



QUEST

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QUEST

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EDITORIAL

At this, the start of the fourth year of publication of QUEST you will find slight changes in the cover and ordering of the contents.

The current issue starts a discussion on the Zairean philosopher and novelist V.Y. Mudimbe, especially concerning his book The Invention of Africa. Readers are invited to take part in the discussion by submitting short responses, theses, or full-fledged articles.

Topics relevant to Africa and African philosophy are discussed in this issue by Kibambe-Kia-Nkima, Prof. W. Langley, Dr. Ch. Neugebauer and Prof. H. Kimmerle. Further articles discussing the state of philosophical discussion in selected countries or regions are welcome, as are book-reviews.

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EDITORIAL

A la rentrée de la quatrième année que paraît Quest, vous verrez sans doute que la couverture et le sommaire auront subi quelques changements.

Ce numéro de Quest commencera par la discussion au sujet de V.Y. Mudimbe, philosophe et écrivain zaïrois. Nous dirigerons notre attention notamment sur son livre The Invention of Africa. Dans ce but nous aimerions inviter à participer à la discussion nos lecteurs qui pourraient écrire de brèves réactions, des propositions ou des articles.

Kibambe-Kia-Nkima, le professeur W. Langley, Dr. Ch. Neugebauer et le professeur H. Kimmerle traiteront des sujets pertinents concernant l'Afrique et la philosophie africaine. De plus, la rédaction accueille volontiers plus d'articles portant sur les discussions de philosophie menées dans certains pays ou certaines régions. Il en va de même des recensions.

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Résumé

Le droit d'autodétermination en droit international

Cet article porte sur quelques aspects moins connus du droit d'autodétermination. Les questions suivantes seront soulevées:

- 1) Le "moi" à qui se rapporte ce droit; il s'agit notamment des "peuples" et au besoin des minorités;*
- 2) La portée du droit: l'autodétermination n'a pas seulement trait aux droits politiques mais aussi aux droits économiques (par exemple le droit du peuple à bénéficier des ressources naturelles et le droit à une coopération internationale loyale) et aux droits socio-culturels.*
- 3) Les rapports du droit menant à un ordre international souhaitable et une égalité substantielle entre les Etats.*

L'auteur souligne ensuite l'importance accordée à la norme d'égalité entre les Etats et les peuples (exprimée par le droit d'autodétermination) en traçant les grandes lignes de leur participation à concrétiser certaines valeurs telles que la formation dans toutes les domaines de la vie et la dignité de l'homme.

THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION IN INTERNATIONAL LAW

Winston E. Langley

International law, as is the case in all other types of law, is the product of the evolving human social experience. As such, it is dynamic in nature and, especially since 1945, it has played an important role in expressing and shaping the outlines of the human struggle to transform the international order. It is characteristic of modern international law, of course, that it does not only express struggle but, among other things as well, it wombs the "infrastructure" of assumptions, practices, expectations and reliances, embraces the ideals, preferences and moral inspiration of the units it seeks to regulate (principally nation-states and individuals), and defines the commitments to certain collectively-sponsored modes by which shared as well as conflicting interests and purposes can be accommodated.¹ Among the standards that have evolved to encompass those ideals, inspirations, modes and interests is the norm of self-determination.

The objective of this paper is to look at that norm and examine its relationship to the developmental aspirations of "Third World" peoples, in particular, and the world in general. The paper will approach its goal by defining the self in which the right is said to inhere, examining the scope and reach of the right possessed by that self, and looking at the links of that right to certain preferred international arrangements. We will proceed in the order of the outlined approach.

DEFINITION OF SELF

Viewed as the "source" or the "prerequisite for the enjoyment" of most other human rights, the right to self-determination stands at the core of human socio-economic dignity and freedom.² The "self" to which international law recognizes the right as belonging is not that possessed by human beings as individuals, however; rather, it is the self with which individuals are associated as members of groups. Hence, if one carefully examines the relevant international legal instruments--from the United Nations Charter to the International Bill of Rights (the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights)-- one will find the self to which they refer is that of "peoples".

Peoples, in turn, include subject groups under colonial rule (frequently identified as those in dependent territories), nations not enjoying the status of states, and, among others, ethnic groups constitutionally recognized as such, including those living in sovereign states though not in colonial relationships.³ Such peoples and others have the right, as against "foreigners", to a state if their own --a right which includes the entitlement to adopt representative institutions and freely choose the form of government they wish to (external self-determination). Internally, it means that such peoples, in relationship to their respective governments, enjoy the right to political and civil liberties. We will return to this discussion under the scope and reach of the right; for the present, let it suffice to say that the definition of self, as constitutive of peoples, embraces all color, creed, race and nationality.

It is also important at this juncture to indicate that, in respect of ethnic groups within the borders of existing states, in order to give full support to the principle of international law which recognizes the right of such states to maintain unimpaired their territorial integrity, the external right to self-determination obtains only when a government of any such state fails to represent "the whole people belonging to the territory without distinction as to race, creed, color".⁴ Having sket-

ched the definition of the self in which the right is said to reside, it should be helpful to give a brief elaboration of the scope of that right.

SCOPE OF RIGHT

The definition above, by implication, states certain aspects of the reach associated with the right to self-determination. Peoples are entitled to decide on their international status (access to independence, association, secession, union), to defend their independence, if threatened, and to freely determine their political status --especially as that status is in conformity with their freely chosen goals for collective and individual development. In addition --and one has but to review the first article of the two international covenants mentioned above to perceive this-- self-determination includes the right of peoples to freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development; and, for their own ends, to dispose freely of their natural wealth and resources. While the political aspects itself of determination are frequently discussed and are --perhaps because of international public relations-- often the only one with which the mass public is aware, it should be obvious to the reader from the discussions thus far that the political, economic, social and cultural features of that right are legally emphasized. Indeed, the right cannot be fully enjoyed unless and until all four constituents or integrants are jointly realized. Thus, in order to give more attention to the less frequently emphasized features, the paper will proceed to discuss the economic, social, and cultural scope of the right, with the assumption that two generalizations are understood: first, that the political reach of the right extends from gaining the standing of national sovereignty to the development of free political institutions consistent with that status and expressive of respect for fundamental human rights. Second, those political aspects of the right --as in case of the other constituents we will now turn to-- are progressive in character. In short, the right to self-determination is a continuing one that cannot be considered implemented or completed once and for all.

Economic Scope of Right

The recognized right of peoples to freely pursue their economic development bears with it the general principle that one country should not be allowed to exploit the natural resources of another. The relevant international legal instruments which recite that general principle⁵ do not, however, merely affirm the right of every country to its own natural resources, but, in addition, specifically provides that the right over such resources belongs to peoples. This provision, among other things, occasions three consequences. First, in case of nation-states, the government has the responsibility to use the natural resources for the benefit of the "whole people" --the latter term including the unborn. Second, with regard to dependent territories (Namibia until recently, for example), the right implies that the governing regime is legally required to use the economic resources in the interest of the dependent peoples. Third, the natural wealth of a people cannot be legally or morally alienated to the claim of any private group, domestic or foreign. The latter consequence, in part, ushered in the principle which states that "in no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence."⁶

The right of peoples (in economic terms) over their natural wealth and the attendant duty of government to give effect to that right logically follow from the right of self-determination in the political sphere. Just as peoples have "a permanent right" to choose their own form of government and to demand, directly or through representative means, that the conduct of local, national and international affairs be carried out in their interests, so, too, they are entitled to maintain that the natural resources of their country be employed for their benefit.⁷

The claims of the last paragraph are actually but a starting point, because the right to self-determination in the economic realm can, in the modern era, be truly realized only if one includes resources outside the borders of one's country. As Charles Beitz has reminded us, even sovereign states are not self-contained or self-sufficient units; they are in fact open and fully interdependent communities whose borders do not set the outer limits of the cooperative actions that produce wealth. The

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globe as a whole has become a system of cooperative venture --one which, in large measure, is defined by the growth of international investment, trade, and finance. Capital surpluses are not confined to investment in the societies where they are produced but, instead, are reinvested wherever conditions promise the highest net return.⁸

Like individuals in domestic societies, cooperation between and among nations in global society produces aggregate benefits that would not exist if one individual or nation were left to his/her or its own resources. Unlike domestic society, however, institutions and principles promotive of some defined, fair distribution of the co-operatively realized benefits and burdens --especially to the least favored-- are either absent or underdeveloped in international relations. So in inter-state relations, socio-economic interactions now widens (far more than in domestic society) the income gap between the rich and the poor, even though they sometimes produce absolute gains for almost all.⁹ The right to self-determination includes (this is not yet explicitly sanctioned by international law but is implied) the right to remove the obstacles to a peoples full sharing in the realized benefits from international co-operation; certainly, as will be seen later in this paper, they have a right to create institutions to remove the inequality which results from international co-operation. Such, in part, has been the goal of some of those who have sought a New International Economic Order (NIEO). Let us turn to the social reach of the right.

Social Reach of Right

If the right of permanent sovereignty over the natural wealth and other resources is a fundamental element in the principle of self-determination, since economic independence cannot be assured unless people enjoy the right to possess, use and develop their natural wealth and resources in their own interest, it follows that, without that enjoyment, sovereign political independence cannot be achieved or maintained. But self-determination in political and economic terms cannot be fully realized without a social component. One may even say that all three are part of the same process of development. Hence, all peoples, by reason of the right to self-determination have a right to freely define and

direct their own social development.

Central to the social constituent of the right is the view that social progress and a just social order are essential conditions for the full satisfaction of human aspirations, including international peace and security. The first and foremost requirement for development and social progress, therefore, is the elimination from society of those "evils and obstacles" that run counter to that development and that progress--obstacles such as inequality, exploitation, colonialism, racism. Of course, those evils extend in many directions. And if one were to use inequality as an example, it would cover phenomena from the status of women and their participation in development, the rights of children, the handicapped, the aged, and refugees to the utilization of the progress in science and technology, the structure of the international economic system, religious intolerance, and illiteracy.

Obviously, in exercising its right to determine freely its social development, a people may set its own priorities, and, without interference from external parties, decide on the means and methods by which those priorities are achieved. By extension, to the extent that certain social institutions are deemed crucial to the goals of social progress --the family for example-- a people enjoys the right to give special emphasis to them.

Not so obvious are two related consequences to social development: its reciprocally reinforcing relationship to other areas of human rights and its intimate ties to the proper management of the world's natural resources, including the environment. In case of the latter, whether we look at the world's natural forests, the sea --including the seabed-- the electromagnetic spectrum or outerspace,¹⁰ social development cannot take place if resources incident to that development are destroyed or unequally allocated. In respect of the reciprocal relationship between the right to social development and other areas of human rights, one has but to reflect on the right to work, to form trade unions, to social security, to the benefits of scientific progress, to an adequate standard of living for oneself and one's family *et cetera* to grasp the truth of the assertion. We will now look at the final area under the scope of the right to self-determination.

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Cultural Scope of Right

By virtue of the principle of self-determination, all peoples have the right to pursue their cultural development. If culture be defined as the sum of the material and spiritual values created by a people, then cultural development refers to that which is defining of life.

Comprising all forms of expressions, the cultural includes conceptions, beliefs, institutions, and techniques which, together, shape a pattern of living for the members of a society and ensures a shared expectation that allows for change with the degree of stability necessary for continuity. Indeed, in its intellectual and ethical expression, it does not only help to ensure the moral and intellectual solidarity of a people, but, as well, expresses the noblest image which human beings individually and collectively, may envision as defining of their destiny. As such, cultural development is both the ultimate aim of political action and the means by which every individual may gain a sense of self, of her or his place in and responsibility toward the common work of society and the world, and of how to create an environment by which s/he may reflect on the aims of human beings and share that reflection in confronting the future.

SELF-DETERMINATION AND PREFERRED INTERNATIONAL ORDER

One of the preferred arrangements among the peoples of global society is that of a world organized around nation-states. Among the values served by such an organization is that of international equality, since nation-states are said, by virtue of their sovereignty, to be legally equal. Hence, former colonial or non-selfgoverning territories sought to gain sovereign political status --to become politically independent-- because that status promised would-be states the legal capacity to act without being subject to any higher authority, In short, to determine for themselves, coextensively with any other state, that which they adjudge to be in their best interest. Sovereign equality, however, more nearly describes an enabling principle than a substantive capacity. It is self-determination, within the context of the above, briefly outlined

reach, that makes sovereign equality a substantive reality. But why do people seek substantive equality as a value? And what is the relationship of that value to the aspirations of "Third World" peoples?

THE NORM OF EQUALITY AND THIRD WORLD ASPIRATIONS

First, the sovereign equality of nation-states is analogous to the civic equality of individuals who constitute those states. Equality in the first category is, however, a precondition for the enjoyment of full equality in the second, although operationally, the ideal of substantive equality can be approximated only through the interaction of both categories --the individual and the national. Second, the equality among peoples that the right to self-determination pursues and seeks to define is not an end in itself; rather, it is more of a means toward human development and human dignity --two values which are at the apex of peoples' aspirations within the "Third World" and, no less so, throughout the world in general. We will use the value of development to illustrate what we have attempting to do since we began our discussion.

Development, as used in this essay, refers not only to economic growth and certain well-publicized features of social change (revolutions, for example), but the process by which the human personality, individually and collectively, progressively realizes its own flowering. Therefore, when one speaks of self-determination --whether in the political, economic, social or cultural sphere-- one should be speaking, at least implicitly, of a relationship between that right and development as defined. An example may be apt at this juncture in illustrating the points made above.

Studies in social and political psychology as well as the research and reflections of scholars in other fields of learning have concluded that belonging, rootedness, and effectiveness are among human basic needs. In case of effectiveness, defined negatively, it means the need to avoid impotence, to escape being an object. In the affirmative vein, it means to have a sense that one (a nation-state or an individual), in any given environment, enjoys the capacity to influence (to co-determine) the outcome of matters deemed important to one, to affect the conduct of others as well as institutions. Looked at in a socio-economic

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context, the need to be effective, to be co-determiner if actions which affect one, to make others in their conduct pursue alternatives that are complementary to, or --at least, in part-- expressive of the ends one seeks, is the basis of equality. It is also the basis for security, since one enjoys important control over what affects one.

Having the capability to make others shape their behavior in a particular way (being effective) means, among other things, that one can set limits to what others, in their relationship with one, may or may not do. And setting such limits is part of gaining an identity, of defining oneself; while the act of signifying and having others accept the signification of those limits is that of gaining significance. The latter, plus equality, security and identity as part of the process of development as well as the constitution of dignity.

In a more concrete vein, the right to self-determination --considered from the economic, social and cultural point of view, as done above-- enables a people to gain the capacity for effectiveness. By controlling their natural resources, a people will not only be able to organize economic life in a manner conforming to their interest, but they can define or otherwise limit the terms under which others may or may not have access to it. Likewise is the case in respect of the social and cultural: a people may mobilize themselves in a manner which, culturally, promises effective popular participation. In case of Africa, for example, a decision may be made to return, partly, to models of the traditional African community which recognized the right of citizens to participate directly in government not only because doing so can help to reconstitute a cultural heritage fragmented by colonialism, but also on account of the fact that, like the Greek polis, the traditional community emphasized the moral and spiritual as being a defining attribute of all human beings.¹¹ And there is no force more powerful than a people leagued together by moral and spiritual solidarity. Not only will such a people be able to define itself and set limits to what others, in their relationship with it, may or may not do, but the security and the creativeness incident to such a solidarity will enable it to transcend obstacles to the realization of the flowering of its collective personality.

Earlier in the discussion of this subsection, we made reference to signify and significance. Every social identity, however, inchoate, communicates (signifies) itself, by virtue of its very existence, to other identities. The development of that identity in all its fullness, however, (in the case of human beings) depends on the real and continuous interchange between and among peoples. It follows, therefore, that if a goal of self-determination is the full flowering of one's personhood, individual and collective, the right to be informed and to inform is a logical derivative of self-determination as a principle. Such is the basis of the claim for a new information and communication order --an order which, as it presently exists, supports international inequality. Let us turn briefly to dignity and its relationship to the principle of equality.

Although as a concept dignity is not defined in international relations, its appearance in the Charter of the United Nations, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the previously-mentioned international covenants as well as some regional instruments, including the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the American Convention on Human Rights, is not to be taken lightly.¹² Indeed, its central importance can be partially appreciated in noting the position taken in the preamble of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination that the "Charter of the United Nations is based on the principle of the dignity and equality inherent in all human beings". And Principle VII of the Helsinki Accords reinforces that position in contending that the rights which the participating states obligate themselves to respect and promote "derive from the inherent dignity of the human person". In other words, self-determination, as a human right --for all its importance as earlier indicated-- is derived from the concept of human dignity. But what is dignity?

Briefly stated, it is the moral and spiritual attribute of human personhood that is defined in terms of inherent worth. That worth, according to Kant, should not be confused with price or relative value; that which has price or relative value has a substitute that can replace it as its equivalent. But inherent worth is exalted above all values and thus has no equivalent. It has inner or intrinsic worth, that is, digni-

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ty.¹³

The dignity of all human beings, the inherent worth of individuals, makes each person, by virtue of the ultimate value he or she represents, the equal of every other person. Besides, having ultimate worth means individuals and the groups to which they belong cannot, morally, be used as objects, as a means to ends others seek. Yet the world does not operate in this manner. Peoples --as well as individuals-- are compelled, by structures of law and other institutions of power, to submit to the will of the few ("Third World" peoples, for example have been so subjected). And with that submission has come a core feeling of having been wronged, degraded, of being forced to be less than what one is and can be.¹⁴ It is this condition of degradation, of being less than whole, of not being an end but an instrument of others, that self-determination is designed to relieve. And to the extent that it does, it will indeed contribute to the development of human beings and to the restoration of their sense of dignity.

The word contribute is carefully chosen in the preceding sentence, because, among other things, human development and dignity cannot be achieved in full, if those who currently gain their supposed sense of significance and claim to development through the oppression of others are allowed to preserve their existing positions. Those who oppress others are also less than they can be --as they must, since the submission they force others to live under is not only a form of compensation for their own sense of weakness and degradation but a source for the more general corruption of human nature. The preferred order that "Third World" peoples seek, therefore --and the world as a whole needs-- is one from which the structures of oppression are removed. Self-determination, as a right, can substantively and procedurally help in the creation of that order.

NOTES:

1. W. Langley, "The Falklands-Malvinas War: Some Implications for the International Legal Order" in Transition Vol. XIV (1986), pp. 19-20.
2. See the position of Poland, the Ukraine, India and Syria, among others, in U.N. Doc. A/c.3/SR. 310, Paragraphs 10, 33, 47 (1950).
3. It should be understood that, in accordance with Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities are not entitled to the right of self-determination. Persons, as individuals, belonging to such groups are, however, to be allowed to enjoy their own culture, use their own language, and practice their own religion. They may even be allowed a degree of local autonomy.
4. See Declaration on Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation Among States Gen. Ass. Res. 2625.(XXV) October 24, 1970. U.N. Doc. GAOR 25th Sess., Supp. No. 28(A/8028), p.21.
5. See Art. 1(2) of the International Covenants.
6. Ibid. Writer's emphasis.
7. Antonio Cassese, "The Self-Determination of Peoples" in Louis Henkin (ed.) The International Bill of Rights (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), p.103.
8. Charles Beitz, Political Theory and International Relations (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp.144-145.
9. Ibid.

