the struggle for democracy. The elites will have to fight for power on relatively equal terms and they would have to confront the anger of the people without the support of Western powers and other foreign interest groups.

Yet the struggle for democracy in Africa is fraught with problems and contradictions: political opportunism, ideological confusion, personalization of the problem and struggle, vulnerability to penetration by agents of the state and elites, poverty and lack of funds, limited political experience and susceptibility to primordial manipulations. Many of the so-called pro-democracy movements are being led by yesterday's politicians, disgraced and discredited. Others are controlled by powerful opposition elements who see it as a short cut to political power. Yet some have no clear cut alternatives to the existing situation. In Zambia, the MMD is being rocked by allegations and counter allegations of corruption, abandonment of democratic principles and inability to lead the nation away from the political patterns established by Kenneth Kaunda. The resignation of Godwin Nkumbula, the Youth and Sports Minister and A. Lewenika, the Science and Technology Minister and the formation of the Caucus for National Unity (CNU) in Zambia demonstrate that the pro-democracy movements are still fragile, weak, factionalized and vulnerable. Yet

the inability of African elites to build a viable hegemony, promote national mobilization and unity, encourage industrialization and accumulation through investments in productive activities, provide credible and popular leadership, protect the civil liberties if the masses and restructure the marginal location and role of their respective economies in the global system have combined with other factors to promote a new process and struggle for strengthening civil society.

All over Africa, the call for democracy has become very loud and clear. Old orthodoxies and alliances are being challenged and recomposed. Political elites are being demystified as demonstrated by challenges to Kaunda, Mobutu and Moi, to mention a few. Military regimes are becoming unpopular in spite of their rhetoric. We are seeing a demystification of traditional methods of struggle and traditional reliance on the revolutionary consciousness of the working classes. Intellectuals are leaving the confines of their so-called "ivory towers" and becoming concretely engaged in the struggles of the people. The impoverishment of the middle classes has created a huge army of supported for the working and peasant classes. We are seeing instead a new movement bringing together workers, peasants, students, women, professionals and the unemployed. The goals are the same: to demand accountability, participation, social justice, democracy and empowerment of the people and their organizations. We are witnessing new alignment and realignment of social forces beyond ethnic, regional and religious divisions. In the past decade or so, hundreds of civil liberty organizations and popular movements as well as NGOs have been created in all African states in spite of opposition and harassment by the state and its security networks. The Movement for Freedom and Justice (MFJ) in Ghana, the Civil Liberties Organization (CLO) and the Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (CDHR) in Nigeria, the Lusaka-based Zambia Independence Monitoring Team (ZIMT) and Community Action Movement, the Emang Basadi (Women, Rise Up) in Botswana, the Organization of Rural Associations for Progress in Zimbabwe, the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies in The Gambia and the Centre d'Etudes et de recherches sur la

Democratic Pluraliste dans le Tiers-Monde in Senegal are just a few of the numerous popular organizations that have emerged to articulate, defend and extend the rights and power of the masses. In most instances, these organizations plan and articulate their goals beyond the on-going transitions to "democracy". Unfortunately, there is still an excessive focus on the superficial instruments of democracy as opposed to the process of democratization. The latter would involve the systematic mobilization, organization, education, strengthening and empowerment of popular organizations in urban and rural areas and the development and the nurturing of a genuine counter-democratic culture. In this way a foundation can be laid for rational, consensual and democratic political traditions and relations. It is precisely the absence of this tradition of grassroots empowerment that has made it impossible for political parties to become mass-based and to survive, that has made democratic rights and liberties tenuous and that has made it possible for military adventurists and political opportunists to hijack political power, repress the people, plunder the national treasuries and reproduce conditions of backwardness and subservience to imperialism.

