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Special Issue on "Fourth Generation African Scholars"

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Special Issue

The Politics of Knowledge Production in Africa:
Nurturing the Fourth Generation

Guest Editors
Godwin Rapando Murunga
Souleymane Bachir Diagne

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Africa Development is the quarterly bilingual journal of CODESRIA. It is a social science journal whose major focus is on issues which are central to the development of society. Its principal objective is to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas among African scholars from a variety of intellectual persuasions and various disciplines. The journal also encourages other contributors working on Africa or those undertaking comparative analysis of Third World issues.

Africa Development welcomes contributions which cut across disciplinary boundaries. Articles with a narrow focus and incomprehensible to people outside their discipline are unlikely to be accepted. The journal is abstracted in the following indexes: *International Bibliography of Social Sciences (IBSS); International African Bibliography; African Studies Abstracts Online; Abstracts on Rural Development in the Tropics; Cambridge Scientific Abstracts; Documentationselienst Africa; A Current Bibliography on African Affairs,* and the *African Journals Online*. Back issues are also available online at www.codesria.org/Links/Publications/Journals/africa_development.htm

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Afrique et Développement souhaite recevoir des articles mobilisant les acquis de différentes disciplines. Des articles trop spécialisés ou incompréhensibles aux personnes qui sont en dehors de la discipline ne seront probablement pas acceptés. Les articles publiés dans le périodique sont indexés dans les journaux spécialisés suivants: *International Bibliography of Social Sciences; International African Bibliography; African Studies Abstracts Online; Abstracts on Rural Development in the Tropics; Cambridge Scientific Abstracts; Documentationselienst Africa; A Current Bibliography on African Affairs,* et *African Journals Online*. Les numéros disponibles de *Afrique et Développement* peuvent être consultés à l'adresse suivante: www.codesria.org/Link/Publications/Journals/africa_development.htm.

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Introduction[1]

Godwin Rapando Murunga*
Souleymane Bachir Diagne**

Abstract

This introductory article explains the origins of this special issue initiative in the work of a select number of African graduate students in the US. It locates the different articles included in the volume in the general framework of debates about the imbalances in knowledge production on Africa between the global North and South. It highlights the issue of the role which the fourth generation of African scholars is to play in these politics. It concludes by summarising the contributions to this topic of the various articles included in this special issue.

Résumé

Cet article introductif explique les origines de l'initiative de ce numéro spécial dans le travail d'un certain nombre d'étudiants africains de cycles supérieurs étudiant aux États-Unis. Il situe les différents articles inclus dans le volume dans le cadre général des débats sur les déséquilibres dans la production de connaissances sur l'Afrique entre le Nord et le Sud. Il souligne la question de savoir quel rôle est dévolu à la quatrième génération de chercheurs africains dans ces politiques, et conclut en résumant les contributions à ce sujet de divers articles inclus dans ce numéro spécial.

The idea of this special issue on 'The Politics of Knowledge Production in Africa: Nurturing the Fourth Generation' began through an informal group constituted by a number of African graduate students then based at Northwestern University, Evanston, USA. The idea culminated in the establishment of an African Authors Study Group (AASG) that met regularly with the aim of identifying and discussing papers and books written by African

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scholars. When a call for papers for the CODESRIA 30th Anniversary celebration came to our attention, the group submitted a panel proposal on this very theme of nurturing the fourth generation. Out of the initial ideas that came up for the panel, five papers were selected for presentation in Dakar in December 2003. Four of these papers are included in this volume. They include papers authored by Mshai Mwangola, Nana Akua Anyidoho, Godwin R. Murunga and Ato Kwamena Onoma. While in Dakar, the initial team of five panelists enlisted other contributions that make up this volume. Ernest-Marie Mbonda's paper had separately been selected for the anniversary celebration and the organisers decided to include it in our panel. We were glad to have Mbonda on the panel and his paper was easily co-opted into this issue. The other two papers by Babacar Ndiaye and Ramatoulaye Diagne were solicited for inclusion.

The African Authors Study Group grew out of a frustration with the teaching of Africa in many universities abroad, especially in the US. It stemmed from the frustrating reality that universities and research institutions abroad constitute the favoured sites for training in African studies, yet these institutions pay only lip-service to taking seriously the scholarship from the continent. These universities and institutions make their claim on Africa only because of the global power relations that provide them with a better research environment and resources to produce knowledge on Africa. Matters are not helped by the increasing crisis situation engulfing many African universities and research institutions. It is now acknowledged that African scholars have to struggle against a myriad challenges, both economic and political, to produce knowledge about their own societies. These challenges have limited the priority that African universities accord to training future generations of African scholars. Given that some of the best scholars of Africa are pursuing their work in North America and Europe, it does not sound utterly misplaced for African students to undertake their doctoral studies outside the continent. But the effect on those travelling abroad has left a sense of disappointment because of the faddish and afropessimist inclination of knowledge production in the global North.

What was particularly alarming for us in the US was that Africa was taught through the eyes and perceptions of the Other. This may appear a trivial issue to many senior African scholars who have extensive working experience both at home and abroad. But in the eyes of young students in the social sciences whose undergraduate training is in Africa but who eventually gain admission to Northern universities, the surprise and sense of alienation at the *Africa* taught in Northern universities can be very disorienting. By the eyes and perceptions of the Other, we mean that African Studies especially

in the US has developed an immense capacity to ignore the existence of African (including black) epistemic communities that are actively engaged in producing knowledge about Africa. Instead, Africanists prefer an Africa refracted through the lens of western categories and theories – most of which bear little or no relevance at all to situations obtaining on the continent. This situation was very clear to those of us whose articles are included in this volume, because we studied courses in African history, politics, and the question of development, without ever using studies authored by Africans. Yet many of these studies are ground-breaking in more than one way.

The only contact we had with African authors was in courses domiciled into area studies programs like the Program of African Studies. This in itself is an interesting comment on the much talked about successful integration of Africa into the disciplines (Bates et al., 1993). This experience was a reminder that the channels through which knowledge is authorised in the US still retain a resilient aversion to knowledge produced by 'natives'. Consequently, this neglect of knowledge produced by 'natives' (except when they appear as data collectors) has left a false impression among migrating African and also many American students that Africa has no community of scholars worth the name or, if they have, their work is not worth reading. If for no other reason, the AASG was meant to ignite and constantly prick our consciousness about the various anomalies in the organisation of African studies abroad and to regularly remind ourselves of the vibrancy of the African scholarly community on the continent that continues to achieve even in difficult times.