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10. See Erich Fromm, The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), pp.232-236; Christian Bay, "Self-Respect as a Human Right: Thoughts on the Dialectics of Wants and Needs in the Struggle for Human Community" (Paper Presented at the Third Annual Meeting of the International Society for Political Psychology, held in Boston, June 4-7, 1980); and Winston Langley, "The Banjul Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights" in The Indian Political Science Review Vol. XIX #1 & 2 (January-December, 1985) p.12.
11. B. F. Nursey-Bray, "The Polis, The African Traditional Community, and African Natural Law" in Ali A. Mazrui and H. H. Patel (eds.) Africa in World Affairs: The Next Twenty Years (New York: The Third Press, Joseph Okpaku Publishing Company, Inc., 1973), pp.24-25.
12. See Preamble to the U.N. Charter, Article 1 of the UDHR, Article 10 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Right, Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 5 of the African (Banjul) Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and Article 11 of the American Convention on Human Rights.
13. Immanuel Kant, Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals Trans. by Lewis W. Beck (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1959), p.53.
14. Andrew Bard Schmookler, Out of Weakness (London: Bantam Books, 1988).

Summary

Philosophy, Ideology and Economical Actors in Africa.

This article discusses the present social order in Africa.

In the opinion of the author, current political, ideological and philosophical issues are intimately related with social and economical realities, determined by the 'dominated capitalist mode of production'. At the level of ideology this is expressed for instance in mystifying political discourse that refuses to use the terms 'exploitation' and 'dependence'.

The African continent harbours authentic ideologies which could stimulate economic actors. Practical life shows the significance of these ideologies.

PHILOSOPHIE, IDEOLOGIE ET ACTEURS ECONOMIQUES EN AFRIQUE

Kibambe Kia Nkima, Kapongola

Ce travail traite l'ordre social actuel en Afrique. Son intérêt est commandé par le principe que la conjoncture politique, idéologique, philosophique et la structure économique-sociale sont liées. L'explication de cette angoisse économique-sociale majeure, intervenue dans le continent africain depuis les années 1960 jusqu'à nos jours, est remplacée par des idéologies "Authentiques" qui animent les acteurs économiques. Ces idéologies font abstraction de l'histoire et des contradictions objectives qui se nouent au sein de l'organisation sociétaria africaine, actuelle.

L'histoire économique de l'Afrique, de les deux dernières décennies 1965 à nos jours, se présente en deux phases dans lesquelles la conception et l'exécution semblent s'imposer par les slogans tels:

- dans la première phase, l'homme au service de l'économie. De quelle économie s'agit-il en pratique ? Stabilité politique, stabilité monétaire, l'économie mixte.
- dans la deuxième phase, l'africanisation, l'Afrique aux Africains! Création des offices nationaux et multiples déclarations ; ces slogans, reflètent-les la réalité économique déclarée par les discours politiques ? La pratique montre le contraire, car c'est le même système (ancien) qui continue. Les colonialistes sont partis, les néo-colonialistes entrent en fonction. Ce fait explique mieux la philosophie des acteurs économiques en Afrique, les échecs des programmes pour le développement, la dépendance, ainsi que l'inconsistance du DISCOURS POLITIQUE par rapport à la praxis sociale.

En se référant à ces deux phases, on pourra remarquer que le DISCOURS politique, les déclarations officielles ne sont pas vérifiables ni par les faits ni par l'histoire. Car l'homme, quant à nous, c'est le peuple africain mais les faits et l'histoire montrent que l'homme n'est pas le peuple mais une certaine élite privilégiée. L'économie est pour eux. Quant à la stabilité politique ce n'est qu'une instabilité et l'incon-

sistance qui a été instaurée par les dirigeants des acteurs économiques et de l'autorité politique. Cela est essentiellement dû à la faiblesse de l'économie zairoise qui a une forme segmentale et qui n'est ni intégrée ni autocentrée. Car obéissant à la politique coloniale et néo-coloniale, c'est-à-dire obéissant à la structure et au fonctionnement de l'économie capitaliste mondiale.

Les richesses essentielles de l'Afrique sont exploitées par le capital étranger au profit des intérêts étrangers et (des dirigeants) des intérêts privés des dirigeants, acteurs économiques et autorités politiques en Afrique.

L'émergence des partis politiques uniques et le triomphe des acteurs économiques-élites de modernisation- sont liés à une économie au service du colonialisme et du néo-colonialisme. Et les dissensions politiques entre les acteurs économiques et politiques et la prise des pouvoirs par les militaires font clairement part d'une machination colonialiste, néo-colonialiste ou impérialiste.

L'Africanisation, la rétrocession et les différentes créations, leur résultat n'est pas à chercher. L'échec n'exige pas des lunettes pour le voir. Enfin, l'analyse -des faits et de l'histoire politique économique et leurs contradictions- arriverait à prouver le contraire des déclarations officielles et la stratégie qui a été proposée avant de prendre cette mesure d'Africanisation.

Ces faits indiquent la prédominance des forces qui soutendent un élargissement progressif du fossé qui sépare les pays riches des pays pauvres ou mieux appauvris. Ce problème ou sa prise de conscience, n'est-il pas à l'origine d'un ensemble d'initiatives destinées à modifier le contenu et la forme des relations économiques et dont on trouve la manifestation la plus significative dans les conférences des Nations--Unies pour le commerce et le développement réalisées à Genève (1964) et à New Delhi 1968.

L'exploitation des pays pauvres (d'Afrique) par les pays riches (d'occident) aboutit à faire apparaître des rapports de classes comme de simples rapports entre pays, c'est-à-dire à substituer à l'antagonisme réel, travailleurs/exploiteurs, l'antagonisme fictif nations outillées/nations

sous équipées ou dépourvues. Ceci rejoint, à notre avis, aussi bien la thèse philosophique de l'idéologie bourgeoise, impérialiste que l'idéologie de la bourgeoisie compradore- africaine- des pays pauvres.

Une série de questions se pose à ce niveau. Qui sont les acteurs économiques en Afrique ? Quels sont les faits économiques ? Quelle est la nature du discours politique ? Et quelle en est la réalité?

La réponse à cette série de questions sera concrétiser par cette analyse de la contradiction existant entre le système économique au niveau mondial et le système économique en Afrique dans les rapports de l'exploitation économique, la réalité cachée par les déclarations politiques officielles.

Un mode de production?

Il y a un trait dépendance qui surgit par conséquent et qui s'explique à partir des caractéristiques historiques du système qui ont produit une combinaison structurelle qui a rendu la société africaine incapable de se développer par elle même. Cette situation pourra être appelée, "un mode de production capitaliste dominé", dans le développement duquel il existe des tendances regressives et un mélange complexe de caractéristiques qui viennent de ces différentes formes ou structures d'organisation économique et de domination des intérêts financiers privés.

L'Afrique est régie par le système capitaliste. La domination de l'étranger dans le système bancaire (par exemple) joue un rôle révélateur du type d'économie à laquelle appartient le système de production. Malgré la correction de l'africanisation par les radicalisations et par les rétrocessions, la domination n'a subit aucune modification. La confusion demeure. Les étrangers demeurent toujours maîtres de l'Afrique.

Erreur ! Tout politicien ou toute élite de modernisation africaine est-il capable de gérer l'économie privée ? Peut-il être (acteur économique) agent productif ? Non, il faut posséder un sens aigu des responsabilités et de l'intérêt africain.

Enfin, c'est la faillite de la politique monétaire et budgétaire, c'est l'échec des projets de grande envergure. Nous croyons aussi que les dernières manifestations de la ruine économique et de la faillite financière des Etats africains à tous les niveaux suivent le sillage des guerres d'Afrique (au Zaïre alors Congo, en Angola, en Ouganda, au Tchad, au Mozambique, nous en passons...). L'histoire peut le prouver. Bref, ce sont les effets prévisibles de certaines décisions non mûries. Cette caractéristique perturbe même l'évolution sociale après avoir dévié l'évolution économique et politique voire idéologique. Elle permet de comprendre les alternatives économique-sociales et politico-idéologiques des classes sociales, leur lutte, les contradictions, les effets et l'évolution historique de la dépendance, en cherchant les éléments analytiques réunis dans la conception de la dépendance, les limites et les possibilités d'un développement futur. Et, la contradiction effective régissant les rapports établis entre les classes sociales dominantes et les classes sociales dominées. Or, la distinction des classes, n'est autre chose que l'extrapolation - des classes du centre à la périphérie - de certaines différences classiques ; l'accentuation préconçue de l'inadéquation relative des concepts amplifie la différenciation concrète. L'idéologie dominante prend d'ailleurs les allures d'une science exacte.

"Ceci conduit, écrit Poulantzas, à une caractéristique tout à fait remarquable. Cette occultation est opérée par le fait que ces idéologies se donnent explicitement comme science. A l'encontre d'analyses superficielles à ce sujet... Ceci est net dans la constitution des catégories politiques de l'opinion publique et du consensus ; elles se rapportent à la façon particulière dont les classes dominées acceptent ses idéologies... elles ne visent pas l'être reçues par les classes dominées sur le mode de la participation au sacré, elles se donnent explicitement et sont reçues, comme technique scientifique. D'où des contradictions internes tout à fait remarquables"(1).

Une rupture épistémologique.

Signalons immédiatement, dans une telle conception, qu'il y a une rupture épistémologique alléguée entre les deux catégories conceptuelles: l'une, les faits dominants ; l'autre, ceux qui sont dominés. Cette rupture intrduit un équilibre imaginaire là où s'intensifient des relations réelles d'exploitation dont la problématisation est essentielle à la compréhension de la situation concrète. Entre les classes privilégiées; dominantes au centre et dominantes/dominées à la périphérie, la jonction dissymétrique effective s'y trouve voilée par des mystifiants discours politiques et idéologiques. A. Emmanuel écrit:

"Cette combinaison des rapports de production intérieurs, de rapports politiques et idéologiques mondiaux forment le "blocage" des forces productives ou d'"entrave" à leur développement et ne correspondent qu'à des images mystifiants et ne fournissent pas une explication de ce qui est. Ce ne peut-être qu'une illusion de croire que les pays impérialistes pourraient contribuer à modifier, dans un sens favorable aux pays dominés, ces rapports économiques inégaux qui caractérisent l'économie mondiale capitaliste"(2).

Dans cet état de chose, les acteurs économiques en Afrique ne savent pas où conduisent les discours politiques des à-coups contradictoires dont ils sont impuissants/victimes conscients ou inconscients. Peut-être par le désintérêt. La Peur. La Résignation. La Démission ou la Complicité. Et pourtant, nous savons tous, joignant l'analyse théorique aux éléments d'expérience pratique, que le devenir se conquiert, on ne le reçoit pas. De grâce.

Les soi-disant "programmes d'aide" aux pays sous-développés ne sont pas destinés à accélérer le développement de ces pays, et ils ne peuvent objectivement pas l'être. Leur résultat est nécessairement le maintien des pays dans la dépendance par la reproduction des inégalités

économiques. Si l'aide est donnée par les pays impérialistes, elle l'est, certainement, aux classes dirigeantes/dirigées dans ces pays pauvres auxquelles elle permet de consolider leur domination, et non aux classes dirigées/dirigées de ces pays dominés auxquelles elle ne peut permettre que la faveur de la révolution. Ceci s'applique à notre continent Afrique. Ces relations et ces rapports ne constituent, nullement, un adjoint pour recouvrir d'un voile léger la réalité de mode de production, d'exploitation.

En effet, les acteurs économiques et les autorités politiques -élites de modernisation- de ce continent sont conditionnés dans leur action de collaboration "Coopération" et sont sous l'emprise du capitalisme international en matière économique.

Un mythe politique.

Quant à la région juridico-politique dans laquelle s'identifie et s'exprime le discours politique, pour diffuser une réalité aliénante, elle se caractérise par l'absence de toute allusion à l'exploitation, à la domination et à la dépendance. A cet effet, le discours politique correspond précisément à l'occultation, à la mystification et cache la réalité sociale, c'est-à-dire l'exploitation économique (et culturelle), la domination et le rôle réel des acteurs économiques, voire des autorités politiques.

"On pourrait dire en quelque sorte, précise POULANTZAS, que le rôle du politique consiste non pas simplement à cacher le niveau économique toujours déterminant, mais à cacher le niveau qui a le rôle dominant et surtout le fait de sa domination. La région dominante est celle qui précisément, remplit le mieux pour de nombreuses raisons; ce particulier rôle de masque -mythique- obscurisant et mystifiant"(3).

Par le biais de ce qui précède nous pouvons dire qu'il y a domination des acteurs économiques et de l'autorité politique. Cette domination exclut par là même l'indépendance politique ; par conséquent, le développement économique est aussi exclu. Cette domination, cette exploitation et cette dépendance présentent une double nature d'une part ; elle est une exploitation indirecte qui est un fait de la structure polarisée de l'économie mondiale capitaliste, d'autre part, elle est une exploitation directe qui résulte des investissements (et "aide") industriels, commerciaux, financiers etc... d'un pays capitaliste avancé dans un autre pays capitalistes sous-développé.

Aussi, ces investissements permettent-ils l'exploitation directe des travailleurs dans la division, inégale, internationale du travail. Cette exploitation internationale est la même qu'aux niveaux continental, national, régional, sectoriel etc.. Une polarisation en cascade. C'est, certainement, une réalité économique-sociale à laquelle les déclarations officielles ne font pas allusion consciemment ou inconsciemment.

On s'apercevra déjà que l'impact le plus tragique du capitalisme avancé a été toujours l'éducation des acteurs économiques et des autorités politiques et le maintien dans la dépendance politique des Etats-Africains.

L'instabilité ou la stabilité relative à la politique économique, le sous-développement, tout discours politique, ne sont pas, inséparables au développement de l'économie occidentale. Les institutions économiques et politiques ne fonctionnent pas dans l'isolement. S. AMIN soutient aussi cette thèse en s'exprimant en ces termes :

"Le système économique de la périphérie ne peut pas se comprendre en soi, car ses relations avec le centre sont essentielles, de même la structure sociale de la périphérie, est une structure tronquée, qui ne peut être comprise que si on la met à sa véritable place, comme élément d'une structure mondiale"(4).

Il apparait ici la contradiction de la polarisation du système en métropoles et en satellites qui établit que le développement dans l'occident et le sous-développement de l'Afrique engendre le développement dans l'occident alors que le développement de l'occident produit le sous-développement dans l'Afrique ou, ce qui est la même chose de dire que l'Occident se développe -s'équipe d'avantage- grâce à ce qu'il exporte à l'Afrique et que cette dernière se sous développe à cause de ce qu'elle perd au profit de l'occident. Enfin disons que l'Afrique est génératrice du développement de l'Occident et l'Occident générateur du sous-développement de l'Afrique.

Suivant cette conception, attribuer le retard économique et l'érosion des acteurs économiques ou de l'autorité politique à la nature particulière des pays en voie de développement, c'est ignorer le mouvement de l'histoire et l'histoire des idées, c'est-à-dire l'histoire de la philosophie de l'affirmation de la philosophie de la différence ; la position des Etats outillés à l'égard des Etats en retard, la politique de segmentation, le mécanisme de "pas d'élites pas d'ennuis" ou d'exploitation, l'effort pour maintenir une structure de domination et de dépendance permanente.

Quelle est, alors, la position de ces Etats outillés, qu'elle est leur histoire ?

Ces Etats tiennent à maintenir leurs relations dominants/dominés entre les dirigeants de l'Occident et les dirigeants de l'Afrique, ainsi les relations engendrent et consolident une forme spécifique d'une même communauté économique. Karl MARX avait déjà perçu cet état des choses bien longtemps.

Il écrit :

"la forme spécifique dans laquelle on extrait directement des producteurs, un surplus de travail non payé, détermine les relations entre dirigeants et dirigés, qui naissent directement de production, elle même, et qui, en retour, réagissent sur elle comme un élément déterminant. Cependant sur cette constatation, repose l'entière formation de la communauté économique qui grandit à partir des

relations de production elles-mêmes et prend en temps, par ce moyen, sa forme politique spécifique, la forme spécifique correspond à ces relations"(5).

Avec ces relations, on pourra alors soutenir que les sociétés avancées sont à l'origine du sous-développement mondial et sont responsables en grande partie de l'instabilité politique des sociétés dites en retard. En outre, tout ce que peut contenir tout discours politique est contrôlé ou télécommandé -censuré- par les sociétés développées.

C'est dans cette optique que nous pouvons ranger le discours politique et les acteurs économiques en Afrique. Et l'Afrique dans ce cas n'est que l'illustration des destructions qu'opère l'impérialisme mondial, par le truchement du caractère fétiche de la marchandise, en vue d'instaurer la réalité de son exploitation et de sa domination.

Nous nous trouvons devant, d'une part, une économie dominée, économie africaine, d'autre part une économie dominante mondiale, dans un seul et unique système capitaliste mondiale. Tout ce qui est entrepris en Afrique pour mimer les nations outillées, accroît les dettes envers celles-ci. L'Afrique pauvre ou mieux l'Afrique qui subit la paupérisation est ainsi maintenue dans un statut bien déterminé de chasse gardée. De ce fait, les pays capitalistes avancés imposent leur production, par delà des différenciations qu'introduisent la richesse et la misère grâce à une bipolarisation outrancière à l'échelle mondiale. Une différence scandaleuse entre deux catégories extrêmes se manifeste par l'opulence de quelques un et la misère de tous. L'abondance des affaires va bon train et incite le capital monopoliste à maintenir une structure économique-sociale inégalitaire, au sein des forces sociales dominantes et dominants/dominées, tout en suscitant la complicité des acteurs économiques dominants/dominés.

Dès les années 1966, le capital monopoliste arrivait dans les pays pauvres d'Afrique sous forme de prêts aux gouvernements, ainsi que sous forme d'investissements et des sociétés multinationales pour faire sortir ces pays pauvres du chaos. Derrière ces investissements on remarquera que le centre monopoliste cherche à maintenir leurs relations

d'échange afin de bien augmenter la production et surtout de renforcer la fixation du capital dans les pays pauvres. Cette volonté rationnelle des investissements consiste à rechercher des secteurs qui pourront garantir un taux de profits élevé en accroissant l'accumulation de ce capital. Et de quelle façon? La soit disant aide financière est une pure et simple exportation des capitaux qui doivent rapporter des bénéfices aux pays exportateurs. Ces capitaux sont exportés soient sous forme d'investissement soient sous forme de prêts (capitaux usuaires). La spoliation de l'Afrique dans ce domaine consiste dans le fait que l'argent arrive en Afrique pour se multiplier et repartir ensuite. On peut apercevoir une contradiction visible dans ce mouvement d'aller et de retour. Cette aide a deux rôles : le premier de développer le donateur, le second est celui de sous-développer le receveur.

Par le biais de ce qui précède, il résulte que l'Occident exige en plus un commerce centré sur la métropole pour le contrôle direct et immédiat des affaires, c'est-à-dire des hommes acteurs économiques et autorité politique -bref de l'économie satellisée, économie extravertie. Cet état de choses ferme la voie au développement des satellites. L'économie s'ouvre complètement aux influences économiques étrangères. Les satellites deviennent des champs actifs de l'impérialisme. Les conséquences de cet impérialisme sont le succès grandissant des milieux d'affaires, directs ou indirects, impérialistes. Les apports de surplus américains en est une preuve tangible. Le lait, les boîtes de conserves, les habits usagés [communément nommés au Zaïre KOMBO en swahili ; TOMBOLA BUAKA en lingala; PEANCH = Pantalon ; LEACH = Chemise dans le milieu des musiciens et des jeunes et LIBANKO = veste !]. Les prix sont accessibles aux couches les plus large des populations en majorité déshéritées, en sont un exemple. Il arrive que les riches sautent aussi sur ces mêmes habits avant qu'on les ait étalés au marché c'est-à-dire ils choisissent ceux qui apparaissent neufs. Tandis qu'une certaine minorité exhibe des abacos, du bleu-jeans américain, des délavés ou génération TCHATCHU en lingala au Zaïre, dont les prix leur sont accessibles.