In spite of its limitations the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development has provided a framework for democratization and empowerment on which African states and popular organizations can build. Adopted in February 1990, it recognizes the "unprecedented and unacceptable proportions" of the African crisis, recognizes that the crisis is not just an economic one, but also a "human, legal, political and social crisis" and takes the position that the only way out of the present crisis is to "establish independent people's organizations at various levels that are genuinely grassroot, voluntary, democratically administered and self-reliant and that are rooted in the tradition and culture of the society so as to ensure community empowerment and self-development" [ECA (1990, p.20)]. The document notes that Africa's crisis cannot be overcome "unless the structures, pattern and political context of the process of socio-economic development are appropriately altered". One of its concrete

prescriptions for government, the media, youths, women, NGOs and VDOs, the international community and organized labour is that "there must be an opening up of the political process to accommodate freedom of opinions, tolerate differences, accept consensus on issues as well as ensure the effective participation of the people and their organizations and association." [ECA (1990, p.19)]. Perhaps the most important part of the document is constituted by the recommendations for the establishment of national and regional monitoring bodies and the identification of ten major indicators of empowerment, participation and democratization: literacy level as an indicator of "capacity for mass participation in public debate, decision-making and the general development process", freedom of association, especially political association, representation of the people and their organizations in national bodies, the extent of the rule of law and economic justice, environmental protection, press freedom, number and scope of grass roots organizations "with effective participation in development activities", implementation of the 1989 Abuja Declaration on Women, political accountability of leadership at all levels and decentralization of decision-making processes and institutions [ECA (1990, p.31-32)].

The indicators above, go beyond the prescriptions from the West-multi-partite, elections, parliaments, constitutions and the adoption of monetarist economic programs- which are comparatively easier for the elites to implement and manipulate. Implementing the indicators recommended by the ECA and which has been accepted and adopted by the OAU will enthrone the power and struggles of the people and overthrow the waste, corruption, decadence and subservience which has characterized elite dominance of the political landscape since the 1960s. This is where the real struggle for Africa in the 1990s is located, rather than in replicating Western political institutions when the foundation and the environment for the survival of the transferred structures and institutions are weak or very tenuous.

Conclusion: Beyond elite politics in Africa?

It is easy to assume that it will be possible in the next few years to transcend bourgeois politics in Africa. This would, of course, be a mere assumption. The reality on-ground shows that the struggle to empower the masses and their organization and to strengthen civil society will be a long and difficult one. State power must first be captured and dominated by the masses and their political movements before they can begin to restructure the society. It is the interest of those who dominate the state that get expressed in public policies. Yet, as we all know, the linkages between the elites and the people cannot be understated. Disgraced politicians and persons convicted of various forms of financial improprieties easily become chiefs in their communities. The so-called young politicians- "new breeds" as they are called in Nigeria, are more corrupt, more violent, more ambitious and more intolerant than the "old brigade." Many of them are controlled and sponsored by the old brigade of politicians. Corruption has eaten deep into the fabric of the African society. Even in many rural areas, complaints about corruption is met with responses like "why don't you go and steal your share?" The work ethics is in shambles, alienation from the state is at its extreme, traditional values have been perverted to the maximum and traditions which were once communalistic have been replaced by crass individualism. The masses, in spite of the slow changes taking place are still very susceptible to ethnic, regional and religious manipulation and can easily be incited to violence. Thus, there is no reason to expect that the current process will not experience significant set backs.

While I agree with Wamba-dia-Wamba that "the Party is not necessarily a political site;" that it is not always correct to view the political party as "a timeless instrument of modern politics;" and that in Africa, the party has served more as a "tool" for the manipulation and domestication of the masses, I disagree with the view that "In Africa emancipative politics will be without parties and will function by means of political organizations." [Wamba-dia-Wamba (1992, p.35,

36)]. This would amount to a reification of the so-called political organizations, and the assumption that parties are necessarily bad irrespective of past experiences and the situation in other parts of the world. The whole purpose of history is to enable present and future generations to avoid the mistakes of the past. Africans have had a very raw deal from the elites as far as political parties go. Yet, the real problem is not with political parties but with the nature, kinds, and purposes of the parties and the environments in which they are formed and operated. Who forms them? Why were they formed? Are they democratic? What checks and balances exist to ensure that they operate as political parties? What is/are the basis of their support? How are the leaders selected? Are they accountable to the membership? These are just a few critical questions that need to be considered in any discussion of political parties. One hundred thousand political organizations without points of focus and points of convergence of interests will culminate in chaos. In any case, there will never be a time when ALL Africans will share the same perspectives and positions on ALL issues.