The spirit of the AASG takes on another task which is embodied in this special issue. That is the task of championing the contribution of a newer generation of African scholars to scholarship. It is no secret that senior scholars in Africa continue to voice their disappointment with the younger generation of African scholars and their scholarship. The overlay of disappointment has tended to mask the contributions, even if minor, of the younger generation and the difficulties this generation experienced during the crisis years in African higher education. Many senior scholars still hark back to the good old days when Marxism was vibrant and when ideological debates defined the prestige of centres of learning like Dar es Salaam. But our task is to invite African scholars to make a better future out of a glorious past, rather than destroying every potential by wishing the recovery of a past that is already gone and ignoring or underrating the work being done today.

It is this younger generation that Mwangola's article addresses and speaks for. Mwangola acknowledges Mkandawire's (1995) pioneering work on three generations of African scholars but proceeds to lay out a mission for the

fourth generation. Noting that this generation has not yet been thought into existence, she defines it by default arguing that it is constituted by all those who self-identify with it. Mwangola does not draw clear boundaries to separate the different generations. She refuses to adopt the divisive politics of positioning this fourth generation against the preceding three generation identified by Mkandawire. She emphasises what each generation can learn through inter-generational dialogue. Mwangola identifies two main challenges the fourth generation must deal with. The first is to bring about the recognition of Africans as the premier producers and consumers of knowledge on and emanating from Africa; the second involves the rediscovery, development, recognition and validation of African epistemologies in the creation and transmission of knowledge. In addressing the problem of mentoring so evident in Africa, Mwangola suggests that the preceding generations can nurture the fourth generation by passing on to them the intellectual heritage they hold in trust from the generations of African intellectuals who have preceded them, that they need to demonstrate their own commitment to the work of their peers in their own research and teaching and, finally, that they can nurture by deliberately facilitating the creation and maintenance of an enabling environment for alternative pedagogical strategies. These are practical issues that set the stage and form the basis for all the contributions in this issue. They are issues whose relevance should not be minimised, since, as we have suggested above, they are relevant to the generation that is the subject of this issue.

Perhaps as a response and elaboration on Mwangola's insistence on centring Africa and African scholarship, the three papers in section II zero in on some specifics. Nana Akua Anyidoho examines the linked themes of identity and knowledge production embedded within the concept of insider scholarship. She addresses the definitional challenges that the concept of insider scholarship poses, and interrogates what impact one's position within a group or a culture has on the knowledge produced. This is in effect a study of representation and identity. As she puts it, earlier generations of African scholars, in an effort to reclaim representations of Africa and Africans, might sometimes have based scholarly legitimacy on idealisations of race, culture and territory. From that historical point, we appear to be in a moment when notions of 'cosmopolitanism' and 'universalism' make nonsense of any attempt to ground scholarship in complex and shifting identities. As the fourth generation of scholars comes into its own, Nana Akua Anyidoho argues, one of its defining tasks will be to negotiate a contested terrain. Her paper represents such an attempt to negotiate this terrain.

The article on 'African Intellectuals, patriotism and Pan-Africanism: on brain-drain', is devoted to a crucial topic, as Africa is and will be for a while a continent of intellectual emigration. This phenomenon has been recently amplified as African universities face a profound crisis. The article questions the moralising position often adopted to talk about those who have 'fled'. Beyond such a sterile approach, the article calls our attention to another form of exile which the situation of intellectuals physically living on the continent but who are totally disconnected from the issues relevant to the African situation exemplifies. This situation is contrasted with that of an intellectual Diaspora, ancient and new, active in pan-African networks dealing with the African questions, issues and challenges. The article invites us to consider this fact of an active African intellectual Diaspora in relation to the affirmation of an African presence in the world of knowledge.

The paper on African and Black Studies in the US brings into the picture the interacting experiences of mainstream Africanist, diasporic black and African epistemic communities in the study of Africa. Often, African scholars on the continent do not pay sufficient attention to the contributions of the African diaspora in the study of Africa. The idea in Murunga's article is to discuss the intellectual and institutional distance between African and Black Studies in the US to illustrate how racial politics within the US are reflected in and influence the conduct of African Studies. At issue is really the place of Pan-Africanism and how our understanding of this experience is limited when an institutional distance exists between Black Studies conducted largely by Africans in the Diaspora and African Studies conducted mainly by white scholars in the US. The article then talks about growing ignorance of African realities among African-Americans. It partly attributes this to the rise and dominance of Africanist Africa, its disengagement from Black Studies, and the marginalisation of African-American and African scholarship (conducted by black scholars) in Africanist scholarship. In particular, it is concerned with the de-emphasis of radical and Black intellectual traditions in the mainstream study of Africans. Murunga proposes the enhancement of direct horizontal dialogue between African and African-Americans as a good way of redefining the intellectual representation of Africa's achievements and failures, gains and losses.

Section III of this issue opens with Ato Kwamena Onoma's paper on the language question. The paper argues that the continued use of English, French and Portuguese in state and academic activities has minimised the empowering effects of recent transitions to democracy. The use of such languages contributes critically to limiting the ability of many Africans lacking fluency in these languages to participate in two important moments that define the

possibilities and limits of democratic decision-making. The paper argues that generations of African scholars have collaborated in this process of disempowerment by refusing to take a concerted and determined stance against the dominant role of the former colonial languages on the continent. Because of this role, Ato Kwamena Onoma provocatively concludes that we should regard African scholarship as a force seeking to create a space for itself within a closed discursive and practical space rather than a radical force seeking to eliminate closure of these spaces generally.

The article on 'The World's disorder' is authored by Babacar Ndiaye, an officer in the Senegalese army, who uses his experience as a peace-keeper in different areas and on different missions with multinational UN forces to reflect on the new world (dis)order which characterises our post-Cold War situation. This reflection of a scholar trained as a philosopher explores the situation of a world of uncertainty, in a 'permanent state of surprise' and also the paths towards an international order whose foundation cannot be but multilateral and a leadership not based on hegemony.

Finally, the article by Ramatoulaye Diagne revisits Senghor's notion of the Civilisation of the Universal which he borrowed from Teilhard de Chardin. At a time of globalisation it is important to re-read what Senghor had to say about universality and pluralism, or about the dialogue of cultures vs. the 'clash of civilisations'. Ramatoulaye Diagne demonstrates in this article how Senghor's thought could be understood in connection with the philosophy of G. W. Leibniz, and particularly with his notion of a world constituted by individual monads, each of them being a particular reflection of the whole and all of them forming together a 'monadology', or harmonious totality.

Note

1. The discussions that led to this special issue began while most of the contributos were still at Northwestern University, USA. We were joined in the discussion by Ramatoulaye Diagne and Babacar Ndiaye, who unfortunately passed away in the bombing of the UN office in Algiers, in December 2007.