Ces traits ne peuvent pas être négligés dans l'histoire économique de l'Afrique. Ceci explique ou confirme que les traits de base du sous-développement et de la dépendance internationale se trouvent dans les

caractéristiques structurelles de mode de production capitaliste, provoquent à chaque moment les déséquilibres économiques pour le bon fonctionnement du système capitaliste mondial. C'est une distorsion immédiate de la vie économique et une détérioration totale.

On peut comprendre à partir d'ici ce qu'est le rôle - l'idéologie ou la philosophie- des acteurs économiques au Zaïre. Ils sont là pour les action et leurs intérêts capitalistes. La superstructure étatique, ses effets, ses relations avec la réalité aident historiquement à appréhender la totalité de cette conception.

"Cette conception de la totalité", écrit KARL KOSIK, "appréhende la réalité dans ses loi et structures internes, et s'efforce de découvrir les connexions internes intimes et nécessaires sous la superficialité et la contingence des phénomènes, s'oppose à la conception empirique qui s'accroche aux formes phénoménales et contingentes et ne parvient pas à saisir le procès d'évolution de la réalité"(6).

Signalons que cette conception est un problème de la conscience totale et significative de ces effets, qu'on trouve chez LUCKAS dans son "HISTOIRE ET CONSCIENCE DE CLASSE" lorsqu'il écrit : "...la vocation d'une classe à la domination signifie qu'il est possible à partir de ses intérêts de classe, à partir de sa conscience de classe, d'organiser l'ensemble de la société conformément à ses intérêts(7).

De cette situation de fait, un double statut de la classe surgit : la classe en soi déterminée par sa place dans la structure économique d'une part et la fonction de classe pour soi déterminée par sa fonction : lutte des classe d'autre part. A partir de ce double statut on voit le rapport idéologique entre les agents de la production et des classes sociales. Ici sont les acteurs économiques et l'autorité politique au pouvoir, dans l'ensemble des structures d'un mode de production qui demeurent en totalité les problèmes de l'exclusivité et de la détermination des classes.

L'absence de forces dynamiques a fait dans ce cas que l'histoire de

lutte de classes soit superstructurelle en ce sens que elle correspond au maintien des intérêts du groupe au pouvoir qui préserve sa position et contrôle les possibilités d'un contre mouvement. Ce n'est là que la possibilité de consolider consciemment ou inconsciemment, nous l'avions déjà dit, le développement du sous- développement incapable d'harmoniser les déclarations officielles avec la réalité économique-sociale. Car c'est dans une économie de la périphérie. Et c'est la raison pour laquelle les déclarations officielles utilisent le progrès et la croissance comme étant synonymes, ainsi elles mystifient la réalité, parce que toute croissance n'est pas nécessairement un progrès un développement.

Pour notre part, le développement ne peut être qu'un moyen efficace de poursuivre la lutte pour l'accession au bien-être des formations sociales données, selon une référence des "valeurs centres"(8) et un rythme propre à chaque citoyen. En d'autres termes : le développement est un processus dynamique et cumulatif de libération et de transformation des structures mentales politiques, culturelles et sociales de toute "formation sociale"(9). C'est une action de longue durée qui doit être appréciée en fonction du moment historique spécifique auquel on se situe, à la différence de la croissance qui est un phénomène à court terme. S'il y a développement à court terme, celui-ci doit respecter la perspective dynamique de long terme, en ne partageant pas l'opinion du laisser faire économique.

Certaines déclarations officielles semblent se défendre en faisant des bilans "positifs" de réalisation en termes de croissance économique, sociale et culturelle. Ceci fait croire aux gens qu'il y a un développement. Et pourtant une analyse fouillée et profonde montre que cette croissance est asymétrique et désordonnée. Tels que l'extension du chômage et du sous-emploi, la marginalisation des masses paysannes, la formation de la sous-prolétarisation urbaine et l'africanisation de la gestion économique et politique etc...

Aujourd'hui l'Afrique se trouve devant les problèmes de remboursement des annuités d'une part et de recours à l'extérieur pour s'endetter (sous forme d'investissement) afin de rembourser ces annuités. C'est, sans conteste, la désarticulation des édifices de la fondation de l'écono-

mie africaine. Car l'assistance financière extérieure, n'est qu'une nuisance qui ne demande pas une démonstration. On accorde au Zaïre un moratoire de réorganiser tous les secteurs de production par un nouvel endettement. C'est de la marre au diable ou mieux du diable à la marre, une aberration économique. Les investissements augmentent mais le taux réel n'a cessé de baisser. Les investissements sont-ils le moteur de la croissance ? Doute.

Alors pour provoquer l'adhésion au système, on rappelle aux masses africaines de sauvages guerres intertribales qui avaient lieu aux premières années des indépendances africaines. L'élément déterminant dans cette autre face du système est l'existence des idéologies non seulement dominées, mais aussi régionalistes. Et pourtant les spécialistes des affaires africaines -les savants- de l'autre côté expliquent la situation par des dualismes et le manque d'homogénéités etc...

On ne peut pas se limiter à une telle explication, car la situation ne peut s'expliquer que dans un ensemble de déséquilibres et de différences qui englobent tous les aspects des structures sociales. C'est la raison pour laquelle les interprétations du dualisme, soit en termes d'économie pure soit en termes de sociologie pure ne peuvent pas fournir une explication satisfaisante de ce phénomène. Il y a eu de grands débats autour de ce mot, nous ne pouvons donc pas y rester longtemps. Signalons seulement que : une économie duelle est tout d'abord un marché duel de la main d'oeuvre dans lequel les travailleurs de grosses sociétés, sociétés protégées par les syndicats (le vilain du système) et la législation sociale peuvent obtenir des salaires supérieurs à ceux du secteur retardaire (agriculture, petites industries) et à ceux que l'on pourrait obtenir dans un système de salaire. Quant à C. FURTADO et R. PREBISH, ils considèrent le dualisme comme un trait inhérent au sous-développement. Le dualisme nécessaire ou inévitable est considéré par ces auteurs comme un problème à long terme qui disparaîtra avec le développement si le gouvernement prend, en matière d'économie, des décisions justes dans une économie autocentrée(10).

Ce sont des approches diffusionnistes et dichotomiques d'ailleurs critiquées par A. G. FRANK, car elles expliquent le fossé entre les pays développés et les pays sous-développés en termes dichotomiques. Parfois

on parle, une intégration croissante, ce qui est le cas ; elle augmente la dépendance et accélère le processus de désintégration et d'adaptation subordonné de ce qu'il reste des relations sociales. Ces différentes explications du concept de dualisme sont, croyons-nous, les expressions conscientes de l'idéologie dominante du système ; tant dans la version conservatrice que progressiste. On lui attribue des causes endogènes et/ou exogènes.

Dans une version économique, c'est la concurrence imparfaite du marché, une rigidité dans les coefficients techniques sans références à la domination externe.

Dans une version sociologique, la transformation est possible grâce à la diffusion des facteurs des modèles avancés. C'est aussi l'expression des discours politiques. Des idéologies ? Absolument.

Quant à nous, l'expression logique et philosophique devrait être celle de la loi de l'histoire c'est-à-dire le dualisme est un phénomène temporaire dans tous les secteurs. Il est là, on ne l'oublie pas, mais, on doit tenir compte de l'ensemble du système. Car l'intégration, de certains éléments culturels et d'autres du passé, est conforme à la dialectique du procès de toute l'histoire économique.

Dans cet état de choses, nous disons encore une fois que les discours politiques sont des discours idéologiques, discours de mystification. Les masses sont aliénées, les discours politiques sont aussi aliénés, les acteurs économiques et les autorités politiques sont enfin aliénés. Par conséquent ce sont des dictatures néo-coloniales, impérialistes, en Afrique, qui cache les réalités.

Nature et effort voués à l'échec!

Comme les discours cachent les réalités, il faut donc aller au delà des mots pour découvrir celle-ci. C'est là qu'on trouve la nature du discours politique, le rôle des acteurs économiques et des autorités politiques.

Les dirigeants des acteurs économiques et des autorités politiques tiennent à l'exploitation et à la domination. S'ils remarquent que les autorités politiques ne sont plus favorables à leurs intérêts, ils arment un autre groupe dans l'obscurité et ce dernier exécute le jour, afin de continuer avec le maintien de la dépendance. Ainsi, tous les échecs s'expliquent bien dans l'ensemble du système présent au pays. L'authenticité, au Zaïre par exemple, n'est que cette idéologie de la dépendance qui accomplit son rôle d'occultation. C'est une domination qui se nie. Car nous savons que sans indépendance économique il n'y a pas d'indépendance politique. Ainsi les acteurs économiques et les autorités politiques sont soumis à l'action idéologique occultant la domination qui s'exerce sur eux. Et cette domination réside dans l'accaprement de la plus value produite par le travail des masses exploitées, d'une part, par la bourgeoisie nationale ; et d'autre part, par les maîtres de cette bourgeoisie.

La menace, d'agir sur les gens, constitue, dans cette situation une arme d'intimidation maniée dans l'obscurité par l'impérialisme avec la complicité des acteurs économiques pour faire pression sur les forces sociales dominées et les contraindre à se plier à des objectifs économiques et stratégiques bien précis.

Ainsi, les appareils politiques africains, par la contrainte, exercent à l'égard de ceux qui tentent de démasquer l'exploitation économique qui bloque le développement. La contrainte s'inscrit dans une perspective plus large dont la topographie est tracée en dernière instance par les lois impérialistes du capital monopoliste, agissant par interposition. Cette menace constante, qui plane sur les éléments progressistes, ne saurait avoir d'autre signification, malgré une certaine volonté manifeste qui anime les dirigeants politiques/dirigés, de sortir du joug colonial. C'est dans ce sens que Y. BENOT écrit : "Les contradictions héritées du colonialisme et celles du néo-colonialisme, la production idéologique soit une des fonctions et des armes de équipes au pouvoir"(11). Il enchaîne que :

"la connaissance des idéologies africaines n'est pas moins nécessaire que celle des travaux et acquis de la recherche scientifique africaine parce que les

unes et les autres sont des éléments qui, lus dans leur contexte intégral, donc rapportés et confrontés à cette situation de dépendance néo-coloniale, dévoilent les contradictions profondes de l'histoire contemporaine en Afrique et éclairent le proche avenir"(12).

En effet, à la lecture de ces travaux de nature différente et variée, dialectique de l'histoire montre que ces rapports de domination considérés -cette idéologie- risque d'être- et sont- remis en question s'ils n'arrivent pas à rendre toujours invisible l'essence qui est la sienne. Car, "le plus fort", écrivait Jean Jacques ROUSSEAU, "n'est jamais assez fort pour être toujours le maître s'il ne transforme pas sa force en droit et l'obéissance de devoir"(13). Il enchaîne en disant : "de là le droit du plus fort, droit ironiquement en apparence est réellement établi en principe"(14).

Nous pouvons dire encore ici que comme le discours politique est produit par les forces sociales dominantes du système à l'échelle mondiale et s'extrapole au niveau africain, nous voyons que ce discours dénonce la domination en principe et la légitime en réalité, évoquant ainsi, soit la prise de conscience de cette situation, soit tout simplement la mission du droit du plus fort, soit encore les deux à la fois.

Corrolairement, les forces sociales dominées, les masses du continent africain apparaissent ainsi laissées à elles-mêmes, elles ne sont pas associées à la mise en fonctionnement des mécanismes institutionnels ou structurels qui assurent la marche du système c'est-à-dire à la marche du comité de gestion ou mieux encore à l'ensemble du comité de gestion du système. Et comment se reproduit ce système ? Sans doute, il se reproduit essentiellement à l'aide du mécanisme de repression, le mode d'exclusion sur tout plan. On s'adresse elles par un discours idéologique destiné à transformer la force en droit et l'obéissance en devoir. C'est une décision politique.

"Convenons donc, écrivait J.J. ROUSSEAU, que la force ne fait pas droit. Puisque la force ne produit aucun droit, reste donc les conventions pour base de toute autorité"(15).

C'est la vérité évoquée du passage de la domination nue à la domination occultée, conventionnée, qui joue le jeu. C'est là une explication des échecs de programmes évoqués pour le développement c'est ici que nous pouvons dénoncer les actions intégratrices de l'Afrique.

Que le discours politique soit dominant cela atteste sa nature, la nature de classes au sein des formations sociales africaines et la praxis sociale ; car, selon un des principes fondamentaux de la théorie marxiste de la connaissance, la pratique est le seul critère valable de la réalité(16). En face d'elle, toutes les affirmations sonores de l'indépendance, des indépendances, "africaines", la simple socialisation des acteurs économiques ou les survivance des traditions politiques sont vouées à l'invalidité. Cette analyse de la nature des aspects du discours politique fait remarquer que matériellement, le sous-développement de l'Afrique se situe principalement dans l'instance économique voire culturelle. Parce que la structure économique est une structure répondant aux exigences de l'économie capitaliste mondiale. Ce que Pierre SALAMA dit du procès du sous-développement de l'Amérique Latine est aussi vrai que le cas de l'Afrique :

"Le sous-développement de l'Amérique Latine", dit-il, "ne peut-être expliqué en soi. Toute tentative d'étudier le sous-développement en l'autonomisant, en la séparant de l'évolution de l'économie mondiale, des besoins et nécessité de ses centres dominants, est voué d'emblée à l'échec, car elle élude le problème essentiel, celui de la genèse du sous-développement. C'est l'analyse des lois d'évolution du processus productif mondial et donc par l'étude des formes de l'accumulation du capital à l'échelle mondiale qu'on peut non seulement saisir le sous-développement dans sa formation, mais également aller au delà des caricatures simplistes et procéder à l'étude fouillée des différentes formes de sous-développement et leur évolution"(17).

En conséquence, la politique n'est pas exclue de cette loi de l'évolution ; à fortiori le discours politique, d'où les conflits avec la praxis

sociale. On songera, à partir de cette logique des choses, au dualisme dont nous avons déjà parlé en haut.

Ces discours politiques présentent la masse comme la seule et unique bénéficiaire des ressources du pays. Il imprègne tout son contenu en faisant passer l'intérêt de l'authenticité africaine avant l'intérêt économique. Et pourtant :

"Le but premier de toute entreprise capitaliste", écrit P.F. CONIDEC, "est le profit. La civilisation qu'elle prétend apporter n'est qu'une conséquence de la domination culturelle laquelle sert à mieux asseoir la domination économique. Il précise : il y a un parallélisme étroit entre l'évolution socio-économique des pays européens et de l'expansion coloniale sous des formes différentes, le motif déterminant, mais non pas exclusif est d'ordre économique, souligner ce fait ce n'est pas méconnaître que d'autres motifs ont pu inspirer la colonisation. Ils demeurent malgré tout secondaires et ne servent souvent qu'à masquer l'essentiel ou à justifier les excès. L'intérêt et le sentiment sont toujours intimement liés. Les artisans de la colonisation même les plus purs ne furent eux-mêmes pas toujours saints, mais plutôt conquérant porteurs de foi, chercheurs de gain, donnant le salut, prenant le profit. L'idée de gain est toujours au premier plan"(18).

Ce qui est dit dans cette citation est aussi vrai pour les Etats Africains Indépendants, les Etats néo-colonisé. En effet, c'est au niveau de la pratique que nous avons l'inquiétude. Car les dirigeants africains, ils sont non au service de leur pays et le bonheur des masses, plutôt au service de l'Occident et à leur propre service. Dans une telle pratique, la masse, comme le prolétariat décrit par MARX, subit toutes les contradictions. Elle se trouve ensevelie sous le carcan rigide d'une série d'aliénation emboîtées les unes dans les autres, dans un mécanisme bien

déterminé.

Les conseillers, les différentes coopérations, les multinationales ou l'assistance technique, au lieu d'être conseillers -œil des Etats Africains, par exemple, sont purement et simplement les espions des grandes puissances d'argent. S'il arrive que l'autorité politique et les acteurs économiques prennent des mesures favorables à des économies africaines, ces conseillers avertissent les grandes puissances et ensuite ils soldent les efforts de ces autorités.

Et pourtant, à la lecture de différents documents, on doit le reconnaître, on ne fait pas allusions à cet état des choses. Ainsi en affrontant les déclarations officielles et la praxis, on remarque que ces déclarations sont profondément marquées par l'action mystificatrice de l'idéologie de la domination, de la différence ou de la dépendance. Les termes utilisés sont à resonance révolutionnaire, humanitaire pour masquer la réalité, et divertir la population en tournant son attention vers des choses accessoires. On parle de développement en citant quelques réalisations concrètes qui, derrière elles, cachent l'exploitation ou les dettes interminables. Campagne de pacification alors qu'il s'agit des repressions. C'est un mécanisme du système capitaliste partout en Afrique. KALALA MWAMBI dit bien lorsqu'il écrit :

"L'Afrique Noire est prise dans un mécanisme infernal où les slogans, les discours, les programmes sont les mêmes sur le fond des guerres civiles et d'aggravation du processus de sous-développement. Tout le monde agit au nom de la "Révolution", laquelle demeure imprécise et prend une tournure anarchique : arrestation, exécution sommaire des intellectuels, des étudiants ou des hommes de culture. Le premier réflexe de l'autorité politique est de s'entourer des gens de son ethnique qui contrôlent tous les secteurs du pouvoir, de là les clivages internes resurgissent avec force et le pouvoir vit sous la menace continue des coups d'Etat et des assassinats.

Devant ces violences et cette anarchie grandissan-

te, les intellectuels gardent un silence assez mitigé pour plusieurs raisons : la peur devant la violence, la domination des partis uniques et l'absence d'un courant idéologique capable de défendre le minimum des droits devant cette oppression obscurantiste. Les grandes puissances, les mercenaires entrent en jeu et la victime reste le peuple, car le soutien extérieur entraîne un transfert de contrôle de certains secteurs décisifs de l'appareil de l'Etat, l'autorité politique diminue et certaines mesures prioritaires ne peuvent être prises sans recourir à l'extérieur"(19).

Ce processus cadre avec la stratégie capitaliste et rejoint deux opérations :

"La première consiste à favoriser l'installation de l'investissement privé exportateur lui permettant la récupération d'un important surplus économique, nécessaire au développement de l'économie occidentale et américaine ; la seconde opération est une aide publique, qui facilite le maintien de l'exploitation, et assure un contrôle politique sur les dirigeants et la bourgeoisie nationale, dévouée aux intérêts de l'impérialisme. Les deux opérations fonctionnent de façon à assurer un transfert de valeurs du pays arriéré au pays avancé et à écarter la mise en place d'une économie nationale autocalibrée et autodynamique"(20).

Une telle stratégie qui imprègne tout le système et le discours politique nuit au progrès économique. Ceci parce que l'impérialisme a octroyé les indépendances dans des conditions qui lui ont laissé le contrôle de la vie économique, sociale et culturelle du continent africain. Et les dirigeants politiques africains ont été préalablement dressés pendant que la balkanisation battait son plein. C'est ainsi que les Etats africains sont dépendants malgré les déclarations officielles. L'appel aux capitaux étrangers est une preuve. La lecture de Celso FURTADO et les

radicalistes de l'Amérique Latine explicite mieux cet état des choses.