It is not always the case that the elites see "the people to be unthinking." [Wamba-dia-Wamba (1992, p.36)]. On the contrary, the elites have been very scared of the revolutionary and popular ideas and thoughts of the people. This is the main reason for the establishment of several security networks, the control of the press, the harassment of popular organizations, the attacks on academic freedom, the underfunding of education in general and the control of all spheres of society. Political parties will still be required to select the best and most responsible candidates, educate the public on issues, serve as outlets for the expression of different political interests and ideologies, serve as checks and balances on each other, and encourage the initiation and execution of public policies. The real challenge is to create first and foremost the viable, democratic and rational environment for the party not to be hijacked by the elites and the wealthy, and for it not to become an instrument for advancing narrow religious, ethnic or regional interests. We must not allow the euphoria of the on-

going changes in the global system, or let our disappointment with the failure of socialism in practice in Eastern Europe to compel us to throw away the baby with the bath water. Africa cannot move from one extreme to the other extreme without mapping out its own original path while taking due cognizance of developments in other social formations.

In the final analyses, the current crisis, unfortunate as it is, is good for Africa. It is exploding old myths, exposing the elites and the state to new challenges, generating new contradictions, encouraging new questions and alliances beyond officially sponsored organizations, and laying the foundations for a second revolution in Africa. The present resembles the situation in which Africa found itself in the 1960s. A propitious situation for far-reaching and radical restructuring of the political and economic landscape. It was squandered on the alter of the Cold War, conservatism, lack of political will, subservience to the West and in some cases to the East, and the inability to consummate the struggle against colonial capitalism. It is interesting to see the OAU reviving some of the positions adopted by Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana in the 1960s by adopting the African Economic Treaty which is to culminate in the establishment of an African Common Market in AD2025 as well as in the election of an African parliament. In spite of all its failings, it is clear that even at the level of the OAU, there is a new realization that change is around the corner. The days of the "life presidents", tyrants, sit-tight rulers, and professional politicians who were accountable only to their foreign masters and bankers, are clearly numbered in Africa. Whatever happens, "the new democratic governments, or those retained after honest elections, will be confronted with the difficult challenge of reviving stagnant economies. In most cases, they will inherit depleted treasuries, high debt repayments, declining earnings from commodity exports, low levels of private investments and increased dependence on international aid and loans." [Africa Demos (1991, p.1)]. Building democracy, accountability, self-reliance, and strengthening civil society in the context of these constraints will be the challenge of the 1990s.

Notes

Africa Demos Vol. I (2) (January 1991)

Ankomah, Baffour

1990 "Ghana's Reform Programme: How long Will it be Before the Patient is Cured?" in African Business, March 1990, pp.11-13.

Bing, Adotey

1991 "Salim A. Salim on the OAU and the African Agenda" Review of African Political Economy 50, March 1991

Cheru, Fantu

1989 The Silent Revolution in Africa: Debt, Development and Democracy, Harare and London, Anvil and Zed.

ECA (Economic Commission for Africa)

1990 African Charter for Popular Participation in Development, Addis Ababa, ECA

Ihonvbere, Julius O.

1991 "Political Conditionality and Prospects for Recovery in Sub-Saharan Africa" in International Third World Studies Journal and Review Vol. 3 (1-2), 1991, pp.17-26.

1992 "Africa and the New World Order" in The Iranian Journal of International Affairs, 1992.

1993 (forthcoming) "Economic Crisis, Structural Adjustment and Social Crisis in Nigeria" in World Development Vol. 21 (1), January 1993.

Morrow, Lance

1992 "Africa: The Scramble for Existence" in Time, Sept. 7, 1992

North South Roundtable

1991 The Challenge of Africa in the 90's: Report of the North South Roundtable Consultation, New York, North South Roundtable

Okongwu, Chu

1991 Minister of Budget and Planning of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the OAU at the 1991 Review of UNPAAERD, reproduced in "UNPAAERD speeches debate issues of debt, governance, and aid flows" in Africa Recovery Vol. 5 (4), December 1991, p.24.