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Nurturing the Fourth Generation: Defining the Historical Mission for Our Generation

Mshaï S. Mwangola*

Abstract

Reflections on the African academy have identified different generations of African scholars. These interventions have sought to using different criteria, identifying different foci and arguing the importance of each. This paper furthers Thandika Mkandawire's reflection on the first three generations of the post-colonial era (1995) by suggesting a historical mission for the next, the emerging fourth generation.

Résumé

Les réflexions sur l'Académie africaine ont identifié différentes générations de chercheurs africains. Ces interventions ont cherché à utiliser des critères différents, à identifier les différents centres d'intérêt et à discuter de l'importance de chacun. Ce document élargie la réflexion de Thandika Mkandawire par rapport aux trois premières générations de la période postcoloniale (1995) en suggérant une mission historique pour la prochaine, la quatrième génération émergeante.

> How are we nurturing the next generation?—Takiyawaa Manuh
>
> Each generation must out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfil it, or betray it.—Frantz Fanon

Celebrations are almost always joyous occasions, and CODESRIA's 30th anniversary is certainly no exception. I think that the Council has justifiable reason to take pride in the achievements of thirty years. Celebrations should also provide the opportunity to carefully and responsibly take stock of the challenges of the present, which are the legacy of the past and the foundation for the future. In the spirit of collective reflection that Ayi Kwei Armah calls 'cerebration', this is an intervention focusing on the emerging genera-

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tion of African intellectuals, those who, following Thandika Mkandawire's identification of three preceding generations of African scholars trained in the 'post-independence' era, have been identified as the fourth generation.[1]

In the recent past, CODESRIA has placed much emphasis on the issue of intergenerational participation in its programmes. This has resulted in concerted efforts being made to ensure the participation of all four generations in the activities of the Council. Of particular significance are CODESRIA programmes for emerging scholars. Initiatives such as CODESRIA's 'small' grants for thesis-writing and prizes for doctoral dissertations are invaluable in both enabling and recognising quality graduate work in African universities. The new CODESRA series, 'Interventions', promises to further increase the visibility of the work of younger scholars and entrench their contributions.

While the presence of the fourth generation has been recognised, it is still yet to be defined, except by default. Mkandawire's reflection on the first three generations, based as it is on a retrospective analysis of characteristics already manifested within the African academy, is silent on this still emerging generation. Ebrima Sall et al. (2003), who have re-examined these three generations, are also silent on the nature of the fourth generation of African scholars. I suggest we begin to actively 'imagine it into being', articulating what we already know to be its reality even as we shape the direction(s) we envision it to take.

In his now classical treatise on the reality and legacy of colonialism, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon urges us to seize the initiative for each historical era, by adopting a generational agenda to the challenges we face (1967: 166). Whether we like it or not, each generation of people—and that must include its intellectuals as well—are born into a specific context that presents peculiar challenges. The scholarship of preceding generations of African scholars clearly reflects the eras in which they worked. Discourses on decolonisation, for example, can be used to trace the trajectory of that historical struggle, from its earliest phases of resistance, through different stages of the liberation struggles, to the manifestation of diverse experiences of political independence in the continent. In the present academic environment, these discourses continue in different guises, hence the re-emergence of similar theoretical arguments in first, discussions on neo-colonialism, and now in the debates on globalisation. A comparative analysis of important works by African intellectuals from different historical periods shows that, stripped of the specificities of the particular debates, Africa's intelligentsia has continued over different eras to respond more or less to the same core concerns, such as identity definition and the continent's complicated relationship to the rest of the world. One cannot also ignore the prevailing socio-

political contexts and the accompanying economic environment that proved crucial factors in determining the nature of the African academy and had enormous impact on the choices undertaken by intellectuals, including the important question of who stayed, and who left. As Mkandawire demonstrates, while it is possible to demarcate between the generations from the point of view of their scholarship and the focus of their work, the conditions within which they have to work has also influenced their scholarship. The first generation generally returned home after graduate studies abroad to job security as well as other material and moral incentives. They had a relatively good working relationship with the state and have maintained an influential presence in the global academy, while inaugurating new networks and institutions aimed at developing and strengthening the African academy. In contrast, the second generation tended to stay or return abroad due to the growing disenchantment with the working environment at home, a hostile relationship with the state and /or their own marketability abroad. Highly mobile, they remain an influence in intellectual circles everywhere but in Africa. The third generation largely trained in an era characterised by difficult socio-political and economic circumstances, which negatively impacted the African institutions in which they studied. It has marginal presence in the global academy, and has focused its energies within the continent, shouldering the logistical burden of qualitative transformation of the African academy. Recognising the influence that each of these generations has had on the present, I submit that it is important that the fourth generation understands how the specific contexts, constraints, challenges and possibilities of this present moment influences it towards the discovery, planning and implementation of the historical mission that will be its own legacy to the future.

This paper is an invitation to cerebration—calling forth an engagement with issues emanating from the identification and articulation of a collective mission for this fourth generation. In recognising the importance of self-articulation in initiatives of this nature, this paper is first directed to those who self-identify as members of this fourth generation as I do. We are the ones who ultimately will be held accountable for the commission of the mission we choose to adopt. Secondly, it is directed to all others who, in recognising the fourth generation as part of a continuum stretching from the first African scholars to those who are still the unrealised dreams of the future, are willing to commit themselves to its nurture.

I wish to emphasise the desirability and validity of bringing into this conversation a diversity of individual and group experiences, all of whom can and should contribute to this discussion. As an African female graduate student currently located in a non-African institution, I am well aware of the challenges of speaking from what is commonly perceived to be the margin.

I do recognise however the irony of my position; the very attributes some use to define me as marginal, are viewed by others as proof of my privileged status. The perspective that I bring to this discussion is both shaped by who I am, and conversations with other scholars of the fourth generation.[2]

Defining a Mission

In conversations on the issue of generational affiliation preceding the anniversary conference, I became aware that the majority of those I spoke to who self-identified with the fourth generation did so by default. Unable to locate themselves even generally within any of the categories identified by Mkandawire (1995), they were sceptical about the possibility of a definitive ethnography that captured the fourth generation since, as several pointed out, this is a generation that is still emerging, still in the initial stages of consolidating itself. In response to these conversations, I have decided to approach the question of generational definition from another direction. Fanon challenges us to the articulation of a collective definition of mission and agenda, emanating out of a careful examination of the peculiarity of the historical context within which a generation finds itself. It is certainly useful to look back a point in time and identify this kind of historical mission with the benefit of hindsight as Mkandawire does. However, I believe Fanon is rather proposing that this be carried out much earlier, at the point where a generation is emerging onto the scene, when it still has a measure of control in consciously determining the direction its future will take. I would like to propose as this mission the centring of African communities in intellectual production on and of Africa. In conceptualising this shift of knowledge generation, creation, transmission and retention from place (Africa as the object of research) to people (Africans as creators and consumers of knowledge) I argue for a focus on two key areas: the place of African scholarship and the validation of African epistemologies.