Les pratiques théoriques économiques en oeuvre chez nombreux d'intellectuels-acteurs économiques ou dirigeants africains peuvent paraître à première vue objectives et innocentes. En réalité, ces pratiques théoriques économiques ont un impact réel sur le mouvement de libération des masses populaires. Ce sont des pratiques forgées, remodifiées, mises à jour par l'impérialisme. Ainsi en l'absence de la connaissance des mécanismes de dépendance et de domination des peuples par l'impérialisme, tout effort de lutte, de libération et de développement sera voué à l'échec.

Notes:

1. N. POULANTZAS, Pouvoir politique et classes sociales (Paris: Maspéro 1975) p. 237.
2. A. EMMANUEL, L'échange inégale ; essai sur les antagonismes dans les rapports économiques internationaux (Paris: Maspéro 1969) p. 135.
3. N. POULANTZAS, Pouvoir politique et classes sociales (Paris: Maspéro 1975) p. 237.
4. S. Amin, L'accumulation à l'échelle mondiale (Paris: Anthropos, 1970) p. 340.
5. K. MARX, Le capital (Paris: Ed.sociales 1968) p. 791.
6. K. KOSIK, La dialectique du concret (Paris: Maspéro 1970) Cité par Pierre Salama dans: Le procès du sous-développement, le cas de l'Amérique Latine, (Paris: Maspéro 1976) p. 8.
7. N. POULANTZAS, Pouvoir politique et classes sociales (Paris: Maspéro 1975) p. 237.
8. On entendra (ici) par valeurs centrales les caractéristiques de base de traits fondamentaux et des qualités essentielles, par référence auxquels les autres aspects du comportement des groupes doivent être examinés ; ce sont les traits qui constituent le fondement de

l'explication des attitudes et du comportement de la majorités des membres d'un groupe. Un anthropologue ajoutera : chaque société a ses totems et ses tabous politico-culturels, ses buts et ses principes qu'elle traite comme socio-culturels, sacro-saints et inviolable.

9. Si le développement est perçu comme un changement, il est essentiel de connaître le ou les moteurs desquels s'ordonne l'activité des groupes et de ne procéder au changement que lorsque l'on possède une connaissance précise des valeurs à modifier. Toute transformation qui ne tient pas compte de l'impact du système des valeurs existant, est irrémédiablement vouée à l'échec ou à la dictature.
Donc, il faut respecter les procédures des valeurs ; la liberté et l'harmonie. Les deux forment un problème global, car les prétentions du groupe sur l'individu ne trouvent leur justification que lorsque le groupe se conforme à la solidarité (partage juste) participation effective de tous aux décisions concernant le groupe agissante des membres du groupe et hospitalité qui est une conséquence d'un comportement.
La solidarité est une obligation morale, elle joue le rôle d'agent général d'assurance.
10. A ce propos, lire de CELSO FURTADO dans sa Théorie du développement économique (Paris: P.U.F. 1970) et RAOÛL BASTIENET-TO dans Essai sur le démarrage des pays sous développés (Paris: Ed. Cujis 1968).
11. Y. BENOT, Indépendances africaines, (Paris: Maspéro 1975), Vol. I. pp. 28-36, 45.
12. Ibid.
13. J.J.ROUSSEAU, Du contrat social, (Garnier-Flammarion) 1966, p. 44.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.

16. On consultera Mao-Tsé-Toung dans : "De la pratique et de la contradiction", in: Cinq essais philosophiques de Mao, éd. en langue étrangères Pekin, 1971, pp. 1-138.
17. P. SALAMA, Le procès du sous-développement, le cas de l'Amérique Latine (Paris: Maspéro 1976) p. 20.
18. P.F. CONIDEC, L'état africain (Paris: librairie générale de droit et de jurisprudence 1970) p. 47.
19. KALALA MWAMBI "Introduction au sous-développement en Afrique" in: Actes du C.I.D.F., févr. 1978.
20. Ibid.

Résumé

La philosophie ethnique du discours philosophique en Afrique: une notation critique.

Cet article commence par une réfutation des propositions capitales de l'idéologie coloniale paternaliste et des conceptions néo-coloniales ne considérant les philosophes africains comme de véritables 'Africains' qu'à partir du moment qu'ils se distancient de la philosophie critique. Le résumé ayant trait aux idées de Tempels est accompagné d'une critique historico-empirique: la méthode qui est inadéquate et les contradictions notoires de sa philosophie y sont par exemple dénoncées.

En outre, on donne un bref tableau historique des critiques portées sur Tempels par Crahay, Césaire, Odera Oruka et Hountondji.

Finally on présente et commente les caractéristiques de la philosophie ethnique générale d'après Tempels et notamment la méthode analogique et la méthode relative à la soustraction dont on se sert dans les analyses des proverbes africains.

L'article se termine par reconnaître quelques aspects du discours ethno-philosophique ayant de la valeur pour la philosophie en Afrique.

ETHNOPHILOSOPHY IN THE PHILOSOPHICAL DISCOURSE IN AFRICA: A CRITICAL NOTE

Chr. Neugebauer

In this article I want to deal with the debate on ethnophilosophy as it is occurring in philosophical discourse in Africa. Both the European development of ethnophilosophy since P.F. Tempels' notorious book "Bantu-philosophy" and developments in anthropology in general¹ are not dealt with. Likewise, both the previous history and the theoretical as well as the ideological frameworks sustaining the existence of ethnophilosophy will not be considered. I regard the discussion on these aspects as well-established.²

As a preamble to my argument I wish to draw attention to certain points which may clarify the context of the discussion on ethnophilosophy.

1.

The racist and paternalistic ideology of colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism can be condensed into two theses:

1. The "Africans" do not possess anything that can properly be called 'philosophy' at all. At best they may claim to have an unconscious, preferably unanimous 'world-view', common to all "primitives" pure and simple, which can be discovered by self-styled anthropologists.
2. The "Africans" only have mass-consciousness, without any sense of mores, ethics, future-planning etc.; i.e. their authentic and unique being is of a particular and peculiar kind.

The first thesis is untenable, given that we accept an underlying diffusionist view and pursue a system-immanent refutation, since the origin of philosophy has to be placed in Ancient Egypt³, as even Aristotle himself acknowledged [Metaphysics I,981b20]. Mutatis mutandis the philosophy of Ancient Ethiopia [cf. Cl.Sumner 1986] has to be put for-

ward, as well as the Islamic tradition of the Sudanese states like Goa, Djenne and Sokoto, which harboured lucid and respectable philosophers such as Al-Maghili and Uthman dan Fodio.

If you vindicate a culture-puristic and diffusionistic approach, which is putting the question of origin first (although I regard the question of origin for philosophy as irrelevant), it is inevitable to accept also St. Augustine as an African philosopher [cf. W.Bühlmann 1960:30]. This is not to mention the famous Ghanaian philosopher, working in Germany in the 18th century, W.A.Amo [cf. W.Abrahams 1967].

The first thesis can be regarded as refuted along the line of argumentation of P.J. Hountondji:

"In short, it destroys the dominant mythological conception of Africanness and restores the simple, obvious truth that Africa is above all a continent and the concept of Africa an empirical, geographical concept and not a metaphysical one." [P.J.Hountondji 1983:66]

Philosophy in Africa is undoubtedly constituting a tradition which is just as timely, disrupted and characterised by both continuity and discontinuity as the European tradition of philosophy is. What do we pretend to know about the philosophy of Franconia or Germania during the classical period of urban Greek philosophy? Less than nothing! Is it therefore justified to pretend that they did not possess any philosophy at all, along with the notorious scholastical argumentation of Christianity? I guess not, since the argument is not valid, as Spinoza stated in his dictum against this very scholastical turn in question: "ignorantia non est argumentum".

If the above argumentation is accepted, then the refutation of the second thesis of colonial paternalistic ideology falls almost effortlessly into place. Moreover, African philosophers are forced, by this trapping assumption to hanker for an 'authentic identity' which was demasked by Th. W. Adorno as the arch-paradigm of ideology. [cf. Th.W.Adorno 1966:-149]

Let us note in this context the following:

Firstly: a theoretical appraisal of the term 'tradition' must take into consideration both the dialectical relationship between continuity and discontinuity of a tradition [cf. A.Cabral 1983:288], and the question: 'whose tradition?'. The question of authenticity itself does not arise when a people is deprived of a given tradition and picks it up after decades, or when it has to reconcile with different and contradictory traditions within one society. This same is true for the illfooted manichaeism of traditional versus modern, which is closely connected with notoriously paternalistic and racist concepts such as 'assimilation' or 'tribalism' [cf. M.Mamdani 1984; A.Southall 1970; A.Mafeje 1971; V.C.Uchenda 1970; Y.Zoetizoum 1988; Ch.Neugebauer 1989a].

Secondly: contemporary African philosophers are consistently ignored by the main-stream European and American philosophical and anthropological discourse. Even the existence of African philosophy is hardly known. Contemporary African philosophy is at best regarded by them as the outcome of an alleged "assimilation". But the assimilation of whom and to what? "Assimilated" because they are not exhibiting an alleged and perfunctorily summed up "African pattern of thought", which does not objectively exist?

If the African scholar, who is expected to permanently exhibit his "Africanness", dares to overcome his ethnocentrism, i.e. cultural chauvinism, then anthropologists and 'Third-World-disciples' will charge: "How can you betray your culture!". To overcome ethnocentrism is only permitted to the European scholar, his colleagues of the so-called 'Third-World countries' will just harvest contempt and shame - how can he! He has suddenly and definitely lost culture, he is "assimilated".

African intellectuals are eventually captured by the European myth of Africanness, as A.K. Appiah delineates: "If the European intellectual, though comfortably within his culture and its traditions, has an image of himself as an outsider, the African intellectual is an uncomfortable outsider, seeking to develop his culture in directions that will give him a role". This very 'uncomfortable role' compels the African intellectual to assume "...that there is, even at quite a high level of abstraction, an African world view", whereby he "...is once more anmeshed in Europe's

myth of Africa."[A.K.Appiah 1985:259-260]

Hence we can identify the dawn of a new paradigm of neo-colonial ideology: the capacity to cope with ethnocentrism and to overcome it in a critical way, is said to be a genuine European quality, whereas the static adherence to an alleged tradition, mostly made in Europe, appears to be solely a Third-World-quality and of course an imperative for the sake of authenticity. Any tradition of the underdeveloped countries is a priori anathemized to an uncritical and folkloritic attitude geared to serve and satisfy aspirations for an exotic thrill after the lost world à la Rousseau.

P.F. Tempels can be regarded as the most significant demiurge of the two classical theses of (neo-)colonialism. His views will be discussed later in this article.

2.

When discussing ethnophilosophy it is always useful to be explicit about one's own concept of philosophy. I would suggest five criteria for regarding a mode of thought as philosophy.

- a. Individual consciousness;
- b. The individual consciousness is provided with a consciousness of a discourse which possesses inherent apophthegms and a semantical thoroughness [cf. F.Wimmer 1981:180];
- c. The discourse mentioned is embedded in an institutional framework. The shape of the framework as well as the medium of communication are defined by the concrete praxis of the society given;
- d. The subject of philosophy, which could be philosophy itself, is liable to permanent inquiry, research, disclosure, interpretation and historical change⁴;
- e. A desanthropomorphising tendency [cf. G.Lukàcs 1981].

At the same time we must be aware that the academic philosophical discourse is not the only discourse in a society. In Africa one can discern e.g. a discourse of non-academic philosophers, who "expressis verbis" refer to themselves as philosophers, or a scholastico-religious

discourse, or a discourse of sages and elders. In each discourse we have to be aware of contradictory and opposing trends and traditions.

In the following pages I wish to deal only with the academic philosophical discourse in Africa on the work of P.F. Tempels.

Tempels' 'Bantu Philosophy'

P.F. Tempels' influence is hard to grasp without far-reaching anticipations on ethnophilosophy in general. Tempels' book is the most widely read and commented upon work in the African philosophical discourse, throwing not a few Africans into confusing riddles.

Ths. Ntumba enumerates five central theses of Tempels' book [cf. Tsh.Ntumba 1979:434]:

1. A traditional 'Bantu philosophy' actually exists;
2. This philosophy is an ontology;
3. The most noteworthy feature of this ontology is the rationale "force = being";
4. 'Bantu philosophy' is an unconscious philosophy and therefore needs the superior occidental terminology in order to be 'revealed';
5. 'Bantu philosophy' is not only valid for the Baluba, but for all primitives pure and simple.

P.F.Tempels' main thesis, of "force = being", contains a distinct logic, epistemology and an ontological hierarchy.

The logic is summarised by the 'General Laws of Vital Causality', containing three major principles:

1. Man can affect directly the being of man
2. Man can affect directly lower forces such as animals, plants and minerals
3. Man can affect indirectly, by means of the use of lower forces, fellow men.

The **epistemology** of the alleged "Bantu-philosophy" implements two sources of evidence for the Bantu, 'internal' and 'external' eviden-

ce. The former turns out to be a form of objective idealism, the latter a form of subjective sensualism.

The **ontological hierarchy** has at its top God, "who increases force" and ".gives existence, power of survival and increase to other forces", running down the gamut via founding fathers, elders, man, woman, child, animal, plants and minerals.

The epistemology is embodied in this ontological hierarchy and submitted to three principles. The first principle is the well known principle of analogy. According to the second principle "...the living being exercises a vital influence on everything that is subordinated to him and all that belongs to him". The third principle circumscribes the vital power of the word, which is the formal expression of ones vital influence, i.e. force.

It is now possible to condense Tempels' self-styled "Bantu-philosophy".

Bantu philosophy is an ontology, a mode of apprehending being, captured in the formula "force = being". This ontology dismisses induction. On the contrary, empiricism is split into internal and external sources of evidence, and the validity of the Bantu ontology is inferred deductively. Simply, then, the lower beings of forces serve as proof for the existence of God. Herein one may easily detect the well known Thomistic postulate for demonstrating the existence of God. Correspondingly, existence is said to be an attribute of being, which is yet another well known scholastic position. Last but not least the ontology coincides with epistemology, a position that, in tendency, corresponds to the rationalism of the early Kant. Thus the assertion of P.F. Tempels about the specific originality of 'Bantu philosophy' is untenable. Tempels rather seems to have detected ingeniously his own theology in an 'African mask' [M.Towa 1988].

Three approaches may be pursued to criticise Tempels:

1. a historical-empirical critique
2. an ideological critique
3. a theoretical-methodological critique

The last two types of criticism have been dealt with in an outstanding manner by the most distinguished philosophers of the African discourse. Nothing further needs to be added here. The core of their argument will be outlined later in this article.

The historical-empirical critique in a narrow sense sets a thankless and impracticable task.

Tempels constructed his Bantu Philosophy relying on the putatively summarised worldview of the Baluba, a people amongst whom he was living in the former Belgian Congo between 1933 and 1940. The Belgian Congo, where the African peoples suffered untold but well known pains. I believe that there is no need to recall the fairly well known atrocities of Belgian paternalism nor of the so-called 'traditional rulers', who were vulgar collaborators [cf. Nzongola Ntalaja 1987:113-141].

From this period various sources of information, including documents exist, but none concerning the 'philosophy' of the Baluba. Tempels describes his method as follows. "We would begin by a comparative study of language, modes of behaviour, institutions and customs of the Bantu; we could analyse them and separate their fundamental ideas; finally we could construct from these elements a system of Bantu thought. This, as a matter of fact, is the method I followed myself" [P.Tempels 1959:41]. This alleged method is, according to Tempels necessary since "We do not claim, of course, that the Bantu are capable of formulating a philosophical treatise, complete with an adequate vocabulary" [P.Tempels 1959:36].

The 'philosophy' of so called primitive man was no serious subject of any scientific research at all. Tempels maintained a quasi-monopoly in this field as a consequence. Therefore one will hardly find any proper reference in Tempels' book: Tempels himself is the main source. What sort of source, we will see later. Tempels brought his very own impressions to paper, rather than that he formed them from concrete historical data. So, pursuing a historical-empirical critique you are repused by Tempels' work itself.

One misleading argument, allegedly sustaining a historical-empirical critique, may be refuted here immediately. It is futile to put forward contemporary counter-examples to the idea of Bantu philosophy, by

pointing for example to Nyerere, a Bantu according to the paternalistic terminology of Tempels. A Tempelsian, namely, may correctly contend that the conditions in Africa have changed to such a degree that Tempels' Bantu Philosophy can neither be confirmed, nor refuted with examples from contemporary Africa. To maintain the above misleading argument, one has to postulate a historically constant cultural pattern, common to all Bantu, untouched by time.

But what we can do is to confront P.F. Tempels with P.F. Tempels and see if major contradictions can be unearthed. This strategy could bring to attention the following contradictions.

First, P.F. Tempels is puzzled about an alleged problem concerning the "pagan"⁵. "Why does not the African change? How is it that the pagan, the uncivilised is stable? Because the pagan founds his life upon the traditional groundwork of his theodicy and ontology..." [P.Tempels 1959:26].

Irrespective of the question whether P.F. Tempels is correct here, it follows from his view that the 'pagan' holds a static ontology, which guarantees him a metaphysical sheet-anchor independent of any given social conditions. Conversely, the alleged Bantu ontology determines the social conditions which are dependent on the former. Yet, regarding an ontology as static (this being inferred from the fact that the ontology in question is the foundation of the pagan's static form of life) is irreconcilable with holding that the very same ontology is dynamic, as does Tempels when he states: "We hold a static conception of 'being', they a dynamic" [P.Tempels 1959:51].

Second, Tempels' view that Bantu philosophy implies a dynamic view of being, unlike the so-called 'European philosophy', is expressed in the statement "Force is being, being is force". It remains all the same if Tempels is postulating that the 'European' notion of being is, at least, equivalent to the 'Bantu' one: "...the notion of force takes for them the place of the notion of being in our philosophy" [P.Tempels 1959:52]. It is impossible to explain reasonably how a per definitionem stable notion of being can be equivalent to a dynamic one. Moreover the eye-catching phrase "force is being, being is force" can be reduced by itself to the plain tautology "being is being, being is being". Taking

the cue from another interpretation is to guess that the notion 'force' serves the same function and occupies the same position within Bantu philosophy, as the notion 'being' within the so-called 'European philosophy'. Finally we may ask how Tempels has himself managed to attain the epistemological miracle of recognising any dynamic quality of being at all, if the totality of the conception of being within 'European philosophy', to which Tempels himself belongs, is static.

Furthermore we can doubt whether Tempels had a firm grasp or by any means a comprehensive knowledge of the history of European philosophy. As is well known Cicero, the Roman, stated already the dictum: "force = being", such that the bombastic announcement of the uniqueness of Bantu philosophy is a futile and shallow gesture [cf. F.A.Lange 1974:286].

After pointing out the empirical weakness of Tempels' work and identifying its internal contradictions, we have to remember the ideological nature of the work.

It is worth recalling the colonialistic pretensions of Tempels' work. For example in his statements "It therefore concerns all colonials, especially those whose duty is to hold administration or juridical office among African people" [P.Tempels 1959:23] and "Christianity is the only possible consummation of the Bantu ideal" [P.Tempels 1959:-186]. P.F. Tempels is a classical representative of the colonial ideology as delineated above: the African has no philosophy proper and can at best only claim to have an unconscious philosophy, which is nevertheless in need of the superior helping hand of European scholars to make it articulate and systematic.

The African Debate on Tempels

Like any philosophical phenomenon the criticism of ethnophilosophy, too, has its history.