Spangler, Scott

1991 "UNPAAERD speeches debate issues of debt, governance, and aid flows" in Africa Recovery Vol.5 (4), December 1991, p.25.

Wamba-dia-Wamba, Ernest

1992 "Beyond Elite Politics of Democracy in Africa" in Quest Vol. VI (1), June 1992, pp.29-42.

World Bank

1989 Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth - A Long-Term Perspective Study, Washington, DC: World Bank.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Julius O. Ihonvbere studied at the Universities of Ife in Nigeria, Carleton and Toronto in Canada. He has taught at the Universities of Ife and Port Harcourt in Nigeria and the University of Toronto. Among his publications are The Rise and Fall of Nigeria's Second Republic 1979-1984 (with Toyin Falola) (London, 1985), Towards a Political Economy of Nigeria (with Timothy Shaw) (Aldershot, 1988) and Political Economy of Crisis and Underdevelopment in Africa (Lagos, 1990) and also numerous articles. He recently completed the book Nigeria: The Politics of Adjustment and Democracy (Transaction publishers at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey). He is currently teaching African and Third World Politics at The University of Texas, Austin U.S.A..

Issiaka-Prosper Lalèyè is professor of Anthropology and Epistemology at the University of Saint-Louis, Sénégal. Formerly professor at the UNAZA (Université Nationale du Zaïre) and at the FTCK (Faculté de Théologie Catholique de Kinshasa). He has published extensively on African Philosophy. His dissertation is titled Connaissance de la mentalité. Epistémologie génétique et critique de l'anthropologie.

Henle Lauer is currently lecturing at the Department of Philosophy, University of Ghana, Legon Ghana. She has been working in the field of Action Theory and is currently interested in the Philosophy of Mathematics. A recent publication is "Causalist Assumptions in the Grammar of Action Sentences" in Philosophical Studies, Vol.33, pp.143-152 (1991/1992).

Mogobe B. Ramose is lecturer at the Katholieke Universiteit van Tilburg, Tilburg The Netherlands and was Senior Research Fellow in the Center for Research into the Foundations of Law, Catholic University of Leuven, Leuven Belgium. He has published, among others, "Self-Determination in Decolonisation" in Issues of Self-Determination, Twining, W. (ed.), Aberdeen University Press, 1991.

Godfrey B. Tangwa has studied in Nigeria (Nsukka and Ife) and obtained his Phd from the University of Ibadan in 1984. He is currently involved in the John Hopkins Programme for International Education and the National Centre for Nursing and Midwifery Ethics of Queen Charloote's College in London. He taught at the University of Ige (1978-1986) and is currently teaching at the Department of Philosophy of the University of Yaounde.

We depend on:

**committed international scholars
contributions against neocolonialism and racism
subscribers in need of radical debate on Africa**

ZAST

The Journal for African Studies

ZAST: HAYDNGASSE 14/8, A-1060 WIEN, AUSTRIA

ANNOUNCEMENT

Work has begun on The Philosophy of Law: An Encyclopedia, to be edited by Christopher Berry Gray and published by Garland Publishing, Inc., of New York. Scheduled to appear in June 1997, the book will comprise alphabetically arranged entries on all aspects of the subject and is intended to provide an overview of current scholarship in this field for students and researchers.

Inquiries should be addressed to: Dr. C.B. Gray, Department of Philosophy, Concordia University, 7141 Sherbrooke St. W., Montreal, Quebec, Canada H4B 1R6.

CUMULATIVE INDEX: VOL.I- VOL.VI 1987 - 1992Articles

Bello, A.G.A.

Philosophy and an African Language. Vol.I, no.1, pp.5-11.

Bewaji, J.A.I.

Dr. Chr. Neugebauer's Critical Note on Ethnophilosophy in the Philosophical discourse in Africa: some remarks. Vol.V, no.1, pp.95-102.

Boele van Hensbroek, P.

Kuhn's Philosophy of Science and the Social Sciences. Vol.I, no.1, pp.67-82.

Social Science as Societal Debate. Vol.I, no.2, pp.68-79.

In Memoriam Roni Khul Bwalya. Vol.VI, no.1, pp.5-9.

Bwalya, R.M. Khul

On Kaundaism. Vol.I, no.1, pp.31-38.