The first challenge for the fourth generation is to bring about the recognition of Africans as the premier producers and consumers of knowledge on and emanating from Africa. This includes both those working within the academy and other intellectuals who prefer or are forced to use other spaces. The focus of this paper is on African academics, but it is important to also observe the need for those within the academy to recognise as equal partners organic intellectuals working outside. African communities will not truly be centred in our work until we develop the kind of co-operative relationships beyond the academy, envisioned for example in Ayi Kwei Armah's epistemic novel, *Kmt: In the House of Life* in which a productive partner-

ship between the university academics and 'traditionalists' is set into motion by this frank admission on the part of the former:

> [W]e are seeking to knock holes in the walls separating us. You have been imprisoned behind walls labelled tradition. We are often not aware that we too lie behind walls that far from making a home, merely make a prison called modernity. We need not just to knock holes in these obsolete walls; we need to knock them down completely. We need not only to touch each other through permissive holes; we need to embrace each other in the fullness of liberating possibility. Working together, living together. No doubt dozens of scholars have come to [traditionalists] in the past, also talking work. But this is what we mean: we are not here to invite you to ... hand ... over your knowledge to us, so we can go and sell it for the professor's salary or the expert's reputation in the world made by pillagers. We would like to sit with you, eat with you, sleep with you, lie with you, in short share everything with you, so that together we can bring your knowledge and ours into one stream ... That your knowledge is precious, we know ... We hope together with you, to create books, films, songs, the many objects in which knowledge can be contained and carried. Each object will bear the names of all who work together to create it. Yours, ours. When sold, these books and objects will make money for the authors and manufacturers, while spreading the knowledge of our own throughout the world. Our method with you will be to share the money and the acknowledgment equally, the same way we share the work. Possibly, in the past, when university scholars came to invite you to work with them, they rearranged things in such a way that you had nothing to do with the making of decisions ... This time what we propose is this: let us meet here to decide together... (Armah 2002: 137-138).

This passage is worth quoting at length because it goes to the heart of a problem deeper than a mere difference in location. As Armah further points out in the novel, it is a question of learning to put aside a long history of suspicion and disrespect, which has grown out of a deliberate distancing of not only different knowledge systems, but also people. If we were honest with ourselves, we would admit that this is a history that has been characterised all too often by exploitation by academics, especially in partnerships with those working within indigenous institutions and systems. These are far too often indistinguishable from the kind of unequal relationships we ourselves rail against, when we talk about being short-changed by scholars from the global North.

General recognition of the work of African academics is long overdue, both from within our own societies and from outsiders. The African academy has been generally sidelined from important decision-making processes by state governments. In countries such as Kenya, independent research

and policy institutes and consultants are thriving as alternative resource bases for the formulation of national policy.[3] The clichéd metaphor of the university as an ivory tower far removed from 'real life' remains unchallenged as the dominant perspective of the academy in most African societies (Sall Lebeau and Kassimir 2003: 138).[4] That this view persists, despite tangible evidence of academic involvement in engaging societal challenges, is verification for the need for an aggressive public relations campaign to dispel the costly illusion that universities are 'superfluous and dispensable' (Mkandawire 1997: 18).

Even inside academia, the problem exists. Within the very institutions in which they teach, the work of African scholars is often subordinated to that of their Western peers. While this could be because their African colleagues are unfamiliar with it for a variety of reasons, including publication location and unavailability of resources, I suggest that it is rather because African scholarship is too often unjustly devalued and sometimes even denigrated in comparison to that of Western scholars. The continuing struggle to decolonise the mind of many African academics is evident in publications and presentations that engage Western work almost exclusively with only token acknowledgement (if any) of African scholarship. This is an indictment of our complicity in the still unequal relationship between the African and Western academies. On the international scene, the situation is even grimmer; '[w]e are probably the only part of the world about which it is still legitimate to publish, without reference to local scholarship' (Mkandawire 1997: 29). While several African intellectuals of preceding generations have fought battles for the recognition of African scholarship in the global knowledge society, the challenge for the emerging generation of scholars is to complete the move, in the words of Micere Githae Mugo, 'from the periphery to the centre' of African Studies scholarship (Mugo 1996: 38).

Moving to the centre of African Studies scholarship entails both the recognition of the quality and quantity of work being done by African scholars, and the transformation of the all too familiar unequal division of labour in international academic partnerships. African researchers are too often relegated in credit even if not in reality to the position of '*watu wa mikono*'—mere hirelings—carrying out the tedious field labour of research, while their Western counterparts do the 'brain work' of analysis and synthesis. No prizes for guessing who is credited with the resulting theoretical insights. This project must begin with collapsing into one the two sites, local and international, of present African Studies. By virtue of both quality and quantity, local scholarship ought to be recognised as the benchmark by which all other work in African Studies is evaluated. For this to happen, we must take

responsibility for the quality of the work produced within African institutions, honestly assessing strengths and weaknesses and attending to them. Where there is legitimate critique of lack or oversight, steps must be taken to redress the situation. Secondly, research agendas and directions must be determined within the continent, by the needs, priorities and perspectives of the communities at the centre of these studies as both subjects and premier beneficiaries. Thirdly, this project must clearly insist on due credit being given to those otherwise invisible thinkers whose work is often 'stolen', ignored or dismissed as irrelevant or unimportant by academic gatekeepers. As Mkandawire put it, in this global era of academic networking, we must begin to combine the 'working' and 'netting' rather than acquiescing to the age-old division of labour in which Africans do the 'working' while westerners do the 'netting'.

On another level, this also means recognising a wider audience for the work that African academics produce. We must actively change the situation where no one else beyond the small circle of other scholars whose job it is to read the work we produce is familiar with it. We must therefore make intellectual discourse emanating from and for African communities accessible to different audiences, taking account of prevailing circumstances existing within and outside the academy.

The difficulties facing African academics are well documented. Beyond the financial restraints that make it difficult for many to publish, it is common knowledge that several have been forced to even flee into exile or to work in severely restricted circumstances, due to unwarranted state censorship and other forms of harassment.[5] Some intellectuals have given in to this intimidation.[6] Many others have chosen instead to disguise their interventions by finding alternative forums, such as embodied performance sites, which are generally more difficult to police or censor.[7] As John Ruganda observes in his study of Francis Imbuga's social satires, the challenge has often been to find a way to tell the truth but to do so in a way that protects it from vilification and the teller from incarceration (Ruganda 1992: xxi).