The first 'critique' of Bantu Philosophy was uttered by Jean-Felix Heuptinne, who tried to expell Tempels from the Catholic church on the

grounds of heresy. His attempt, however, failed, and his critique has no relevance for the contemporary discussion; it is a historical footnote [cf. De Craemer 1977:29-30].

The first philosophical critique proper, is contained in F. Crahay's article "Le décollage conceptuelle: conditions d'une philosophie bantu" (1965). F. Crahay, however, did not pursue an ideological criticism of Tempels' work. On the contrary, he regarded Tempels' Bantu Philosophy as engaging and practical, considering Tempels to have correctly reconstructed the 'Bantu worldview' on a metaphysical level [F.Crahay 1965:65]. According to Crahay, Tempels has elaborated a rational theory about the Bantu worldview, nothing more or less. However, Crahay contends that Tempels' Bantu Philosophy, whether correct or not, has nothing in common with philosophy proper. At best it can be regarded as a meta-theory on the Bantu worldview [cf. F.Crahay 1965:64-65].

The ideological critique was set up by A. Césaire, who denounced the neo-colonial character of Tempels' Bantu Philosophy:

"Bantu thought, being ontological, Bantus are interested in ontological satisfaction. Decent wages? Good housing and food? I tell you, these Bantus are pure spirits: 'What they want above all is not an improvement in their material or economic situation, but recognition by the white man and respect for their human dignity, for their full human value'. In short, one or two cheers for Bantu vital force, a wink for the Bantu immortal soul, and that's that. A bit too easy, perhaps?" [A.Césaire, quoted from P.J.Hountondji 1983:37].

The first methodological critique was formulated by O.p'Bitek:

"The major obstacle here is that... the concept of Bantu Ontology as constructed by Fr. Tempels is a blind alley. It admits of no proof or disproof, having been erected through 'intuition' and not by methods of direct observation and comparative

analysis of data. (...)Fr. Tempels' own Bantu Ontology does not help us to understand anything more of Baluba religious practices and life" [O.P'Bitek 1963:13.

These three critical approaches were brought together synthetically in P.J. Hountondji's article "Remarques sur la philosophie africaine contemporaine" [1970]. For the sake of brevity I will delineate the critique of H. Odera Orika, who takes the cue from both P.J. Hountondji and Wittgenstein [cf. H.Odera Orika,1986:8]:

"For if their thesis is correct, then the authors are not themselves capable of understanding, let alone rationalising the nature of African philosophy. And this is because, so far, all of them (whether Europeans or Africans) have championed what they term 'African philosophy' by terminologies given in 'Western scholarship'. None so far, has given out, what has to be treated as the language of African philosophy. Their very first concept, vital force, is, if they are consistent, a 'Western notion', to throw the ball back, it is a concept by postulation not intuition" [H.Odera Orika 1986:23].

H. Odera Orika clearly surmounted the position of F. Crahay, since 'Bantu philosophy' or 'classical ethnophilosophy' can not even be regarded as a meta-theory of a worldview, because it is thwarted by the emic-etic problem.

The other points of Odera Orika's criticism are adopted from P.J. Hountondji, as Odera Orika himself confesses. Therefore I may take the opportunity to introduce the critique of P.J. Hountondji.

Hountondji reveals the ideological aspirations of four groups who are in need of a 'Bantu philosophy': 1) the Catholic missionaries; 2) Apologists of colonialism; 3) European anthropologists and philosophers; and 4) African national leaders [cf. P.J.Hountondji 1983:77-78]. Hountondji states:

"Each in his own way needed something more massive, more definite, that could be taken in at a glance, something that could be objectivized and manipulated at will so that he could claim passionately (the nationalist), or recognize it frankly as the story of his own intellectual childhood (Bachelard etc.), or find in it confirmation of the inferiority of 'exotic cultures' (the conventional anthropologist). Tempels' book met these multifarious expectations" [P.J.Hountondji 1983:78].

On a methodological level, Hountondji summarizes 'general ethnophilosophy', as I term it, as follows:

"...to reconstruct a particular *Weltanschauung*, a specific worldview commonly attributed to all Africans, abstracted from history and change and, moreover, philosophical, through the interpretation of the customs and traditions, proverbs and institutions...concerning the cultural life of African peoples" [P.J.Hountondji 1983:34].

P.J.Hountondji's apprehension of the ethnophilosophical method confronts one immediately with the problem of sources:

"Who is right? Which is the better interpretation? The choice is the reader's. Perhaps he will wish, in order to form his opinion and close the debate, to return to the evidence itself and take cognizance of the original text of African 'philosophy', that secret text so differently interpreted by Tempels and Kagamé.... Unfortunately, in the case of African 'philosophy' there are no sources" [P.J.Hountondji 1983:42].

Tempels is wrongly comparing '*Weltanschauung*' with 'philosophy', both reduced to an ambiguous body of ridiculous doctrines by a questionable method, if it may be termed a method at all [P.J.Hountondji 1983:59-60].

Last but not least, Hountondji criticizes in ethnophilosophy the ideological myth of the alleged 'primitive unanimity' of the so-called 'primitive societies', where no proper refutation is possible⁶. "Because it has to account for an imaginary unanimity, to interpret a text which nowhere exists and has to be constantly reinvented, it is a science without an object, a crazed language accountable to nothing, a discourse that has no referent, so that its falsity can never be demonstrated" [P.J.Hountondji 1983:62].

General ethnophilosophy in the African philosophical discourse

P.F. Tempels' book promoted not only criticism, but also a wide range of schools and disciplines. Outwardly Tempels and his direct successors - A. Kagamé, L.S. Senghor and J. Jahn - are regarded as the classical paradigm of ethnophilosophy. Hence I may call them the school of 'classical ethnophilosophy', or, in socio-economic terms, 'imperialist ethnophilosophy'. With the evolution of national independence and liberation movements, the socio-economic framework in Africa changed markedly to what we can presently call 'neo-colonialism'. The corresponding ideological epiphenomena within the intellectual milieu, the 'general ethnophilosophy' which seeks to reconstruct values and pride, i.e. national chauvinism ennobled as 'philosophy'. To illustrate my point: we have a 'Yoruba philosophy', an 'Ibo philosophy', an 'Akan philosophy' etc., but none for national minorities like the Edo, Pygmys etc.. 'General ethnophilosophy' serves to set up diverse national charters, meeting the ideological needs of competing national factions among the petty-bourgeoisie of Africa. Thus, at the very base, 'general ethnophilosophy' dialectically mirrors the inherent class-contradictions in Africa as well as her neo-colonial dependence [cf. M.Mamdani 1984]. The said dependence causes an epiphenomenon termed by P.J. Hountondji as 'folklorism', "...a sort of collective cultural exhibitionism which compels the 'Third World' intellectual to 'defend and illustrate' the peculiarities of his tradition for the benefit of a Western public" [P.J.Hountondji 1983:67]. A.K. Appiah seems to have something similar in mind when he

refers to the very same phenomenon as 'ersatz exoticism' [A.K.Appiah 1988:175], which rests upon the illusory consciousness of so-called 'African' tradition: "Ironically, for the contemporary African intellectuals, these invented traditions have now acquired the status of national mythology..." [A.K.Appiah 1988:164].

Due to limited space we can not outline here the evolving twists, surface-tensions and the philosophico-historical traces within 'general ethnophilosophy' out of this very dialectical relationship [cf. Ch.Neugebauer 1989].

The next task to be dealt with is describing the object of 'general ethnophilosophy', its method and rationale.

The object of research, which is characterized by an idealistic approach is implicitly or explicitly a worldview. The said idealistic approach is interconnected with an ahistoricism. This leads to the assumption, sometimes overtly stated, of an immutable, external cultural substratum which is wrongly given out as a genuine African mode of conception. The so-called traditional 'philosophy' under scrutiny serves as the very basis of the pattern itself. The thesis of the cultural substratum assumes a homogeneous, non-contradictory society, which offers an unanimous, collective 'philosophy', in short: primitive unanimity. Individual consciousness, if reckoned with, is regarded at best as a 'reflecting' one (in the Hegelian sense), i.e. it just illustrates the alleged homogeneity of the communal self. The individual consciousness remains traditional as long as it 'reflects' within the invented African tradition [cf. J.Iliffe 1979:318]. To transcend it means to betray one's culture, to be 'assimilated'. Not only this culture, but also its so-called 'philosophy' is a pure invention to serve the ideological needs of the dominant classes. It a-priori frames the intellectual in a ghetto of cultural impasse. In short: ersatz exoticism, or folklorism. Historical change and discontinuity ceases to be. Consequently, what is further significant is that 'general ethnophilosophy', after its glorious invention, defies any socio-economic explanations, unless this very 'philosophy' is put up to explain economics, politics and society.

The typical sources of ethnophilosophy are proverbs, grammar,

language, customs, rites, songs etc.. These sources may be reliable for reconstructing worldviews but they are not appropriate for research on philosophy proper. Who may dare to reconstruct the seventh thesis of Wittgenstein, given that the Tractatus is lost, on the basis of Austrian proverbs? It would be a ridiculous project. The crucial point is that the said sources have no self-consciousness as philosophy has in any case.

Two special methods are enmeshed in the idealistic approach mentioned above; they are characteristic of 'general ethnophilosophy': the analogical and the substraction method.

The analogical method has been typical of 'general ethnophilosophy' since its very onset: to interpret a proverb frankly according to one's whims and needs without even mentioning who used the expression, to whom and in what sorts of circumstances. This method is closely related to an authoritarian proof, expressed by the phrases "All Akans, Yoruba etc. hold that...." or "Our forefathers are said to have said....".

The second method tries to purify an 'African' core from present, 'corrupted' attitudes, proverbs etc.. The argument goes that everything might be regarded as 'African' after the Western, Islamic and Christian influences have been removed. Two problems immediately come to mind here. Firstly, the various foreign influences are measured as if they were monolithic and univocal. Therefore, facts are vulgarised and simplified, but above all handled as if they provoke and cause only one possible effect. On both sides a homogeneity is assumed. Secondly, it is a speculative and metaphysical adventure to regard as African the core remaining after removing the various influences. The new tradition, put as totality, is without doubt made up of various cultural impacts and parts, but these very parts in themselves do not remain innocent and untouched by the evolving totality. Conversely the totality dialectically influences the parts themselves, or, as F. Engels said, 'the totality is not the sum total of its parts'. In toto, new syntheses are evolving such that no part remains as it was previously. And these very parts themselves are by no means simple units, unequivocal cultural blocks identical to themselves in a homogeneous orbit of an external present without contradictions and dissonances. The evolving totality builds and

enforces a dialectical balance out of these parts in tension by synthetically changing them. The totality and the parts are only understandable as the dialectic of unity and contradiction of contrasts.

The unspoken rationale of the subtraction method is the 'cultural-area-thesis' (Kulturkreislehre) or 'culturalism', which has been ultimately criticised by E. Bloch's fourth Tübinger thesis:

"The concept of progress does not allow a cultural-area ("Kulturkreis"), to which time has been pinned down to space in a reactionary way(...) So we can not, in order to do justice to the enormous amount of non-European material, work along one line only, no more without complicated many-shaped timeliness..." [E.Bloch 1963:201].

The ethnophilosophical project takes ahistorical mass-consciousness as philosophy, without even mentioning the class-differences within society. A homogeneous, harmonious and unanimous society is postulated. Or, as Hountondji wrote: "Until now African philosophy has been little more than an ethnophilosophy, common to all Africans, although in an unconscious form" [Hountondji 1983:38]. The ideological goal is obvious and almost classical: 'general ethnophilosophy' is part and parcel of the overall and duly conservative project of the invention of 'culturalism' as the ideology of tribalism and irrationalism [K.B.Hadjor 1987].

Six main currents of the 'general ethnophilosophy' are discernable:

1. the christian-linguistic approach [A.Kagamé 1956; F.M.Lufuluabo 1962; J.S.Mbiti 1974; I.C.Onyewuenyi 1980];
2. the collective hermeneutical approach [B.J.Oguah 1984; K.Gyekye 1975,1987; the classical African Socialism (early Nkrumah till 1966, J.K. Nyerere, L.S.Senghor et.al.); W.E.Abraham 1963];
3. the individual-hermeneutical approach [H.Odera Oruka 1988; S.O.Sodipo 1973];
4. the phenomenological approach [B.Hallen 1980];
5. the linguistic approach [K.Wiredu 1980];
6. the apologetic approach [Th.J.Blakely 1984; I.A.Menkiti 1984; K.C.Anyanwu 1984].

Concluding remarks

It would be wrong to suppose that ethnophilosophy just produces false, incorrect and duly wrong theses. Partly, ethnophilosophy has been able to shed light on empirical questions. For example, J.S. Mbiti, by granting that Christianity can be regarded as compatible with many a traditional African religion. Further, one has to approve of the merit given by H. Odera Oruka to ethnophilosophy: "...ethnophilosophy has provoked criticism from rigorous philosophical circles and caused debates on the question of 'African philosophy'. In-as-much as such criticism and debates are instrumental in inspiring and shaping the development of philosophical thought in Africa, ethnophilosophy may not be without a useful role in African philosophical history" [H.Odera Oruka 1981:3]

Thirdly, it would be mistaken to regard the various African philosophers who I above classed under the head 'general ethnophilosophy' as only ethnophilosophers. The ethnophilosophical project is often only an aspect of their work.

Last but not least, one has to grant that 'general ethnophilosophy' is developing a meta-discourse which has to be understood as philosophy proper. In the case of 'Akan philosophy', the construction itself is to be estimated as ethnophilosophy. However, the evolving discourse and critique - e.g. when A.G.A. Bello [1987] is criticising the results of K. Wiredu on the 'Akan philosophy' - must be regarded as part of the proper African philosophy. Various Ghanaian philosophers are elaborating a new paradigm of Akan philosophy which, however, has to be measured within their ideological limits which contain the pursuit to erect a nationalism, as argued above.

As long as the national question is on the agenda [cf. M.Mamdani 1984], the ethnophilosophical project will not be easy to inter. Moreover, as long as the African philosopher does not emancipate himself from the hankering after the 'authentic authenticity' of being-an-African, he will definitely remain enmeshed within ethnophilosophy and the cultural ghetto of an 'africanist philosophy'. Conversely, the African philosopher is to be regarded as the real and true traditional African

philosopher who is not in need to squint stealthily at an imaginary and putative philosophical tradition called 'African'. He is in himself, if you want to adhere to this terminology, authentic, traditional and of course African. The African philosopher of today is, to put it controversially with P.J. Hountondji, the traditional African philosopher whom we have to look at:

"So called modern Africa is just as traditional as pre-colonial Africa in the only acceptable sense of the word traditional -tradition does not include, but necessarily implies a system of discontinuities" [P.J.Hountondji 1983:102].

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NOTES:

1. cf. T Zeleza 1986; O. Balogun 1974 and P. Bruckner 1983; as classical representatives of the European ethnophilosophical school can be regarded Janheinz Jahn 1986 and L. Apostel 1981.
2. cf O.p'Bitek 1963; M.Towa 1988; P.J.Hountondji 1974 and 1983.
3. cf. J.Spiegel 1950; H.Olela 1981; M.Bilolo 1986.
4. So to speak with M.Horkheimer: "Es gibt keine Definition von Philosophie", because "Ihre Definition ist identisch mit der expliziten Auslegung dessen, was zu sie sagen hat" [M.Horkheimer, 1967:155].
5. F.Wimmer notes on 'paganism': "It is a different case again with missionaries' arrogance. What is meant is: the presupposition that somebody is in principle not thinking the right way, that he is incompetent..." [F.Wimmer 1987:44].
6. And even the editor of 'Current Anthropology', A. Kuper, has to confess: "...the history of the theory of primitive society is the history of an illusion" [A.Kuper 1988:8].

THE GREAT THOUGHT: Reflection On Idealism

*In the Great Wall a crack,
A glimmer of Light in the Dark.
Beyond the Barriers is the Other
Of Reason, its father and mother.
Dare anyman approach in There?
Is that not, ask I, the Great Affair?*

*Beyond the appearances, Realities-
For Truth lies Beyond the Entities,
And sustains them in Its Becoming;
Is and Is-Not, ever going and coming;
Is present in the past and future
History, Society, O Man!, Nature... .*

*Why have we so late thought:-
"It's all but a Great Thought!"
For, verily, we really ought
For this One Truth we have got:
Man is It,
The very seat
Of Existence, The World, Esse-
Amen for, after all, so it IS.*

Roni M. B. Khul Bwalya

Résumé

La question d'utilité dans la philosophie nigérienne.

*La question d'utilité est plus urgente dans les pays du Tiers-Monde que dans les pays de l'ouest. Des thèmes pratiques et actuels sont choisis au cours des séminaires, des congrès et des conférences. On pourrait citer l'exemple de la communication de Ch. B. Okolo (Nsukka/ le Nigéria): *Philosophy and Nigerian Politics* (1985).*

La question d'utilité et la question de rechercher la pensée traditionnelle d'Afrique sont combinées. Les professeurs modernes qui s'orientent vers la philosophie européenne et américaine sont accusés de faire preuve d'un manque d'utilité. G. Sogolo (Ibadan/ le Nigéria) considère cet aspect comme un dilemme difficile tant qu'il n'y a pas d'évolution aboutissant à la constitution d'une philosophie purement africaine.

THE QUESTION OF RELEVANCE IN CURRENT NIGERIAN PHILOSOPHY

Heinz Kimmerle

I have remarked elsewhere that there is something taking place in African philosophy today which could be called "an ethical turn". I noticed that above all during philosophy-lectures in Nairobi and at other African Universities, when the lecturers tried to formulate examples to apply ideas of Western philosophy to the situation in Africa. However, the bulk of academic teaching is still based on European and North-American philosophical concerns. A primarily practical orientation, on the other hand, is the hallmark of the themes of conferences, seminars, and congresses on which philosophy has to prove its relevance to African societies.

A striking example of that is the lecture by Chukwudum B. Okolo of the University of Nigeria at Nsukka, which he delivered at one of the regular congresses of the Nigerian Association of Philosophy and which is also published as a little book, Philosophy and Nigerian Politics. He points out in this work that "...the nature of philosophic task is practical rather than theoretical"¹. However, the usefulness of philosophy and other pure sciences is not always immediately apparent, though it does exist in any case.

As regards philosophy and Nigerian politics, Okolo states that at the present time "...the all-important question is, in what way or ways can philosophers be useful to Nigerian society and its politics?"² He notes that in Nigeria there is a big gap between the text of the constitution and the political reality. The former solemnly proclaims "Unity and Faith, Peace and Progress", while the political reality often is characterised by gross indiscipline and on the part of those who hold the offices, by embezzlement of public funds, excessive greed, irresponsibility, ..tribalism, sectionalism, nepotism....in short, bad leadership". This is above all true of the two civilian governments of Nigeria (1960-66 and 1979-1983), so that the military coups, which ousted them where seen to be necessary.³

The judgement of A.K. Armah from Ghana, which is not given in a philosophical, but in a literary text is even more radical. "Men who had risen to lead the hungry... spoke to us in the knowledge that they were our magicians, people with some secret power behind them. They were not able in the end to understand the people's unbelief.... How were these leaders to know that while they were climbing up to shit in their people's faces, their people had seen their arseholes and drawn away in disgusted laughter?"⁴ There are certainly exceptions to that description. Nkrumah (by all accounts during the first years of his presidency), Nyerere, Senghor, Touré, Kenyatta or Kaunda were or are generally regarded as exempt from the above description as politicians and leaders of their peoples. In a number of African states the political style has changed in the meantime, so that a relative stability has been attained without which socio-economic development, which everybody is eagerly anticipating, would stand no chance.