ContRanganathan. Vol.I, no.2, pp.81-92.

The Great Thought: Reflections on Idealism (poem). Vol.IV, no.1, p.65.

Bwele, G.

Axes du Temps en Afrique et en Occident. Vol.V, no.2, pp.48-62.

Cocks, J.

Cultural Theory looks at Identity and Contradiction. Vol.IV, no.2, pp.38-60.

Diagne, O.

Voix et Existence. Vol.V, no.1, pp.36-49.

Diaware, M.

Reading Africa through Foucault: V.Y. Mudimbe's Re-affirmation of the Subject. Vol.IV, no.1, pp.74-93.

Goma, L.K.H.

Foreword. Vol.I, no.1, pp.2-4.

Harris, L.

The Characterisation of American Philosophy: The African World as a Reality in American philosophy. Vol.II, no.1, pp.25-36.

Hountondji, P.

What Philosophy can do. Vol.I, no.2, pp.3-28.

Occidentalism, elitism: answer to two critics. Vol.III, no.2, pp.3-30.

Hunt, G.

On Anyanwu's Conception of African Aesthetics. Vol.I, no.1, pp.23-29.

Ihonvbere, J.O.

Is Democracy Possible in Africa? The Elites, the People and Civil Society. Vol.VI, no.2, pp.84-109.

Irung Tshitambal'a Mulang

Mythe et Philosophie; Réponse à Elungu, Towa et autres. Vol.I, no.1, pp.13-22.

Pourquoi cette Fidélité excessive de la Philosophie Négro-Africaine Contemporaine à la Philosophie Occidentale. Vol.II, no.1, pp.3-14.

Kambaji wa Kambaji

Quelques Réflexions sur les fondements épistémologique de la Connaissance Sociologique. Vol.II, no.2, pp.53-72.

Kapongola Kibambe-Kia-Nkima

Philosophie, Ideologie et acteurs economique en Africa. Vol.IV, no.1, pp.18-41.

Kasanda, S.M.

The African Scholar Through the "UNZA Graduate". Vol.II, no.2, pp.23-29.

Kasi, L.

L'Anti-idéologue dans la lutte Politique en Afrique. Vol.II, no.1, pp.15-22.

Kasongo, P.K. and Kolo, M.

La Presse et les Idéologies ou la Problématique de l'Apolitisme dans le Journalisme. Vol.II, no.1, pp.39-57.

Keita, L.

Sen, Individual Rights and the Paretian liberal. Vol.I, no.1, pp.75-82.

Biology and Sociology - A false Synthesis. Vol.II, no.1, pp. 59-73.

Research Disciplines in the African Context: A Revised Paradigm. Vol.III, no.1, pp.3-19.

Barnes, Bloor and the Sociolgy of Knowledge. Vol.V, no.2, pp.90-105.

Kigongo, J.K.

Human Rights in the Context of Uganda's Political Experience. Vol.V, no.1, pp.74-79.

Kimmerle, H.

The Question of Relevance in current Nigerian Philosophy. Vol.IV, no.1, pp.66-73.

Non-Africans on African Philosophy. Steps to a difficult Dialogue. Vol.VI, no.1, pp.69-77.

Kiros, T.

The Concept of Self-Determination and the Crisis in the Horn of Africa. Vol.I, no.2, pp.53-67.

Foucault on Language and Power: A Reconstruction. Vol.III, no.2, pp.53-84.

Kluyskens, J.

World Conference of Philosophy (report). Vol.V, no.2, pp.115-116.

Koenis, S.

Dewey and Merton on Science and Democracy. Vol.III, no.1, pp.76-83.

Kolo, M. and Kasongo, P.K.

La Presse et les Idéologies ou la Problématique de l'Apolitisme dans le Journalisme. Vol.II, no.1, pp.39-57.

Lalèyê, I-P.

Conscience et Culture. Vol.VI, no.1, pp.10-27.

Temps et Développement. Vol.VI, no.2, pp.44-62.

Langley, W.

The Right of Self-Determination in International Law. Vol.IV, no.1, pp.4-17.

Lauer, H.