Even where and when academics have the freedom to work as they please, it is often the case that this work remains inaccessible to those to whom it should most matter. Some have deliberately eschewed scholarly forums in order to reach those who find academic publications inaccessible for reasons of dissemination location or choice of linguistic register. Social commentators Francis Imbuga, Wahome Mutahi and Kwesi Yankah have thus earned the accolade of public intellectual, not so much from their scholarly publications as from their dramatic and journalistic endeavours.[8] Embracing our own societies as the primary audiences for our work produces

the challenge of finding ways of making it accessible, and where necessary, finding appropriate ways of addressing different audiences, without diluting the essential content.

The second challenge for the fourth generation is of an epistemological nature. It involves the rediscovery, development, recognition and validation of African epistemologies in the creation and transmission of knowledge. This needs to happen in both the studying of issues specific to Africa and those of a universal nature. I am calling on the fourth generation to re-define and re-design the terms of engagement between Africa's intelligentsia and that of the rest of the world. We need to prioritise our own endogenous methodologies of generating, sharing, transmitting and storing knowledge, with no apologies for the fact that these will sometimes differ from those of other societies. Instead of relying solely on epistemologies validated by other academies, we need to use these to complement our own. It is time that we each came to the realisation that our 'training as a social scientist [may be] inadequate to the task of studying the subjugated knowledge of a Black ... standpoint', leading us to the empowering space opened up 'by using alternative ways of producing and validating knowledge' (Collins 2002: 252).

More and more, African intellectuals and institutions such as CODESRIA are insisting on having a significant say in the choice and direction of research priorities, even though these sometimes do continue to be determined by funding 'partners' who are more likely to be influenced by the World Bank, IMF and UN 'experts' at the expense of local knowledge and needs. But the focus on agenda, while important, is not enough. We need to re-examine the interpretative frameworks and research methodologies that we use to carry out our research. In what ways do these paradigms and strategies reflect the contexts in which we work, the resources we have available and the people with whom and for whom we are working? Are they able to accurately change to accommodate, in particular, work with communities whose subjugated knowledge has long evaded and defied traditional forms of Western knowledge? Do they 'overcome the legacies of both the epistemological violence and the paradigmatic limitations bequeathed' us by existing hegemonies controlling our production of knowledge?[9] Until we are able to use our own epistemologies in our pedagogy and research, we will continue to marginalise our own communities, voices and issues to the ultimate detriment of our continent.

The importance of embodied and material performance as a facilitator of discourse on important issues has been recognised by scholars working in different disciplines, especially in the arts and humanities. The challenge for the fourth generation is to apply indigenous epistemologies in our research

and teaching, developing endogenous paradigms that reflect our contemporary context as African intellectuals participating in the global knowledge community.

I have articulated the mission of the fourth generation as the centring of African communities in intellectual production on and of Africa. This entails moving African intellectuals and forms of discourse 'from the margin to the centre' globally. As such, I am applying the term 'African Studies' here in a secondary sense to refer to all intellectual production by Africans. Africa's contribution to world civilisations did not end with the fall of ancient Egypt, nor have African intellectuals ceased to engage questions of a universal nature. This emerging generation must reflect in the content and methodology of its work the continuing relevance and importance of African intellectual thought to the whole world.

Working Together

The importance of inter-generational co-operation in working towards the success of the fourth generation cannot be discounted. There has been some progress in creating a nurturing environment for the fourth generation on the part of a number of individuals and organisations like CODESRIA. But the truth of the matter is that there is still much to be done. While we acknowledge all that has been done it is still far too early to

> …sing
> a PraiseSong for Our People.
> For
> There is no genuine praise except
> Where great battles are won.
> No deserving praise except
> Where great despairs are blown apart.
>
> (And so) Before the Praise [the ancient dirge singers] say
> I must remind our people
> Of our many, many Failures.
> Before the praise they say
> Such ample room for Blame & Shame.
> So much Pain before the Dawn of Joy.
> Pain to measure our many blunders by
> Blame to count&count until our fingers break (Anyidoho, 2002: 55).

In her review of the current state of higher education in Africa, Takyiwaa Manuh concurs with researchers who conclude that our institutions of higher education have lagged behind other African organisations serious about insti-

tutional reform with regard to gender. The cause of generational affirmative action is likely to suffer from a similar fate unless we take the issue of organisational reform seriously. We need to 'interrogate our institutional cultures and practices, [including our] management policies, power relations, resource allocation and division of labour [in the adoption] of equal opportunity policies' (Manuh 2002: 46). I suggest that we base our commitment to the development of the fourth generation on a covenant of mutual understanding, that will move us beyond the current intellectual climate which Issa Shivji laments as being far removed from the 'total absence of intellectual hierarchy' and 'joyful exchange[s]' that characterised the relationship between scholars such as Abdulrahman Mohammed Babu and Walter Rodney and those they mentored (Shivji 2003: 110). Such mentoring relationships, today an all too rare phenomenon within the academy, should become the goal of all scholars committed to the nurturing of the fourth generation.

Some scholars have expressed their discomfort with the encouragement of generational projects, which they see as taking away from involvement in a collective cross-generational agenda. However, as the then CODESRIA president Zenebeworke Tadesse emphasised in her closing remarks to the 2003 East Africa sub-regional CODESRIA conference, generational discourses need not result in generational division. The mission of the fourth generation is neither unique nor unrelated to those of preceding generations. It is a specific task in response to the peculiarity of the historical context in which its members find themselves, made possible only by the foundational work of those who have gone ahead. The fourth generation is simply under commission to build on the legacy that is its heritage from the past, with equal responsibility to prepare the foundation for the mission of those following. This is why we must think seriously about the question posed by Manuh at CODESRIA's international symposium on Canonical Works and Continuing Innovation in the African Arts and Humanities: 'How are we nurturing the next generation of scholars?'.[10]

I challenge the first three generations of African scholars represented in this gathering [CODESRIA's 30th Anniversary] to take on the task of nurturing the fourth. Let me at this point break with scholarly protocol and address you directly, suggesting a number of ways in which you can each personally demonstrate your commitment to those of us who self-identify as belonging to the fourth generation.