Okolo regards the contribution philosophers can make to Nigerian politics as consisting above all in: a) critical analysis of the situation, and b) the critical assessment of moral values which are relevant to the political realm. They have to cope with the task of tracing an "ethics, particularly axiology or the science of values".⁵ For "the real problem of the Nigerian politics is a moral one"⁶. Besides that, questions can be tackled as to the best form of government, just laws and how they are rightly applied, and economic justice. A starting point for the solution of all these problems is the educational system, which has to transmit moral values to individuals. It should be such as to give to everybody the possibility of "self-development" which has to be combined with economic and technological development, and ultimately has to give sense to the latter.⁷

This lecture is only referred to in this context as an example for many others in which African philosophers try to demonstrate the relevance of their work on public congresses which in Nigeria are often transmitted by television. Moreover the question of relevance is, particularly in Nigeria, connected with the debates on the question of "African Philosophy", over which African philosophers have been divided

into two different schools of thought for a number of years now.

Those who orientate themselves towards Western philosophy, it has been charged, are purely academic and cannot be relevant for Africa. This is the view of a number of Nigerian scholars, especially those at the University of Lagos and whose work primarily consists in the questioning of African traditional thought. It is in this way that, as African philosophers, they want to make their work relevant. They speak of "the strenuous attempts of African elders to ponder over the mysteries of the Universe, the hostility of the environment, the difficulties of living with fellow beings, human and non-human, the desire to establish and live in a stable society, the necessity to communicate freely with others, and to know and master the environment either through cooperation or by conquest." According to them "these strenuous attempts led to asking philosophical questions. African elders came up with answers to such fundamental questions and it is these answers that constitute ancient African philosophy."⁸

G. Sogolo, from the philosophy Department at Ibadan University, regards this combination of the question of relevance with the question of orientation towards traditional African thought as a predicament which cannot easily be resolved. The question of relevance according to Sogolo is different for African countries compared with countries of the Western world, because within the former ones there is no room for luxuries, which the latter can afford "alongside their chosen essentials".⁹ Either African philosophers work academically on a high level and orientate themselves upon Western philosophy, with the consequence that the relevance of their work for Africa may be denied; or they concentrate on the scrutiny of traditional African thought and try by that to prove their relevance. Then their work remains mostly "descriptive".

During the earlier stages of this controversy, when the "Departments of Philosophy" were just emerging, the first of the two groups mentioned above had created a pseudo-relevance of their work by posing the question: "Is there at all an African philosophy?" and by answering this question in the affirmative in a way which might be acceptable for Western colleagues. Since the futility of this question

has come to be recognised, as Sogolo says, this group has become the butt of a criticism which reproaches it with lack of relevance.¹⁰ This group under criticism includes such eminent African philosophers like P.O. Bodunrin, K. Wiredu, P.J. Hountondji, and H. Odera Oruka. The critics, however, often fail to climb up to the philosophical level of the criticized. This is partly due to the fact that their work, which is directed at relevance, is suppressed or marginalised by the purely academic philosophers.

A solution of this predicament Sogolo expects from a philosophy which takes on critically African traditional thought as "raw material". For therein are incorporated experiences "with which the student and the teacher share an affinity". Sogolo judges this to be more fruitful than the "domestication" of Western ideas. His goal is the evolution of a philosophy that "will be uniquely African not only in content but also in methodology". Only auxiliarily "the need may arise to draw on parallel arguments in Western philosophy."¹¹ I think that Sogolo should have mentioned in this context K. Gyekye's book: "An essay on African thought" (1987) and H. Odera Oruka's work on the "Sage-philosophy". For both realize to a great extent his postulates.

By critically going back to traditional African thought, however, philosophy in Africa does not thereby automatically prove its relevance. This is perhaps a necessary, but not a sufficient reason for meeting the requirement of relevance of philosophical work in Africa today. The further question, how traditional African thought can contribute to the task of grasping the intellectual foundations of the present situation in Africa, is not raised by Sogolo. Besides that we have to consider that the critical work upon the tradition alone does not guarantee the possibility of the relevance of actual philosophy. The traditional ways of life have been and still are subject to rapid changes. The influences of the Western world upon economic, scientific, political life cannot be overlooked. They will also have to find an expression in philosophy. Africa is part of an emerging world-society. It is from that perspective that it can determine its particularity.

This last argument is worked out by P.O. Bodunrin in a long rejoinder to Sogolo's article. This is the subject of a lecture: "Philosophy

hy in Africa. The challenge of relevance and commitment", which he has delivered on the 3rd of April 1989 as "The Ibadan-Pennsylvania Exchange Lecture" at the University of Pennsylvania.¹² Bodunrin denies "Sogolo's contention that the African philosopher cannot reconcile professionalism with relevance". In this connection he points out many actual themes of congresses and seminars, where lectures like the one mentioned above by Okolo have been delivered. Bodunrin goes on to argue that one learns to philosophize from the masters of this subject, and those are to be found in Western history. Therefore, Bodunrin defends a strong orientation of African philosophy towards the West. In a certain sense he regrets this: "One would have wished that the masters we learn from were those of our own culture".¹³ However, the concepts of a different culture can be applied to the African situation. "African culture today is a mixed bag and it is within that mixed bag that Africa must eke out a plan of development."¹⁴

With regard to an earlier period of African philosophy wherein those who are oriented towards Western intellectual history were predominant. Bodunrin finds now that their criticism of ethnophilosophy then was too harsh and that academic professionalism has been defended too rigidly. Like Hountondji he modifies and relativises this criticism from his recent point of view, and he explains the former severe attitude as having been necessary in order to make possible serious work at the emerging Departments of Philosophy. "Most practicing philosophers in Africa today combine something of the two orientations, a thing Sogolo sees as irreconcilable."¹⁵

The common goal of all, of the "Africanists" as well as of the "Western orientated ones" is the endeavour to contribute to the development of the African nations. If the latter in a former period were predominant, this can be said now of the "Africanists". According to my experiences, when I recently travelled to different African countries, this is only true of Nigeria. It gives witness of his superior point of view when Bodunrin looks at this as some kind of distributive justice.¹⁶ Western and traditional African thought begin to mix. Both can exist besides each other in a "friendly coexistence" and try to come to a

dialogue with each other.

Finally, Bodunrin warns against striving for a relevance which is too direct and restrictive. Philosophical thought is open, and it is essential that different points of view be made possible. Communiques and political messages will seldom be unanimous. Although all wish for relevance and commitment, they do so in different degrees and ways. As in Western history there are in Africa different temperaments and different callings, which lead to more or less direct statements on political questions. Again it is the contribution to development which is named as common goal. Like Okolo Bodunrin pleads for a twofold concept of development: an economic-technological-scientific one and a moral one which is related to the human person. Although at present the problems of Africa are mostly socio-economic he thinks "that the inculcation and spread of a scientific culture is the most basic of our present day needs".¹⁷ The statement may be allowed that this is not directly derived from the twofold concept of development.

Notes:

- * This essay has been written during a stay of the author as a visiting professor at the University of Ibadan (Nigeria) in January 1990.
- 1. Ch. B. Okolo Philosophy and Nigerian politics (Uruowulu-Obosi: Pacific College Press, 1985) page 17.
- 2. Idem, p. V.
- 3. Idem, p. 7-15.
- 4. A.K. Armah: The beautiful ones are not yet born, London/Ibadan/-Nairobi (Heinemann Educational Books), 1975, p. 81/82.
- 5. Okolo, op. cit., p. 22.

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6. Idem, p. 32.
7. Idem, p. 25/26.
8. F.I. Unah: Disguised denials of African philosophy, in: Journal of African Philosophy and Studies, Lagos (African Philosophy Projects' Publications) vol.1, nos. 1, and 2, 1988, p. 51/52; C.S. Momoh: African philosophy - Does it exists?, In: Diogenes, nr. 130, 1985, p. 79. These authors prefer to speak of ancient African thought" in order to avoid the expression "traditional African thought," which has according to them pejorative connotations.
9. G. Sogolo: Philosophy and relevance within the African context, in: Journal of Humanities (University of Malawi), vol. 2, 1988, p. 97. (A new version of this article has been published in: Philosophy, vol. 64, 1990, under the title: Options in African philosophy.)
10. Idem, p. 110.
11. Idem, p. 112.
12. P.O. Bodunrin: Philosophy in Africa. The challenge of relevance and commitment (The Ibadan - Pennsylvania Exchange Lecture), Ibadan, 1989.
13. Idem, p. 14.
14. Idem, p. 15.
15. Idem, p. 10.
16. Idem, p. 16.
17. Idem, p. 18-21 (Italics are mine, H.K.).

Résumé

Lire l'Afrique par l'intermédiaire de Foucault

Cet article traite de l'analyse faite par Mudimbe qui en concevant la méthode discursive à propos de l'Afrique a été inspiré par Foucault. Le compte-rendu se base sur les ouvrages L'autre face du royaume et L'odeur du père et ses romans Entre les eaux et L'écart.

A l'aide de l'analyse faite de Négritude de Senghor, Mudimbe démontre qu'il est difficile de se soustraire au discours occidental. Les jugements portés sur l'ethnocentrisme occidental vont même jusqu'à fortifier la raison occidentale. Dans le cas de Senghor cet aspect se révèle par exemple dans l'emploi qu'il fait des oppositions binaires telles que primitif/civilisé, occidental/africain, etc..

Suit un compte-rendu de la relation Mudimbe-Foucault. Foucault offre la possibilité de déconstruire le discours occidental mais il fait, lui aussi, partie de la tradition occidentale. Mudimbe doit se défaire de "l'odeur" de son père tant estimé. Il n'aspire pas seulement à faire la critique du discours occidental mais aussi à créer en Afrique des régimes de vérité totalement différents. Ceux-ci pourraient se baser sur des langues africaines et d'autres classements en ce qui concerne l'organisation des disciplines scientifiques. Or, ces nouveaux discours africains devront, eux aussi, être critiqués.

READING AFRICA THROUGH FOUCAULT:
V.Y. MUDIMBE'S RE-AFFIRMATION OF THE SUBJECT

Manthia Diawara

On connaît les paroles fameuses du Roi-Soleil à son filleul, le prince noir Aniaba. Comme le prince prenait congé de lui à la veille de s'embarquer pour ses états, Louis XIV lui aurait dit: "Prince, de vous à moi, il n'y a plus que la différence du blanc au noir." On interprète: après l'éducation que nous vous avons fait donner à notre cour, vous voilà devenu un Français à peau noire.

Everyone knows the famous words of the Sun-King to his godson, Aniaba, the Black Prince. On the Eve of Aniaba's departure for his states, as he was saying his farewell to the king, Louis XIV is said to have told him: "Prince, the only difference between you and me is the difference between black and white." We interpret: after the education that we have provided you at our court, you have become a Frenchman with a black skin.

--Léopold Sédar Senghor, "Vues sur l'Afrique noire, ou assimiler, non être assimiler."

M. Foucault...-du fait de l'importance, de l'originalité et de l'apport de ses travaux,- peut être considéré comme un symbole insigne de la royauté de cette pensée occidentale dont nous aimé- rions tant nous défaire.

Michel Foucault, because of his influence, his originality and the significance of his work, may be considered a noteworthy symbol of the sovereignty of the very European thought from which we wish to disentangle ourselves.

--V.Y.Mudimbe, L'odeur du père.²

Mudimbe posits here, in a rather blunt manner, the place that Western thought occupies in non-Western discursive formations. For him, it is necessary for the theorist in Africa to appreciate what it takes to create an authentic statement, one which reflects African socio-cultural practices, and takes as its condition of possibility a local discursive space. Such a project must distinguish what is still Western in the discourse that denounces the West. The non-Western theorist, in search for the enabling elements inside the Western canon, must be aware of the reversibilities and the traps embedded in the same canon.

Mudimbe's theoretical books, L'autre face du royaume and L'odeur du père, and novels, Entre les eaux and L'écart, engage as their subject the enabling as well as the reversible elements in Western discourse, thereby liberating spaces in Africa in which more empowered discourses can be uttered. In this essay, I will show how Mudimbe follows Foucault's definition of the rules that subjugate discourse, and then apply a Foucauldian critique to Negritude in order to reveal the presence of the Western ratio in this first African literary movement; next I will show that Mudimbe's transformation of Foucault's thought is a necessary step to creating African essentialisms that in turn become targets for criticism.

Foucault's archeological approach to discourse is doubly enabling: first, for thinking differently within the Western canon, and secondly, for proposing alternative discursive formations outside the West. On the one hand Mudimbe uses Foucault's method to unmask and unmake the Western ratio which dominates the human sciences and, under the guise of universalism, duplicates Western man in Africa. On the other hand, Mudimbe creates a post-colonial and post-imperialist discourse which posits a new regime of truth and a new social appropriation of speech and thereby raises the question of individual subjugation in the post-colonial discourse.

Out of Foucault's subversive uncovering of the rules that govern discourse in the West, Mudimbe unmasks the Western ratio in the African literary canon. But first, let's read Foucault through Mudimbe. In L'odeur du père he argues that, for Foucault, different societies control discourse by first positing external rules. These include the construction

of forbidden speech that bans certain words from certain statements; the designation of madness which opposes reason to insanity; and a regime of truth that determines the desire to know and practices a principle of discrimination based upon the access to "education, books, publishing houses and libraries, as well as the secret societies before and the laboratories today." (L'odeur du Père, p.39).

There comes next an internal system of tying down discourse. This internal system is aimed at classifying, ordering and distributing discursive materials so as to prevent the emergence of the contingent, of the Other in all its nakedness. This internal system of discursive subjugation involves the concept of authorship which serves to rarify the quantity of statements that can be made; the construction of the-organization of disciplines as a delimiting force; and the notion of commentary that places temporal and spatial hierarchies between the levels of discursive statements.

The third system of mastering the movements of discourse, that Mudimbe finds in Foucault, consists in positing the conditions of possibility of putting discourse into play through the subjugation of individuals, who are involved in discursive deployment, to rules. However, the object is neither to neutralize the return of that which was repressed, nor to conjure out the risk of it appearing in discursive practices, but to make sure that "no one will enter the discursive space unless certain prerequisites are satisfied; and one is qualified to do so." (L'odeur, p.40).

It is this last system of discourse control that serves to distribute and specialize the speakers. It involves four rules. First there are the discursive rituals which place constraints on the manners of delivering a discourse; the presence of discursive groups that have as their mission the keeping of discourse from multiplying and losing authenticity; the discursive norms which through their deployment in certain spaces have the double function of linking the speakers to those spaces and then of distributing them into specialized groups; and finally, the social appropriation of discourse that binds together discursive statements with non-discursive spaces such as institutions, class interest and political events.

For Foucault and (for Mudimbe), societies put into play these discursive rules to repress the irruption of discontinuities, disorders, and the vengeful return of discourse as nonsense. At the same time, Foucault points out that the deployment of the rules coincide with the creation and the positioning of Western man with all his positivity at the center of discourse. Because Western man has been creating and recreating his positivity in discourse, a problem concerning traps and reversibilities arises whenever an African theorist uses the dominant canon to represent African realities. Paradoxically, then, the African theorists that assume a violence toward the West risk unwittingly reasserting the superiority of the Western ratio by losing themselves in Western ethnocentric canons. As Foucault puts it, "there is a certain position of the Western ratio that was constituted in its history and provides a foundation for the relation it can have with all other societies, even with the society in which it historically appeared" (Foucault, The Order of Things, p.377).

Mudimbe's reading of the Foucauldian criticism of discursive rules reveals the position of, and the condition of possibility of the removal of the Western subject in African discourse. The founders of Negritude, for example, while aware of the duplication of French canons in their poetic statements, did not question the dangers of reproducing a French ratio in Africa, which repressed the local epistemologies as its Other (i.e. "Nos ancetres les Gaulois"). In short, the Negritude poets, even as they sang about the "total sum of black values," and denounced European ethnocentrism, were re-asserting the superiority of the West over Africa. As Mudimbe puts it, Negritude was "a product of a historical moment proper to Europe, more particularly to French thought which marked it." (Mudimbe, L'autre face du royaume, p.101)² .

Perhaps this is best seen by the way in which Léopold Sédar Senghor, in a 1945 text that is formative of the ideas in Negritude, addressed the manner in which the African canon may be constituted out of the study of French letters. For Senghor, just as French authors such as Racine shaped French values and styles out of their mastery of Greek fables and techniques of representation, Africans, too, must "discover their blackness and a style to express it through the study of

French letters." (Senghor, Vues sur l'Afrique, p.95). For Senghor, the knowledge of Africa must pass through a knowledge of France which is recorded in literature. A mastery of "the most humane authors such as Corneille, Racine, Molière and Hugo" imparts universal values like honesty to the African student, and provides him with a language and a style to express them. The French writers are not only the masters to think with, they are also the masters of language and style. Senghor recommended them for an essential French quality, a French way of doing things which he was later known to call la francité: "clarity, order, harmony of ideas" which the African needs in order to describe his feelings and the world around him. (Senghor, Vues sur l'Afrique, p.93).

To create the "African Humanities" Senghor desired the assimilation of French classics to be accompanied by a teaching of ethnology which made Africa known to Africans. The works of ethnologists such as Leo Froebenius and Delafosse were necessary in the classroom, "because they are our ancestors who saved us from despair by revealing our rich tradition to us." (Quoted in L'odeur, p.36). Thus ethnologists showed to the world that Africans, too, had an art, a philosophy and a history. With the tools and the disciplines thus imported from Europe, Africans can begin a new humanities with an African style which Senghor defines "not so much as a technique, but a state of mind which takes its nourishment from the deep sources of the black soul; it is found in the traditional qualities, i.e. the warmth, the tension and the rhythm." ("Vues sur l'Afrique..", p.92). For Senghor, the black is, before everything else, a lyrical person with a strong sense of verbal imagery, rhythm and the musicality of words. Finally, following Froebenius' opposition between the Hamite and the Ethiopian, Senghor posited Africa as the primitive contemporary of Europe and argued that the former could help the latter to rediscover its ancient values which had been deformed by the loss of natural feelings since the Industrial Revolution. ("Vues sur l'Afrique..", p.98).

Note that Senghor's defense of assimilation rests on a universal view of a world with France in the center. This is understandable given that he wished to transcend what he called the "false antinomy" be-

tween the terms of assimilation and association. According to Senghor, the concept of assimilation has always been embodied within French civilization. Moreover it is a Cartesianism that transcends human passions in order to emphasize reasoning as the glue that unites all men, regardless of their skin color. "French universalism speaks of Man, not men." When this Cartesian notion is applied to politics and colonialism, it results in the "Declaration of Human Rights," the creation of "La Société des Amis des Noirs," the abolition of slavery and the assimilation of Africans to the universal French civilization. ("Vues sur l'Afrique..", pp.57-65).

For Senghor, the concept of assimilation which requires Africans to espouse the French language as the universal tool does not contradict the concept of association which implies a relationship between two autonomous states. The doctrine of association seeks to undo hierarchies and create the possibilities for cultures and nations that are diverse in origin, customs, religion and race to work together. It was a concept used by the opponents of assimilation during the period of the French Imperial Community, and it is used today by those in the Organization of Francophone countries to denounce France's cultural imperialism within the organization.