Saying is not Believing: Some Fallacies of Fundamentalism. Vol.VI, no.2, pp.4-24.

Lungu, G.F.

Pragmatism or Crude Utility? A Critique of the Education with Production Movement in Contemporary Africa. Vol.V, no.2, pp.74-89.

Makhabane, T.E., Ramose, M.B. and Maphala, T.G.T.

In Search of a Workable and Lasting Constitutional Change in South Africa. Vol.V, no.2, pp.4-31.

Maphala, T.G.T., Ramose, M.B. and Makhabane, T.E.

In Search of a Workable and Lasting Constitutional Change in South Africa. Vol.V, no.2, pp.4-31.

Miller, S.R.

Just War Theory and the ANC's armed Struggle. Vol.IV, no.2, pp.80-102.

Mombo Kubele N'Suka

Causalité et Réalité chez Jean Piaget: Approche Critique de l'Epistémologie Génétique. Vol.III, no.2, pp.85-91.

Mudimbe, V.Y.

Response. Vol.IV, no.1, pp.99-101.

Muhigirwa Rusembuka, S.J.

Critique Nietzscheenne de la Métaphysique: Aurore ou Crépuscule? Vol.I, no.1, pp.55-65.

Nauta, L.W.

Dogmatists and their Critics - A Philosophical Inquiry into the Roots of Rigidity. Vol.II, no.2, pp.31-51.

Neugebauer, C.

Ethnophilosophy in the Philosophical Discourse in Africa: A critical Note. Vol.IV, no.1, pp.42-64.

-
- Hegel and Kant - A Refutation of their Racism.* Vol.V, no.1, pp.50-73.
- Ocaya, V.
Logic, Fallacy and the Law of Evidence. Vol.III, no.1, pp.32-44.
- Okolo, C.B.
'Wonder' as Path to African Philosophy. Vol.III, no.1, pp.20-31.
- Oladipo, O.
Morality in Yoruba Thought. Vol.I, no.2, pp.42-51.
Towards a philosophical Study of African Culture: A Critique of Traditionalism. Vol.III, no.2, pp.31-51.
- Oruka, H.O.
For the Sake of Truth - Response to Wiredu's Critique of "Truth and Belief". Vol.II, no.2, pp.3-21.
Cultural Fundamentals in Philosophy: Obstacles in philosophical Dialogues. Vol.IV, no.2, pp.20-37.
- Outlaw, L.
The Deafening Silence of the "Guiding Light"; American Philosophy and the Problem of the Color Line. Vol.I, no.1, pp.39-50.
- Oyugi, E.
Human Rights in Africa. Vol.III, no.1, pp.46-59.
- Procee, H.
Beyond Universalism and Relativism. Vol.VI, no.1, pp.44-55.
- Ramose, M.B.
Hobbes and the Philosophy of International Relations. Vol.V, no.1, pp.18-35.
African Democratic Tradition: Oneness, Consensus and Openness: A Reply to Wamba-dia-Wamba. Vol.VI, no.2, pp.62-84.
- Ramose, M.B., Maphala, T.G.T. and Makhabane, T.E.
In Search of a Workable and Lasting Constitutional Change in South Africa. Vol.V, no.2, pp.4-31.

Salami, Y.K.

Anomalous Monism and the Mind-Body Problem. Vol.V, no.2, pp.106-114.

Scholze, W.

Human Rights between Universalism and Relativism. Vol.VI, no.1, pp.56-68.

Sterling, M.C.

The ethical Thought of Martin Luther King. Vol.V, no.1, pp.80-94.

Sogolo, G.

Popper's Hermeneutics and African Thought. Vol.II, no.2, pp.75-85.

Tangwa, G.B.

Criticism and Survival. An Interpretation of Popper's Theory of Evolution. Vol.V, no.2, pp.32-47.

Colonial Legacy and the Langaue Situation in Cameroon. Vol.VI, no.2, pp.24-44.

Tchafu Mwamba

Afrique, Ou Est-Elle? Vol.I, no.1, pp.51-53.

Wamba-dia-Wamba, E.

Philosophy and African Intellectuals: Mimesis of Western Classicism, ethnophilosophical Romanticism or African Self-Mastery? Vol.V, no.1, pp.4-17.