First, you can nurture the fourth generation by passing on to us the intellectual heritage you hold in trust from the generations of African intellectuals who have preceded you. I am here not talking about just those who have been schooled with the western traditions of the post-independence

African academy. I am including here the entirety of our intellectual legacy, dating as far back as we can trace it, through the different eras of our past. It is important that this inheritance be passed on, along with the tools and preparation to engage it exhaustively. Nuanced understandings must be cultivated from informed exploration of relevant aspects of the historical, socio-cultural and intellectual contexts of these discourses.[11] This will entail 'going back to go beyond the usual suspects' to use Femi Taiwo's words, undertaking a recovery or re-evaluation of important work previously ignored, dismissed or simply neglected. It will also mean that you take us back into an exploration of significant debates that keep recurring within the academy,[12] helping us to make our own contributions to them in the present contexts that we engage. Introduce us to seminal reflections on the African academy. Move such interventions as "The Kampala Declaration on Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility" out of library archives, through introductory courses offered in every department at both undergraduate and graduate level, into the everyday life of the academic institutions on this continent.

Secondly, you need to demonstrate your own commitment to the work of your peers—those still actively working within the academy—in your own research and teaching. Our centring of African communities must be carried out from a current, relevant and constantly updated resource base, itself testimony to the quality work that African communities are even now producing through our own institutions. As Francis Njubi (2003) points out, if a paradigm shift is to occur in the study of and by African communities, such discourses must be decoupled both from Eurocentric moorings and any ahistoric Afrocentric alternatives denying, ignoring or downplaying an African presence and present. This does not mean a blind rejection of the work of the rest of the global community. It does mean however, that careful attention must be paid to the politics of citation. We must ensure that hitherto marginalised communities are well represented in pedagogy and research. Beginning with those continental scholars whose work is ignored elsewhere, we need to pay particular attention to those who are subordinated within our own academy because of institutional biases with regard to gender, language and methodological differences.[13]

Thirdly, you can nurture the fourth generation by deliberately facilitating the creation and maintenance of an enabling environment for alternative pedagogical strategies. The kind of apprenticeships that were the strategy of choice in many African communities in the training of creative intellectuals ought to become a standard feature of African institutions of higher education. Isidore Okpewho (1992) establishes both formal and informal mentoring

as the cornerstone of educational frameworks in the vast majority of indigenous African communities. Adopting them means going beyond the stipulated duties of formal academic mentoring in, say graduate student–advisor or junior–senior faculty relationships. It means a personal commitment that may well involve individual sacrifice, but that fosters mutual respect facilitating genuine dialogue in inter-generational partnerships. Committed mentors create opportunities for theory to move into practice by involving younger scholars in all aspects of their academic endeavours. They invite partnerships in editing material, writing proposals, and other aspects of organising and participating in scholarly forums. I have argued that the fourth generation need to take from those who are going ahead. I insist in return that you must be willing and eager to receive from, and give due credit to those who follow, thus establishing transformative mentorships that benefit both parties in the relationship.

In his analysis of Francis Imbuga's creative work, John Ruganda attributes Imbuga's 'flowering' to the creative and critical atmosphere he found during his undergraduate years at the University of Nairobi. Ruganda pays special attention however to Imbuga's mentoring by dramatist Joe de Graft, then a senior lecturer at the university, which he refers to as 'the most significant event to the young playwright' during his time there. Ruganda adds, [Joe] de Graft 'as a teacher ... encouraged his students to experiment [and] never suffocated younger and greener talent'. Though this tribute refers to de Graft's contribution to the Drama Studio in Ghana, it is equally pertinent to his work in Kenya. Imbuga established a long-lasting friendship with de Graft, which culminated in the latter recommending Imbuga for a UNESCO scholarship to further his education in drama and theatre. This bond of friendship is also mirrored in de Graft's creation of the challenging character of the Second Son in his play *Muntu* specifically for Imbuga—whom he had come to trust as a reliable and competent actor. In turn, Imbuga wrote a student's guide to the same play by his mentor. Aware of Imbuga's ability at improvisation, de Graft suggested that he explore it for his postgraduate degree (Ruganda 1992: xv–xvi, citation, Micheal Etherton).

We need more Joe de Grafts.[14]

Similarly, I challenge myself, and the rest of the fourth generation, to take responsibility for our own nurturing. We cannot sit back and simply wait to become the next generation of African scholars by default. Instead of bemoaning the constraints that we face—and they are many—we need to exploit the resources that are available to us, both human and material, enabling us to take hold of opportunities unavailable to preceding generations. We must play our part on facilitating mutually beneficial partnership with

histories similar to ours. We must pay particular attention to the African Diaspora in this regard.[15] On the continent, we must work towards sustaining inter-generational cooperation, even as we seek out, create and participate in intra-generational forums which allow us to actively engage each other and so facilitate individual and group involvement in the carrying out of our mission.

I am aware that, all too often, frustration has resulted from negative experiences of academic bullying, especially through the 'peer' review process. This has led in some cases to a disdain and disrespect for preceding generations that we expertly mask outside our 'safe spaces'. Part of our reality is knowing, as Elikia M'Bokolo has observed, that many of our own teachers are themselves presently incapable of providing the kind of nurturing we seek.[16] Presumably this is because they themselves have been the victims of poor preparation, lack of resources and years of systematic repression and oppression by both state and international agencies. It must be granted that some will always neither be able nor willing to do their part in nurturing those who follow them. Fanon however urges us not to give in to the temptation of a blanket dismissal of everything and everyone who has preceded us:

> We must rid ourselves of the habit, now that we are in the thick of the fight, of minimising the action of our [mothers and] fathers and of feigning incomprehension when considering their silence and passivity. They fought as well as they could, with the arms they possessed then; and if the echoes of their struggle has not resounded in the international arena, we must realise that the reason for their silence lies less in their lack of heroism than in the fundamental different international situation of our time (Fanon 1967: 166).

While we must learn to refuse to give in to academic bullying and other forms of intimidation that will hold us back from meeting the challenges we face, we can seek out those who are can and do provide positive mentoring and support experiences thereby fostering enabling environments for us to benefit from.

Most of us work under conditions of material constraint; even those located in the affluent West/North starve for lack of access to resources, by and most relevant to African communities. However, we can look at the possibilities afforded us by the accident of time that has placed us in this particular historical context. On one hand, we must grapple with the challenges of globalisation, on the other, as Edward Waswa Kisiang'ani argues, we can take advantage of it (Kisiang'ani 2002). The IT revolution has made it possible for example to improve networking between institutions and individuals, and to make available resources that were hitherto difficult if not

impossible to access. The Internet has the potential to become one of our greatest aides in the important project of creating and maintaining support systems crucial to the facilitation of intra-generational partnerships. Fostering a healthy environment for exchange and cooperation amongst ourselves is foremost among the tasks we face in the accomplishment of our mission.