Senghor defends himself against the proponents of association by drawing an evolutionist scheme toward equality. To become uncolonizable, Africans must first assimilate that which enables them to be as educated as the French. By posing the problem in this manner, Senghor wishes to show that the proponents of association, in their radical demand for equality between Africans and French, are against a much needed education in Africa. ("Vues sur l'Afrique..", pp. 63-64). To the concept of association, Senghor prefers terms like universalism, creolization, symbiosis, grafting, all of which posit France in the center and Africa on the margins.³

Let's now read this Senghorian statements through Mudimbe (and Foucault). To apply a Mudimbean reading to these Senghorian passages is not to deny the merit of Negritude which participated in the modernist movement of the thirties and forties and helped to undermine the dogmatic claims of the canons of Western civilization. In short, one is

not interested in criticizing assimilation as a bad object, but in showing that assimilation is an un-attainable goal because of the barriers inherent in French discourse between the West and Africa. Following Mudimbe, one reads Senghor, therefore, in order to reveal the structures that create ambiguity and contradictions in his discourse and to posit the conditions of possibility necessary to getting rid of those structures. Thus, Senghor's intention to create the "African Humanities" through assimilation is debunked by the emergence of a French ratio at the center of the text which forces Senghor to construct the African as the European's Other.

Given that Senghor's only audience was in France at that time, it can be argued that he had no choice but to speak in a discourse that was socially appropriated to recognize the African only as Other. Even his categories of the black as warm, rhythmic, musical and emotional come from a well established source in French literature existent since the Enlightenment, and re-thematized in the Nineteenth century by the arch-racist Gobineau. As Christopher Miller has shown, Gobineau and other writers stripped the black of reasoning faculties and depicted him as one who is moved only by a blind sensorial desire. Gobineau's Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines is at the origin of a notion that gained wide acceptance: that blacks are endowed with greater 'imagination' than whites and are thus the source of the arts. From the Essai, through Guillaume Appollinaire's theories on "fetish-art" to Sartre's "Orphée noir," this assumption continually endows the black with a type of thinking that simultaneously robs him of the ability to think as a fully reflexive intellect. The Essai often reads as a caricature of other, subtler texts." [Miller, Blank Darkness, p.88].

The Negritude of Senghor, because it was only addressed to French people and because it was removed from Africa, was constituting a black that never existed, except as the Other in the unconscious of the French. Nevertheless it was an Other that was presented as real, human and beautiful. The result of such a discourse is not only the impossibility of beautifying the Other: i.e., making it an exotic French, but also the impossibility of speaking of Africa without Othering it: i. e., re-asserting the superiority of the West over it. To paraphrase

Mudimbe, this discourse has internal constraints which make one imagine that Senghor is against Western ethnocentrism by speaking of African beauty, but which at the same time maintain the binary oppositions between European and African, civilized and primitive, rational and emotional, religious and idolatrous.

This brings us to the epigraph above, namely that the only difference between prince Aniaba and Louis XIV is one of skin color. Senghor's assimilationist discourse, far from making the African the equal of the European and therefore uncolonizable, participates in a universalist concept of man that posits Western man as the model and the African as its aberration. Africa, according to the Senghorism described above, is the primitive contemporary of the West; and as such, it can help Europe to rediscover its lost traditional values: According to a Mudimbean reading, this overstatement of universalism, at the expense of difference, leaves unsaid the construction of Africa as "the infancy of humanity which, when studied carefully, reveals certain traumatismes repressed in Western societies." (Mudimbe, L'autre face du royaume, p.81).

A Mudimbean/Foucauldian analysis of discourse also reveals the duplication in Negritude of themes and motives that are always/already appropriated by social conditions in the West. As Mudimbe puts it, "Western discourse defines its space and takes its order from a specific socio-economic and cultural structure. It can address other societies and cultures only in reference to itself, and never to specific systems that cannot be reduced to it." (L'odeur, p.44). Senghor, in an attempt to find African equivalents of European art, and to valorize African culture for the purpose of bringing the West to respect it, has forced a reading upon Africa which estheticized it and deformed it by making it conform to the gaze of the West. That is, Negritude, in the name of a French universalism, unlishes on the surface of Africa Europe's regime of truth (la volonté de verité), its notion of authorship and disciplines. Negritude, for Mudimbe, "simply and faithfully takes categories, concepts, schema and systems from the West, and runs them into African entities." [L'odeur, p.43].

After this Mudimbean/Foucauldian reading of some of the original claims of Negritude, it is now important to turn to the other aspect of Mudimbe's work which transforms Foucault's thought. As I have shown Mudimbe's critique of Negritude is intended to name the paradoxical presence of the Western ratio in it, so that it can be removed, circumvented or surpassed by a more liberated discourse. It is here that Mudimbe stands Foucault, so to speak, on his head.

Foucault is well known for his criticism of the use of discourse as merely a structure of language put into play in order to produce meaning. For him, discourse is not simply there to mediate between thought and speech, or to legitimize original experiences through the constitution of subjects. Foucault calls for the resurgence of discourse without signification; a world of discontinuity between the speaking subject and the discourse he/she produces; a pure discourse criticism divorced from sentence criticism which is engrossed with analysis of latent meaning and propositional statements. He draws our attention to the exteriority of discourse by delineating the condition of possibility of its materiality.⁴

To obtain this pure discursive analysis, Foucault proposes the removal from discourse of the regime of truth, of meaning based criticism, and the return in discourse of its aleatory and subversive elements. In this effort, he debunks classical notions of creativity, unity, originality and signification in discursive analysis, and emphasizes in their stead the notion of reversibility which reveals the negative side of subjugating discourse; the notion of discontinuity which posits discursive statements as discontinuous practices that intersect each other, address each other, or exclude each other; and the notion of specificity which conceives of discourse as a violence practiced upon other bodies. It is in these practices that contingencies and chance assume their regular recurrence and the notion of materiality comes to define the exterior "body" of discourse and its condition of possibility. (*L'odeur*, p.42)

If we suppose that Foucault is to Mudimbe what the French anthropologists were to Senghor, in the sense that the Africans have been empowered by the Europeans to carry a discourse about themselves, the

next question raised by Mudimbe's book, L'odeur du père, is how to get rid of the father's abusive smell. For Mudimbe, "to really escape the supremacy of Western thought presupposes to exactly appreciate what it means to rid ourselves of it. It presupposes to know how far the West, perhaps cunningly, has recreated itself in us. It presupposes also to know the Western in what has enabled us to denounce the West. (L'odeur, p.44).

The West cannot talk about Africa outside the Western text, just as Africans cannot form canons with texts that reflect the European socio-cultural conditions. I have tried to show in this essay that Foucault's work influences Mudimbe's critique of discursive formation in Africa. Moreover, when conceived in another manner, it is possible to argue that Mudimbe contradicts the French thinker. Foucault's thought properly belongs to a specific region in Western discourse which gives it its condition of possibility as a necessary counter hegemonic statement. In short, the Foucauldian system too, under whatever ideological and methodological metamorphoses it appears, belongs to the history of Western culture. Even Foucault's call for a pure discourse criticism, a discourse unconstrained by social appropriations, leaves unsaid the repression of non-westerners by Western discourse. Additionally I would like to suggest that what is feared most in the West is not the emergence of discourses by Foucault, Marx, Freud, or Nietzsche, which are always /already appropriated; what is feared is the emergence of (an)Other discourse; one that excludes Western ratio. Because this would mean the break down of hierarchies between the West and the Other; the end of conquest and the removal of the self from the other's space; the breakdown of the security and comfort to which one was accustomed when one was able to predict the other's actions in one's discourse. In essence, the West fears the fear of the unknown. Accordingly, Foucault's call for the removal of the subject and the return of pure discourse criticism posits the condition of possibility for the deployment of a new Western ratio and the repression of other subjectivities. The pure discourse criticism, part of a particular culture, while it enables non-Westerners to denounce the dominating presence of the West in their texts, paradoxically does not allow them to move

forward and create a discourse outside the Foucaudian system.

Mudimbe, on the other hand, calls for a reformulation of discourse in Africa. He argues that "we Africans must invest in sciences, beginning with the human and social sciences. We must re-analyze the claims of these sciences for our own benefit, evaluate the risks they contain and their discursive spaces. We must re-analyze for our benefit the contingent supports and the areas of enunciation; to know what new meaning and what road to propose to our quest so that our discourse can justify us as singular beings engaged in a history that is itself special." (*L'odeur*, p.35). For Mudimbe, Africans must rid themselves of the smell of an abusive father; the presence of an order which belongs to a particular culture, but which defines itself as a fundamental part of all discourses. In order to produce differently, they must practice a major discursive insurrection against the West.

For Mudimbe, the most radical break with the West can be obtained only in a linguistic revolution in which European languages are replaced by African languages. Just as the originators of Greek thought set into motion a reorganization of knowledge and life through the transformation in their language of Ancient Egypt's use of science and methodologies, the West dominates the rest of the world today because it has appropriated Greek thought in its languages. In like fashion, for Mudimbe, at least "a change in the linguistic apparatus of science and production would provoke an epistemological break and open the door for new scientific adventures in Africa." (*L'odeur*, p.47).

For Mudimbe the other insurrectionist practice against the abusive odour of the father is obtained through the excommunication of Western ratio from African discursive practices in European languages. In other words, Mudimbe calls for a reformulation of disciplines inherited from the West, and a subtle discursive technique aimed at deconstructing the Western control over the rules that govern scientific statements. Working within Western languages, the new practice departs from the traditional duplications of the Western canon in Africa, and makes its movement toward a construction of an African regime of truth, and socially appropriated sciences. The new and cannibalizing discourse swells, disfigures, and transforms the bodies of Western

texts⁵⁷ and establishes its order outside traditional binary oppositions such as primitive/civilized, (neo)colonized /colonizer, slave/master, receiver/donor. This uncovers the centrality of Althusserian notions of ideology in Mudimbe's work which I cannot go into here.

I will now turn to the novel, L'écart, to show Mudimbe's discursive practice of un-making the Western ratio, and of building the African regime of truth. L'écart is about Ahmed Nara, an African student in Paris, working on a history dissertation on the Kouba people. Nara meets two Africans, Salim and Aminata, who are archivists at the Bibliothèque Nationale. Aminata and Nara become lovers. Other important characters in the story are Soum, an internationalist Marxist, Isabelle, Nara's French girlfriend, and Dr. Sano, a psychoanalyst.

The novel takes as its subject the questions of existence, history and ideology. Its narrative strategy consists in describing African images in French discourse as a projective construction, in order to reveal the modes of existence of the "real" contours of Africa. Nara the main character finds his individual freedom trapped by Sartre's influential definitions of Negritude in Orphée Noire, the famous introduction to Senghor's Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache de langue française (1948). As Mudimbe argues in L'odeur du père, Sartre's intent to theorize Negritude for Negritude's sake was defeated by a master text: i.e. the Existentialist Marxism. Sartre blots out the irreducible part of the Negritude movement, manipulates its operational system, and constructs the black man as an androgynous character, that ambiguous figure already common in Western literature. For Mudimbe, Sartre "modified, in fact the ascension of the first manifestations [in Negritude], fixed the ways of interpreting the writings, named the rules and the modulations of the action, articulated, at last, the claims of the black race, and proposed a universalist strategy [identification with the proletariat] for its struggle." (L'odeur. 139). Orphée noire has influenced in a fundamental manner not only the criticism of Negritude, but also the creative writing that followed it.

Nara, in L'écart, tries to undo Sartre's recreation of androgeny in Africa, and the limitation of his freedom as constrained by the Sartrean construction of the personae of Negritude. Nara realizes that for

Isabelle, his French girlfriend, he is the one half of the androgynous figure: i.e., the animal, she herself being the other half: i.e., the human. Their sexual encounter is therefore symbolic of the encounter between Europe and Africa, the civilized and the primitive. As Nara puts it, "I was a phallus... Could only be that...And the gasps that I was to hear, these cries that I had wanted never to have heard, were supposed to have come from the junction of two reigns, the human and the animal." (*L'écart*, p.34). Nara and Isabelle are incapable of reaching true love because of the stable barrier that Western literature constructs between the "rational European" and the "emotional African," which are thematized in Senghorian Negritude and made to trap the lovers' freedom in their text. According to Nara, Isabelle sees him in every erotic poem she reads and tells him "you are my totem," to which he answers "I am not an animal." (p.170).

In the novel, Mudimbe also illustrates the manner in which universalist Marxism debunks the freedom of Africans by assimilating their struggle to that of the proletariat. Mudimbe, already in *Entre les eaux* (1973), a novel that was awarded the *Grand prix catholique Littéraire*, exposed the violence inflicted by both Catholicism and classical Marxism on African spaces which were outside the societies and class systems that produced these thought systems. In *L'écart* too, Soum, the socialist realist friend of Nara, believes that "to be a black, that is nothing exceptional in itself. To be a proletarian, yes." (p.45). Blotting out the differences of culture and history, and emphasizing class alone, Soum states that history begins the moment Africa joins the proletarians in the fight against the Euro-American capitalists and their puppets. Soum points out to Nara that to celebrate his African heritage is to indulge in false consciousness; "for thirty years [since independence] they have tried to divert us. They sing the richness and the complexity of our culture... What a farce! When you think about the fact that the majority of our people do not have one full meal a day." (p. 44).

However, Nara is not satisfied with Soum's deterministic positivism and tabula-rasa approach to African culture and history. He thinks to himself, "how could our people live all their desires if they could not have, in addition to the architects and the engineers, culturally impas-

sioned people who could, if need be, look for and find the secret keepers of our traditions." (p.45). Elsewhere, he states, "how am I to tell Soum? When I tried to communicate my doubts to him on the universality of his practice, he quoted Marx to me: The relations of production form a whole; that does not imply at all that history is a totality, but that there are totalities in it." (pp.149-150).

As a student of history, Nara is not convinced by Soum's "scientific" method which pushes aside as insignificant the ambiguities, the contradictions and the challenges that African societies present to Western discourse. Nara argues against anthropologists and historians who project images of their own desires on the surface of Africa, and posits as an imperative for himself the need to be more sensitive to the specificity of local knowledge. For him the question of archives is not limited only to "the particular expressions actualized by the brief history of Europe." (p.67). The new historian must question also the oral traditions, reformulate the symbols in local cultures and avoid easy conclusions about rituals. Nara, who spends most of his time ruminating about the mode of existence of a discourse which is not held hostage by a Western regime of truth, states, "it is Aminata, boiling with a cold anger, who gave me last year a good lesson: 'watch the dead, some things can make them move in the grave.' No other image could have been stronger for me. She forced me to take caution, and I stopped entertaining Salim about the primitive aspects of Nyimi funerals. I found the itinerary of silence and sympathy. The contact with tradition and its rigorous practice subjected me to its norms, and my speech bent faithfully before it." (p.28. My underlining).

Defining history from the perspective of oral tradition, Nara compares it to memory, a thought understanding itself at the root of its own consciousness. He says, "science was, in my mind, a memory. I could dig it up, read it in my own way; if need be, find it in error and discard it." (p.68). Clearly, what Nara is doing at the Bibliothèque Nationale is to appropriate the archives and construct his own regime of truth. For him, the anthropologists have either dismissed the rigid norms of African tradition as primitive, or estheticized them beyond their socio-cultural limits. He calls therefore for a critical practice that

reveals the meaning of people's life to themselves, instead of using them as a meta-discourse on the West.

So far I have shown that Nara in L'écart, like Mudimbe in his books of criticism, creates a distance between himself and the Western master texts by making his movement toward the construction of a discourse that can be socially and culturally appropriated by Africans. The comparison of the fiction to Mudimbe's theoretical works also helps to understand L'écart in the social context that gave it theme and structure. When dealing with an elusive character such as Nara, an easy way out inherited from traditional Western criticism of the novel would be to label him as insane. I will call to the reader's attention here Foucault's criticism of the division of insanity discussed above as a means to control discursive deployments. For example the blurb on the back of L'écart describes Nara in the following terms: "Mudimbe is most certainly interested in a character who is a neurotic; he lives on the margins [il vit l'écart] of society. He is schizophrenic and it is killing him." The story of L'écart can be twisted to fit the classic case of a character who is mad. As a child, Nara was locked up in a rat-infested cellar for an entire night. In the morning after the horrible night, he is told of his father's death. As a student in Europe, Nara's fear of rats and the dark becomes obsessive. In Paris, Nara's women play simultaneously the ambivalent roles of lovers and mothers. It is convenient for a critic of thematology, the Geneva school of criticism for example, to find here a network of obsessive objects which are linked to a primal repression.

But such an interpretation only represses the revolutionary aspects of the text. Nara's power consists in being able to construct his text on the outer limits of Western discourse. He slips out of Soum's deterministic construct of history, Isabelle's image of the African as a totem, and the use of an Oedipus universalis to explain his desires. To put it in his own words, "I slipped out of the bed, oozed out in the embrasure of the door, and took the first train to leave behind, forever, the torment of being loved." (p.50).

Nara's reformulation of discourse on Africa, like any essentialism, raises questions of discursive subjugation that Mudimbe addresses in

L'odeur du père. However, as we have seen, for Mudimbe criticism of essentialism and identity does not mean a rejection of the concept. It is necessary for Africans, too, to construct temporary totalities and to be allowed to raise questions of individual freedom in these totalities. For example, categories such as African history and African literature, by assuming the cultural unity of Africans, leave unsaid the diversity of traditions and, since the era of independence, the emerging nationalist discourse of the authors. Since the sixties, works of art and the lives of people have become reorganized according to new needs. They no longer respond to the need to struggle for independence, nor to the horrors committed by the white man. For Mudimbe, nowadays "there is a clear diversification of themes, and, like all literatures, African literature too tends to occupy new spaces of enunciation. Each text is thus particularized according to the ideological and the literary inclination of its author. To a certain degree, the author's nationality also counts." (L'odeur, p.143).

The social context that provides the writer with the elements of his/her text is no longer the same from country to country; "the father to kill or to celebrate, when such is the case, is no longer the same from Senegal to the Congo." (p.143).

The unanimist tendency that one encounters in Nara, and also in Mudimbe, although necessary, can therefore be posited only momentarily. It is necessary and convenient for signifying Europe's discursive violence against Africa, and the need for Africans to call for a discourse that can represent their history, their life and their literature. But once Africans stand up and speak, a new discursive violence takes place, which has to be constantly challenged. In summary, I have tried to show Mudimbe's original contribution to African and contemporary discourse. His texts address in Africa the condition of existence of literary canons, and the issues of epistemological breaks both with the West and traditional Africa. Mudimbe also raises the questions of identity and difference in post-colonial discourse, thus reformulating the Foucauldian definition of discourse and transforming Negritude.

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Reading Africa Through Foucault

Notes:

1. These and subsequent translations are mine unless otherwise specified.
2. Mudimbe argues that, ironically, the relativist discourse of European anthropologists such as Leo Froebenius gave fuel to the Negritude poets to sing about the beauty of Blackness. See my essay, "The Other('s) Archivist" in Diacritics, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Spring 1988).
3. In addition to the text under scrutiny, see also L.S.Senghor, "Pierre Teilhard de Chardin et la politique africaine" in Cahiers Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. Vol. III, 1962.
4. See my essay, "The Other('s) Archivist" referenced above.
5. For more on the reorganisation of Western texts by discourse in Africa, see Christopher Miller "Trait d'union: Injunction and Dis-memberment in Yambo Ouologuem's Le devoir de violence" in L'Esprit creatur 23 (Winter 1983): pp.62-73.

REVIEW

The Invention of Africa. By V.Y.Mudimbe. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988. Pp. ix and 241.

Reviewed by Lansana Keita.