Homage to the Great African Savant Cheikh Ante Diop. Vol.V, no.2, pp.63-73.

Beyond Elite Politics of Democracy in Africa. Vol.VI, no.1, pp.28-43.

Wanjohi, G.J.

St. Thomas Aquina's Philosophy of Education. Vol.II, no.2, pp.87-104.

Westerman, P.

The European Example. A Continent Path towards Democracy. Vol.III, no.1, pp.60-74.

Wiredu, K.

La Question de la Violence dans la Philosophie Contemporaine Africaine. Vol.I, no.2, pp.30-40.

Are There Cultural Universals? Vol.IV, no.2, pp.4-19.

Zolua, B.M.

De l'Idéologie comme Correlat des Termes Idéologiste et Idéologue. Vol.IV, no.2, pp.62-79.

Reviews

Birt, R.E.

A returning to the source: the philosophy of Alaine Locke edited by L. Harris. Vol.IV, no.2, pp.103-113.

Boele van Hensbroek, P.

Praxis International. Vol.I, no.1, pp.83-85.

Einführung in die Afrikanische Philosophie by C. Neugebauer. Vol.V, no.1, pp.114-117.

Philosophie, Ideologie und Gesellschaft in Afrika: Wien 1989 edited by C. Neugebauer. Vol.VI, no.1, pp.87-90.

Harriott, H.H.

The theory and practice of autonomy by S. Dworkin. Vol.V, no.1, pp.118-122.

Hoffmann, G-R.

Philosophie in Afrika - afrikanische Philosophie by H. Kimmerle. Vol.VI, no.1, pp.78-83.

Kasanda, S.

Philosophy of Education and Education of Philosophy by C.B. Okolo. Vol.IV, no.1, pp.102-105.

Keita, L.

On Wiredu's "Philosophy and an African Culture" and Hountondji's "African Philosophy: Myth and Reality". Vol.II, no.1, pp.74-80.

After Philosophy - End or Transformation edited by K. Baynes, J. Bohman and T. McCarthy. Vol.III, no.1, pp.84-88.

Anthropology as Cultural Critique by G.E. Marcus and M.M.J. Fischer. Vol.III, no.2, pp.92-94.

The Invention of Africa by V.Y. Mudimbe. Vol.IV, no.1, pp.94-99.

Eurocentrism by S. Amin. Vol.V, no.1, pp.104-113.

Kluyskens, J.

The essential readings of African Philosophy by T. Serequeberhan. Vol.VI, no.1, pp.84-87.

Ranuga, T.K.

Negotiating change in South Africa by M.B. Ramose. Vol.V, no.2, pp.120-123.

Storm, W.

Journal review: Educação e Filosofia. Vol. IV, no.2, pp.114-116.

Philosophy of Liberation by E. Dussel. Vol.V, no.2, pp.117-119.

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

In My Fathers House; Africa in the Philosophy of Culture

K.A. Appiah. New York, Cambridge University Press, 1992

From the Preface: "Africa's intellectuals have long been engaged in a conversation with each other and with Europeans and Americans, about what it means to be African. At the heart of these debates on African identity are the seminal works of politicians, creative writers, and philosophers from Africa and the diaspora. In this book, I draw on the writings of these African and African-American thinkers to explore the possibilities and pitfalls of an African identity in the late twentieth century."

225 pages including bibliography and index

The Surreptitious Speech. *Présence Africaine* and the Politics of Otherness 1947-1987

V.Y. Mudimbe (ed.) Chicago/London, The University of Chicago Press, 1992

A collection of essays celebrating forty years of the journal *Présence Africaine*. Twenty-three contributions from a wide range of authors, in six sections, 463 pages, US\$ 22.50

Parables & Fables. Exegesis, Textuality, and Politics in Central Africa

V.Y. Mudimbe. Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1991

From the back-side cover: "V.Y. Mudimbe poses two overarching questions: "How can one think about and comment upon alterity without essentialising its features? And, is it possible to speak and write about an African tradition or its contemporary practice without taking into account the authority of the colonial library that has invented African identities?"