We must also take advantage of the present challenging of hegemonic ideologies within the academy, which enables the transcending of boundaries long part of the legacy of imperialism haunting the African academy. This involves confronting geographical, gender, linguistic, religious, regional, racial, ethnic, institutional and other realities that have kept African thinkers of both continent and diaspora divided up into intellectual 'blocs'. Even as we continue to work within contexts of particular institutional, national and regional identities and histories, we need to develop a collective sense of belonging to a bigger whole, a project that brings our diversities into a unity based on dialogue and mutual respect.

Finally, we need to discover and pursue new ways of working that are relevant and particularly adapted to the environments within which we work In other words, we must commit ourselves to 'work out our own salvation', if not in fear and trembling, then certainly with dedication and purpose.

As we, all four generations of African scholars of the post-independence era, join together in doing our part in nurturing the fourth generation,

> Let us mix the long memories of a people destroyed with new narratives of our own making, as we move into space of our own choosing, as we dream in images woven from our people's best desires, as we plan on designs drawn from our own reflection, then make again the universe that might have been but was not, here in this place, now in this time freed for our new creation ... Let us walk together, invoking the future into now (Armah 2002: 12).

Notes

1. Several scholars have responded to the challenge of identifying generations of intellectuals within the African academy. Some have chosen to confine themselves within specific boundaries, for example, Ngugi wa Thiong'o whose understanding of intellectuals as 'interpreters' in *Penpoints, Gunpoints and Dreams* focuses on words as the medium through which ideas are fashioned and David Donkor who explores a specific context (Ghanaian theatre) in his paper 'PanAfricanism, Nationalism and Theatre Discourse in the New Political Economy of Ghana'. I have chosen to specifically engage Mkandawire's reflections on this issue, since these emerge within the context of CODESRIA discourse and are of a more general nature.

2. I acknowledge in particular Nana Akua Anyidoho, Ato Kwamena Onoma, David Donkor, Godwin Murunga, David Ndii, Francis Njubi, Hannington Ochwada, Alphonse Otieno and Praise Zenenga.
3. To give one example, as one observer remarked to me, the Institute of Economic Affairs (Kenya) currently has more influence with the present Kenyan government in matters of national policy formulation than any university department or faculty in the country. In 2003 as I was preparing this presentation, public universities in Kenya were closed by government directive, following the commencement of a strike by academic staff. In the first three days of the strike, I counted no less than five presentations by major news media organisations, using 'ivory tower' as a synonym for the 'university' in either their headlines or programme titles.
4. In its editorial on the above strike, *The East African* paper, a respected regional weekly, supports the University Academic Staff Union's demands, but then, comments in a reflection of popular perceptions: 'Currently, very little cutting-edge is coming out of ... universities, which take a big proportion of the ... education budget, that itself accounts for a third of the public expenditure'. *The East African* further argues, '[I]t will be important for the lecturers ... to ensure that they move to salvage the reputation of their profession ... The common joke is that because of lack of research, many lecturers continue to plagiarise and publish the theses written by their students—which are often themselves recycled drivel—to meet the requirements of academia and keep up a facade of respectability' (12).
5. Individual experiences of this drawn from different parts of the continent recorded in *Words Behind Bars and the Paradox of Exile*.
6. Witnessed for example by Paul Tiyambe Zeleza in Malawi.
7. Godwin Murunga explores the different responses and the consequences thereof with regard to Kenyan intellectuals, especially those with radical persuasions in 'Democratisation in Kenya: Thinking Through the Crisis of Radicalism'.
8. Imbuga, Mutahi and Yankah all became hugely popular with newspaper readers for their keen, hilarious observations of daily life in Kenya and Ghana respectively. Their creative work (the cartoon-strip 'Nyam Nyam' [Imbuga] and humour columns 'Masharubu's World' [Imbuga] 'Whispers' [Mutahi] and 'Woes of a Kwatriot' [Yankah]) is perhaps best described by the intriguing title of Yankah's ethnography of free speech, 'We Bite while We Blow'. Imbuga and Mutahi are also well known for their dramatic social satires; the most well-known of the latter's are in the Gikuyu language.
9. Amina Mama emphasises the importance of this in relation to gender studies.
10. The CODESRIA symposium on Canonical Works and Continuing Innovation in the African Arts and Humanities was held at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana at Legon on September 17-19, 2003.
11. See, for example, Ato Kwamena Onoma's reflection in this collection, 'African Scholarship, Language and Democracy: The Struggle for Participatory and

Inclusionary Politics in Africa', as it explores the contexts influencing the role of the intellectual with regard to issues of language and democracy.

12. See, for example, Nana Akua Anyidoho's paper on this collection, 'Identity and Knowledge Production in the Fourth Generation', which re-visits the issue of insider scholarship.
13. As Rudo Gaidzanwa points out in her investigation on the gender disparity in the canon-makers of the early independence period, the imbalances within the colonial period (carried on after political independence in many cases) with regard to opportunities for western education at the expense of girls and women. This disparity in opportunities also exist(ed) with regard to ethnic, religious, political and other minorities, resulting in similar imbalances in their representation within the African canon still evident today in every discipline in the academy.
14. Imbuga, previously Dean of the Faculty of Arts, and head of the Department of Literature, Kenyatta University was, at the time of writing this article, based in Rwanda working on curriculum development, still following his mentor's commitment to working on a continental level.
15. See Godwin Rapondo Murunga's paper in this collection, 'Thoughts on Intellectual and Institutional Links between African and Black Studies'.
16. Plenary discussion, The CODESRIA symposium on Canonical Works and Continuing Innovation in the African Arts and Humanities.

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Identity and Knowledge Production in the Fourth Generation

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Abstract

This paper examines the linked themes of identity and knowledge production embedded within the concept of insider scholarship. Insider scholarship may be described as the production of knowledge by a scholar about a group with which s/he identifies as a member. We are immediately compelled to complicate this definition by asking how any such group is delineated and how membership therein shapes knowledge production. The idea of insider scholarship thus evokes a series of queries about who produces what knowledge, about whom and for whom. The paper makes the argument that the discussion on insider scholarship has gained renewed relevance. In an effort to reclaim representations of Africa and Africans, earlier generations of African scholars might sometimes have based scholarly legitimacy on idealisations of race, culture and territory. From that historical point, we appear to be in a moment when notions of 'cosmopolitanism' and 'universalism' make nonsense of any attempt to ground scholarship in complex and shifting identities. As the fourth generation of scholars comes into its own, one of its defining tasks will be to negotiate this contested terrain. This paper represents such an attempt. It argues that the concept of insider scholarship cannot simply be discarded as irrelevant. To do so would constitute an ill-advised neglect or woeful ignorance of the politics of representation about Africa, and of the power differentials in different spaces within the field of African Studies. However, there are multiple grounds for claiming 'insiderness', and defining it by narrow parameters is unhelpful, if not damaging to any sense of common purpose. In light of this, I present 'shared struggle' as a strategic basis for reconstituting the theoretical value and the viable practice of insider scholarship. I conclude the paper by examining the implication of this conceptual shift.