The Invention of Africa, according to its author V.Y.Mudimbe, developed "as a result of an invitation to prepare a survey of African philosophy" (p. ix). However in order to encompass in his analysis the precolonial belief systems of Africa as well as the modern structures of African thought the author saw fit to discuss what he viewed as "African gnosis". Mudimbe writes further, in this connection, that

the title is thus a methodological tool: it embraces the question of what is and what is not African philosophy and also orients the debate in another direction by focusing on conditions of possibility of philosophy as part of the larger body of knowledge on Africa called "Africanism".(p. ix)

The author's orientation is again made clear when he writes that his philosophical explorations are meant to interpret "what it essentially means to be an African and a philosopher today" (p. xi). This follows Mudimbe's statement that given the lack of specificity of the task of philosophy he is less concerned to commit himself both to philosophy and an invented Africa.

I detect a puzzle here since the text is titled the Invention of Africa when in actual fact it is more concerned to respond to the sometimes fanciful invention of Africa developed by European scholarship. Like E.Said's Orientalism one would have expected a concerted critique of the way in which the African world has been interpreted (this includes the invention of the "negro" in the Western Hemisphere.) since the days of Europe's contact with it. It is in the first chapter only ("Power and Otherness") that Mudimbe seeks to analyze the way in which the European (represented by "the Same") has historically viewed

the African as "Other". In order to effect this peculiar relationship a special lexicon and phraseology expressing a polar opposition between European and African civilisations had to be invented. Although first originating with the European anthropologist this special emotively charged phraseology has gained much public currency. In general the antipodal points of human civilisation were viewed as being that of a "civilised progressive European" and a "primitive, static Africa".

The situation, of course, was not like that at all. Premodern Africa consisted mainly of agricultural societies (some were herding societies) characterized by particular technological and ideological structures. Deficiencies in empirical (scientific) knowledge were compensated for by appeals to metaphysical constructs expressed in the form of abstract cosmologies and religious practices. But note that this mode of dealing with reality is not unique to African society. The sociological evidence demonstrates that the traditional pre-modern societies of Europe, Asia and the Americas were similar to those of Africa in terms of their epistemological instruments and metaphysical claims. But a crucial qualitative difference between European and non-European societies arose at the time of the Renaissance when new intellectual and technological skills were ushered in by way of the Moslem invasion of Europe, and effectively put to use by a minority of researchers for the eventual purposes of exploration and trade.

At this historical point however the doctrine that the intellectual and technological gaps between Europe and Africa were quite vast, was developed. On the one hand there was a civilisation founded on principles of "rationality", while on the other hand African civilisation was governed by unreason. Yet this thesis fails to point out that until the last century the vast majority of Europeans (of whom most were recently freed from centuries of servage) were not only nonliterate but held many irrational beliefs in the form of superstitions. But this belief in the technological and intellectual differences between European and African civilisations has assumed over time the status of orthodoxy. This general point is well exemplified by Mudimbe's discussion of Euro-American astronomer Carl Sagan's explanation of the accuracy of the knowledge of astronomy held by the savants of the Dogon people of

Mali. According to Mudimbe's report Sagan fancifully attributed the source of the Dogon's knowledge of astronomy to some Gallic visitor (p. 14). This example and others demonstrate that "epistemological ethnocentrism" (Mudimbe's term) serves as a key determinant of the cognitive boundaries between European and African.

Consider too Mudimbe's discussion ("The Power of Speech") of the interaction between European missionary and his converted African homologue, who in a post colonial world sometimes seeks to develop theories of otherness (p. 59). Of similar interest is the author's analysis of African attempts to come to terms with the mind of Europe through the "Africanisation of Marxism", the works of Kwame Nkrumah, the theory of Negritude and the research efforts of C.A.Diop.

But of central interest though is Mudimbe's analysis of the debates by contemporary African philosophers on the nature of philosophy. Thus one is introduced to the ethnophilosophical writings of Central African authors like Kagame, Eboussi-Boulaga, Mbiti and European missionary author Placide Tempels. Mudimbe points out in this section ("Patience of Philosophy") that ethnophilosophy's contribution to our contemporary interpretation of African culture is the evidence, obtainable by appeal to "classical philosophical grids" that "there is an African philosophy which, as a deep system, underlies and sustains African cultures and civilisations ..." (p.152).

Mudimbe also compares the ethnophilosophical approach with that taken by contemporary thinkers like Hountondji and Wiredu who are more concerned to examine those issues more relevant to a modernising post-colonial Africa. I found Mudimbe's discussion of the ideas of E.Blyden welcome given the importance of this African thinker (whose nineteenth century ideas on the role of Islam and colonialism in Africa are problematic nevertheless) in the formulation of the concept of the modern African personality. Mudimbe reminds us of the influence of this seminal thinker on the ideas of Nkrumah and other Pan-Africanists.

Given the significance of Nkrumah, Fanon and C.A.Diop, Africa's most important thinkers since the period of decolonisation, one would have expected a discussion of these writers comparable to that on

Blyden. One must credit Nkrumah for formulating a theoretical program crucial for the understanding of modern Pan-Africanism, a doctrine which remains exceedingly popular with Africa's political theorists. But credit Fanon too for his fascinating exploration of the psychological relationship (based on invention) between the European and objectivized African (Black Skin, White Masks), and his incisive critique of the role of the post-colonial African bourgeoisies in the maintaining of neo-colonialism in Africa (The Wretched of the Earth). Fanon's thesis (now highly confirmed) was that the real goal of the colonized African Other was not true independence but a melding of his personality with that of the European Other. But consider too the polymath C.A. Diop who in systematic fashion set about dissecting the European invention of Africa in the areas of physical anthropology, history and sociology. Diop's research has effectively established the foundations for a new approach to the study of the products of African civilisation (Civilisation ou Barbarie). It would seem that any meaningful program of contemporary African philosophy cannot avoid the ideas of these thinkers given their importance for the ongoing transformation of African society. The successful transformation of African society would require a rethinking of the methodologies, meaning and emphases of modern natural science, social science, political philosophy and the law to determine their most effective mode of applicability for Africa. But this critique cannot take place in a cultural vacuum--it can take place only in the context of a modernising African civilisation. It is in this context that the ideas of Diop and Fanon and Nkrumah are of importance.

One detects too in Mudimbe's analysis a concern for an issue which ought to have been already resolved. This issue is the one which assumes that

The fact of the matter is that, until now, Western interpreters as well as African analysts have been using categories and conceptual systems which depend on a Western epistemological order. Even in the most explicitly "Afrocentric" descriptions, models of analysis explicitly or implicitly, knowingly or unknowingly, refer to the same order (p.x).

One detects here some vested interests at stake here. The European anthropologist no doubt waxes nostalgic for his invention of a static "tribal" Africa with "exotic" peoples and their "quaint" customs and practices. The near-to-be extinct European anthropologist has no explanatory paradigm for modern African societies locked in a dynamic struggle with issues of politics and economics. At the same time there is the Western mind-set embedded in the languages of West and derived from the paradigms of the physical anthropologist which regard any externally prompted change in African modes of thought or culture as yielding an "epistemological hiatus" between traditional and modern African modes of knowing.

Yet such demands are not placed on other cultures. Consider the fact that the traditional gnosis of Europe as reflected in the genuinely European thought systems of the Vikings, the Gauls, the Saxons, etc. holds no place in the intellectual pantheon of modern Europe. Is there an epistemological hiatus between the long period of traditional European culture and the new age which began when Europe first made contact with Greece? The solution to this problem was the invention of Europe to encompass not only the Visigoths but also the Greeks. Yet the cultural geography of classical Greece was essentially a hybrid of inputs from Asia (Mesopotamia) and Africa (Ancient Egypt). But the result of this contouring of the idea of Europe yields a paradox: what is viewed as being "Western", in reality is derivative from non-European sources and what is genuinely Western or European (i.e. the traditional cosmologies and technologies of a Europe untouched by Greek modes of thought and Christian belief structures) is hardly so recognized.

But considers too the fact that modern Japan founded on the adaptation of technology from foreign sources undoubtedly experiences no psychological crisis because of some "epistemological hiatus" created when this borrowing first took place. Note too that although gunpowder was first invented in China, it was the West which employed with telling effectiveness in its appropriating of three of the world's continents. One does not detect any lament at this crucial departure from Europe's traditional technologies.

Modern European art and musical forms have been inspired by

the traditional art representational forms of Africa yet there have been no apparent cultural dislocations as a result of this. We have instead modern European art and modern European popular music. The point is that such borrowings are carried out for the purpose of enriching the European cultural matrix and not for allowing absorption by the African Other. Africa's progress in the world, as has been the case with Europe and Asia, will depend on creating or borrowing just and only just those items of uni

versal culture which would enrich the African Self both materially and culturally in the ongoing interaction and competition between nations and peoples.

In sum, Mudimbe's text should be read in the sense that it poses and attempts to answer important questions concerning the nature of what may be regarded today as Africinity. The text is rather problematic though in that one is never quite sure of the author's viewpoint on his topic given the excessive appeal to references and a style of language that seems to present ideas that are not coherently conjoined. I suspect that there may be problems of translation here.

RESPONSE

by V.Y. Mudimbe

Perhaps I should begin by noting that, first of all, The Invention of Africa which I wrote directly in the English language, is not about the history of Africa's landscapes nor her civilizations. Since the 1950's, African scholars, and remarkably historians, have been interrogating these and reconstructing piece by piece fragile geneologies that bear witness to historical vitalities that, until the 1940's, seemed invisible to students of African affairs. Secondly, The Invention of Africa is neither a presentation of the history of African anthropology, nor even that of the colonial conversion of the continent. At any rate, it does not concern itself with what one could call African achieve-

ments.

The Invention of Africa stems from a very simple hypothesis. In all societies, one always finds, in principle, a sort of zero degree discourse: a primary, popular interpretation of founding events of the culture and its historical becoming. That this discourse should be qualified as conveying a body of legends and myths is of no importance since its ordinary function is to witness, naively for sure, to a historical dynamism. There is, also in principle, very explicitly in certain societies and less in others, a second level of discourses. These deploy themselves critically and actualize themselves as, say history, sociology, economics of the culture; that is as disciplinary knowledges transcending the first level discourse and, by their critical power, domesticating the domain of popular knowledge and inscribing it in a rational field. It is at this level that the identity of a culture and its dynamics manifest themselves as project and invention, as a construct claiming to hold in a regulated frame the essentials of a past and its characteristics or, if one wishes, the "spirit of a culture" in the specific sense illustrated, for example, by the romantic concept of Volkgeist.

Finally, there is a third level discourse; one which, in principle, should be critical of the second level discourses (interrogating their significance and objectives) and, at the same time, by vocation, auto-critical. It is clear that the deviation between the second and this level is practically a spurious one as witnessed to, say by Hegel's philosophy which subsumes magnificently all the a priori of the second level discourses in the European experience and history. In any case, at least theoretically, nothing prevents us from conceiving this third level as one on which a meta-discourse could bring about a history of histories of a given culture, or, as Lucien Braun has demonstrated in his book, the possibility of a history of histories of philosophy.

From this perspective, it is obvious that to the question "what is Africa?", or "how to define African cultures" one, today, cannot but refer to a body of knowledge in which Africa has been subsumed by

Western disciplines such as anthropology, history, theology or whatever other scientific discourse.

And this is the level on which to situate my project. Reading some critics of my book, my first reaction has been to remain silent. In effect, to use a metaphor, why should I be forced to play chess with people who do not seem to know the rules of the game?

In any case, let me be clear. I do not doubt that there is in the primary discourses of African cultures a reading that could possibly relate to "la chose du texte", that is to the fundamental local authority. Yet, the fact of the matter is there: African second level discourses have been silenced radically or, in most cases, converted by conquering Western discourses. The popular local knowledge has been subsumed critically by "scientific" disciplines. The process meant not only a transcending of the original locality, but also through translation (which is, in reality, a transmutation), took place, what I call the "invention" of Africa. In The Invention of Africa, I simply observe and analyze this fact. In effect, Western interpreters, as well as African analysts, have been using categories and conceptual systems which depend on a Western epistemological order. Even in the most explicitly "Afrocentric" descriptions, models of analysis explicitly or implicitly, knowingly or unknowingly, refer to the same order. What does this mean for the field of African studies?

V.Y. Mudimbe
Duke University

REVIEW

Philosophy of education and education of philosophy. By Chukwudum B. Okolo. Snaap Press LTd., Enugu 1989.

Reviewed by Dr.S.Kasanda.

If the role of philosophy of education in Africa has been misconstrued, it could very well be because, among other things, the discipline has been mystified by professional philosophers. When one of them arrives to demystify the subject through educational conscientization however, the reader gets the feeling that the silhouette outlines of African education have finally begun to trace.

Even a quick brouse through Rev. Dr. Okolo's book makes one realise that education ceases there where people produce knowledge so their peers can know they know and the laymen to be reminded that they are at a perpetual loss; and that it starts, on the other hand, when those who have something to offer make it possible for others to know what to think and do with the knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, sensibilities etc., across which they come. Indeed, the author renders philosophy of education and education of philosophy simple but without simplifying each and both of them.

The first chapter of the work opens with a wonder as to whether an African has really understood what education, especially its philosophy, is all about and what it can and should do for him/her. The author then goes on to unravel the concepts and definitions of education, of philosophy and of philosophy of education that have emerged thus far. He does so with painstaking reference to some of the most potent philosophers, branches of philosophy and philosophies of education.

But Rev. Dr. Okolo does not just assert, inform or describe. He actually questions, analyses and synthesises. After having argued, for instance, that every known educational theory and practice has had to

be grounded in some metaphysics or philosophy of man, life and reality as a whole, he avails himself to illustrate the moorings of that truth by examining the relevance to education of: naturalism, pragmatism, existentialism and idealism. The limitations and limited influences of these 'isms' are also explored in the book.

Section one, of the work under review here, culminates into the household dichotomy of the educated ignorance of the tabula rasa concept of knowledge -consumption on the one hand and on the other, the active knowledge- producing mind of a Deweynian legacy. The chapter is rich in the expository and analytical ontology of a wide range of educational and philosophical ideas that many readers will find irresistible.

Section two of the work opens on a title-note that suggests that educationalists will at long last be exposed to something they have not been accustomed -EDUCATION OF PHILOSOPHY. The key issue dealt with here concerns the question: Does philosophy provide the kind of education expected of it? The author does not attempt to answer the question but sets out, instead, to illumine those values that the educand will possess or appreciate - thanks to the potentialities of philosophical wisdom! Put simply, the climax of the last chapter of the book, including the CONCLUSION, is first and foremost to inform and remind educators of the importance of philosophy of education. Then, they are begged, persuaded and invited to 'buy' philosophy as would a caption in the world of advertising.

But let us pose for a while and suppose that educators, politicians and educational administrators are already aware of the value of philosophy of education. What, in that case, would they expect to read under the title: Education of Philosophy? If they knew as we do know, for instance, that only 2 out of the 18 Universities sampled in the Eastern and Southern African region do offer Philosophy/History of Education, as compared to 10 of them offering Sociology, and 7 Religious Studies, Classics and Philosophy², would they say that, that is

because they are not aware of the importance of philosophy? Is the time not yet ripe for us to delve deeper and find out more about why there appears to be a cold shoulder given to philosophy of education in many African institutions of learning?

The work that is the subject of review here does not make any attempt to answer the questions posed. In other words, the philosophical posture called for, is not contrasted with the contributions of the other contending disciplines and such other concepts as: African political systems, democratization of knowledge production, dissemination and consumption, and education and development etc.. In my view, the work has not succeeded in helping us shed off the negative attitudes that we might harbour towards the subject of philosophy. One might even add that time for the discipline to advertise itself is long gone. What is now needed is for it to devise its own self-actualizing methodologies that shall take it closer to the hearts and minds of those entrusted with educational decisions - if it cannot get there by force.

Given its title therefore, the book should have explored, under section two, the question of how our students should be educated (through philosophy) to appreciate the indispensability of the subject in education, and to come to grips with how the discipline should make it easier for them to embrace that reality. With those small observations aside, the book is nevertheless a success in its own right.

Indeed, the work is impressive but neither because it breaks new grounds nor because it adequately summarises well-known developments in the fields. Rather it is the lucid coherence of ideas, the timeliness of the topic and the kind of urgency with which it invites attention that, make the book a masterpiece. It is with a tinge of modesty, I think, that the author informs us that his work is addressed 'to students of philosophy of education in particular and education students in general'. Otherwise the text is unreservedly suitable for: philosophy of education amateurs and educators and philosophers seeking to sharpen the relationship between developments in philosophico-educational thought and the practical treatment of individuals, societies and their environment.

It is also worth noting that the author has succeeded in providing

Review 'Philosophy of Education'

the whole gamut of philosophies of education with a rare tact to fit them neatly into some catalogue of only 74 pages of text - a space many a writer would have reserved for an introduction!

Note:

1. As reported in: University Capacity in Eastern and Southern African Countries: Eastern and Southern African Universities Research Programme (ESAURP), Portsmouth, Heinemann Educational Books, Inc., 1987.

ERRATA

Please note the following erratum in the article by Lansana Keita, "Research Disciplines in the African Context: A Revised Paradigm" in Quest, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1989, pp 3-19.

p 8 par.1 line 12 read "Western" not "African"

Please note the following errata in the article by Olusegun Oladipo, "Towards a Philosophical Study of African Culture: A Critique of Traditionalism" in Quest, Vol. 3, No.2, 1989, pp. 31-50.

p32 par.2 line 17 read "see that the" not "see the"

p33 par.3 line 14 read "yield" not "yeald"

line 19 read "the African cultural" not "the cultural"

p34 par.1 line 5 read "traditionalists" not "tr."

par.2 line 1 read "traditionalists" not "tr."

p35 par.2 line 16 read "traditionalists" not "tr."

p38 par.3 line 8 read "which the traditionalists" not "which traditionalists"

par.4 line 5 read "there were methods" not "there methods"

p39 par.2 line 4 read "life" not "live"

p40 par.1 line 3 read "arise in it" not "arise it"

par.2 line 23 read "concept of knowledge" not "concept knowledge"

p41 par.1 line 10 read "instruments" not instrument"

par.3 line 2 read "think" not "thank"

line 6 read "mutually" not "mutualkly"

p42 par.2 line 6 read "the" not "tyhe"

p44 par.2 line 11 read "asking" not "saking"

p47 note 12 line 5 read "Olisanwuche" not "Olsanwuche"

p48 note 25 line 1 read "Appiah" not "Appieh"

p49 note 33 line 1 read "Sodipo" not "Sopido"

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- b) The dependency of life on physical forces means that there is the need-factor. This need-factor or urge must be understood as fundamental to the universal order of things.
- c) Whatever exists has always existed in one form or another. A thoroughgoing explication of evolution and its implications must be linked to the preceding statement.
- d) Physical forces reveal through their pluralistic behavioural patterns that nature constantly strives towards unification.
- e) The following definition of life or life forces underlines the character of nature's strife towards unification:
 - i) Preservation
 - ii) Logic
 - iii) Balance (functional)
 - iv) Procreation
 - v) Awareness
 - vi) Inquisitiveness
 - vii) Compassion
- f) What is the philosophical significance of subsuming the above life forces under the heading of self-preservation of nature and not the preservation of transient individual (ego) entities which, in the case of human organisms, functions under the illusion that they exist as the centre of the universe?
- g) Can philosophy develop a language that conforms to and is consistent with the understanding of Life as a universal indivisible wholeness? The aim of such a language should be to cancel the illusion that the individual human organism is the centre of the universe.

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Abonnements: voir dernière page.