238 pages including bibliography and index, US\$ 19.95

Postkoloniales Philosophieren: Afrika

H. Nagl-Docekal & F.M. Wimmer (hrsg.) R. Oldenburg Verlag, Wien/München, 1992

Eleven contributions, mostly in the English language, with German summary, meant as an introduction to the main discussions in African philosophy after the colonial era.

252 pages including an extensive bibliography, DM 38.00

Science, Rationality, and Neoclassical Economics

Lansana D. Keita University of Delaware Press, 1992

The book challenges neoclassical economist's claim to have developed a scientific theory of economics. 192 pages, US\$ 31.50

African Philosophy: Traditional Yoruba Philosophy and Contemporary African Realities

Segun Gbadegesin New York, Peter Lang, 1991

* **MAILING ADDRESS:**

QUEST

PO Box 9114
9703 LC Groningen
The Netherlands

* **QUEST** appears twice per year in June and December.

* **RATES:**

	Zambia	Africa	Other Countries
Individuals	ZK 100.-	US\$ 10.-	US\$ 20.-
Institutions	ZK 200.-	US\$ 15.-	US\$ 30.-

* **MODES OF PAYMENT:**

(Unless paying by credit card or cash, always add US\$7.- to cover bank-charges)

Bank: US\$ account: nr. 40.53.17.018 AMRO-bank
Groningen, The Netherlands

Giro/Postbank: nr. 3141811 Groningen The Netherlands

Cheque: make cheques payable to:

Quest: Philosophical Discussions

Credit Card:

Visa	American Express	Eurocard
x	x	x

Card number:

Valid until:

Name:

Address:

Signature:

Subscription period requested:

QUEST

Dept. of Philosophy University of Zambia

Adress postale: Quest, PO Box 9114, 9703 LC Groningen, Les Pays Bas

Editeurs: John A.I. Bewaji, Pieter Boele van Hensbroek et Issiaka-Prospér Lalèyè

Editeur Afrique oriental: Prof. E. Wamba-dia-Wamba (Dar-es-Salam)

Conceil Editorial: Prof. Paulin Hountondji (Univ. de Cotonou, Benin), Prof. Gatian Lungu (Univ. de Zambie), Prof. Lolle Nauta (Univ. de Groningen, Pays Bas), Prof. Henry Odera Oruka (Univ. de Nairobi, Kenya) and Prof. Kwasi Wiredu (Univ. de South Florida, USA)

Production: Laurence Charpentier, Sarah Lewis et Willem Storm

QUEST: Philosophical Discussions est un journal Africain de Philosophie. Il sert de voie d'expression aux penseurs d'Afrique, et il veut stimuler une discussion philosophique sur des problèmes qui surgissent des transformations radicales que l'Afrique et les Africains sont en train de subir.

QUEST contient des points de discussion actuels se rapportant à l'Afrique et des questions d'intérêt philosophique général, et s'adresse à un public international de philosophes professionnels et d'intellectuels appartenant à d'autres disciplines ayant des intérêts philosophiques. Des articles originaux écrits en Anglais ou en Français seront publiés, avec un résumé dans l'autre langue.

QUEST paraît deux fois par an.

Contributions: Les articles ne devront pas dépasser normalement 6000 mots et devront être accompagnés d'un résumé d'un maximum de 200 mots. Le résumé devra être en Français de préférence si l'article est en Anglais, et vice-versa. Dans les manuscrits les citations devront suivre le modèle du journal.

Abonnements: voir dernière page.

CONTENTS

Henle Lauer	
<i>Saying is not Believing: Some Fallacies of Fundamentalism</i>	4
Godfrey B. Tangwa	
<i>Colonial Legacy and the Language Situation in Cameroon</i>	24
Issiaka-Prosper Lalèyè	
<i>Temps et Développement</i>	44
Mogobe B. Ramose	
<i>African Democratic Tradition: Oneness, Consensus and Openness: A Reply to Wamba-dia-Wamba</i>	62
Julius O. Ihonvbere	
<i>Is Democracy Possible in Africa? The Elites, the People and Civil Society</i>	84
Notes on Contributors	109
Cumulative Index: Vol.I - Vol.VI	111
Publications of Interest	118