Résumé

Cet article examine les thèmes liés de l'identité et de la production de connaissances ancrés dans le concept de savoir d'initié. Le savoir d'initié peut être décrit comme la production de connaissances par un chercheur sur un

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groupe auquel il/elle s'identifie comme membre. Nous sommes immédiatement obligés de rendre complexe cette définition en nous demandant comment un tel groupe est déterminé et comment l'adhésion à ce groupe influence la production de connaissances. L'idée de savoir d'initié évoque ainsi une série de questions sur celui qui produit quel type de connaissance, sur qui et pour qui. L'article soutient que le débat sur le savoir d'initié a gagné une pertinence renouvelée. Les premières générations de chercheurs africains, dans un effort de reprise des représentations de l'Afrique et des Africains, auraient parfois fondée la légitimité intellectuelle sur des idéalisations de race, de culture et de territoire. De ce point historique, nous semblons vivre une période où les notions de «cosmopolitisme» et d'«universalisme » rendent absurde toute tentative de fonder le savoir sur des identités complexes et changeantes. Pendant que la quatrième génération de chercheurs se dessine, une des tâches visant à la définir sera de négocier ce terrain contesté. Cet article est une tentative dans cette perspective. Il soutient que la notion de savoir d'initié ne peut pas simplement être considérée comme impertinente. Le faire constituerait une négligence inconsidérée ou une ignorance déplorable des politiques de représentation de l'Afrique, ainsi que des rapports de pouvoir qui régissent les différents espaces des Etudes africaines. Toutefois, il existe plusieurs raisons de demander une «initiation», et définir celle-ci par des paramètres étroits est inutile, voire préjudiciable à toute notion de but commun. Par conséquent, je présente la «lutte partagée» comme une base stratégique pour la reconstitution de la valeur théorique et la pratique viable du savoir d'initié. Je conclus cet article en examinant les implications de ce changement conceptuel.

Introduction

This paper asks the question, 'What is African in African Studies' or, phrased differently, 'where is the African in the study of Africa?' What is the link—or should there be a link? Between location and scholarship, between belonging and knowledge production, between identity and representation? This question, long a subject, sometimes a subtext, of debate, is not one we can afford to dismiss as we look back over the state of knowledge production about Africa, in order that we may chart new courses.

Why are identity and knowledge production issues for a new generation of African scholars? It is not because they are novel concerns, but precisely because they are perpetual challenges that require every generation to offer responses peculiar to its circumstances. Let me refer to an incident at a CODESRIA Symposium on Canonical Works and Continuing Innovation in the African Arts and Humanities held in Accra in 2003 to make the point. A paper had just been presented on the politics of representation of Africa in US academia. Another participant quickly stood up to question the relevance of what goes on in the US to scholarship produced on and about the continent, suggesting clearly that this was a preoccupation that we (as African

scholars) could well do without. Without placing too much of a burden of proof on this incident, it did serve as a powerful reminder of the generational standpoints that Mkandawire (1995) refers to in his typology of African scholar(ship).

The author of the paper whose relevance was called into question was a younger scholar working in the US. For him, these issues of representation in US academia arguably had personal and immediate resonance. The questioner was an older colleague based on the continent. The latter had the profile of a member of the third generation whom Mkandawire describes as primarily homegrown, and who lack the impulse of the immediate predecessors generation to 'speak back', or to defend its scholarship to non-African arbiters. It may be that the older scholar's comment was an expression of a generational orientation. In the same way, the paper presenter may have been attempting to map out the terrain for the scholarship of *his* generation. The concerns raised by his paper, while of varying personal interest to his audience, do reflect the general truth that scholarly work about Africa is impacted, as well, by factors 'extraneous' to the continent, and even more so in an increasingly globalized era. The intimate nature of today's society demands attention to events on one end of the world that may have a ripple effect on the other end. The events of the past few years alone have proven that we cannot afford to think of 'the global village' as merely a cliché. Again, as bilateral and multilateral agencies move away from obviously coercive modes of Structural Adjustment to more subtle, but perhaps even more effective control strategies, the local becomes integrated perforce into the global. Alongside these trends are theoretical perspectives that laud the fusion of ideas and cultures. It is imperative that we maintain an awareness of the confluence of political, social, economic and ideological forces that influences our scholarship.

How, then, do we take account of and draw on the 'global' to re-envision an African Studies that is firmly situated in Africa? The importance of this question is highlighted by my very use of the term 'African Studies'. This paper gives it the commonsense meaning of the gamut of intellectual production about Africa. However, the label has taken on a peculiar slant, denoting an area of knowledge in Western educational institutions removed from the 'mainstream', and housed in specific programmes (see Murunga in this volume). By contrast, there are few programmes or research centres on the continent that bear the nomenclature 'African Studies', except perhaps in South Africa and a few selected countries. In fact, one could argue that much of the knowledge produced in African academic institutions falls into African Studies by virtue of content and standpoint. Yet it appears power is

located elsewhere and determines the nature of available knowledge about the continent. This ultimately influences the way that Africa is engaged by the global community.[1] It is in the context of this reality that I introduce the idea of insider scholarship as a way of balancing locations of power in African Studies.

From Where Do We Speak? Questions of Location and Positionality

Insider research can be understood as the practice of research within a group with which one self-identifies as a member. This definition, however, belies the many meanings that are brought to bear on the term, and the contestations around who belongs to what group.

The idea of identity at the heart of this article references the related concepts of *location* and *positionality*. Positionality refers to the identities of the researcher in relation to the 'researched' (Wolf 1996). In other words, positionality indicates contextualised and relational locations such as nationality, ethnicity, race, class, education, religion, family affiliation, ideological leanings, epistemological perspectives and philosophical orientations. Positionality is contextual because it takes account of the circumstances in which knowledge is produced, and relational because it concerns both the subjectivity of the researcher and the subjectivities of others.[2]

Positionality is an important concept because it has implications for the nature of knowledge produced, and how that knowledge is received. This is a truth that has been painfully self-evident in writing about Africa. Positioning themselves as missionaries or administrators, non-Africans made representations about Africans from self-declared locations of authority. Those representations were validated by non-African audiences (and even by African readers privy to these works) because they came supposedly from 'enlightened' sources speaking on behalf of those incapable of speaking for themselves. One reaction of African scholars to this untenable state of affairs was to claim that we could produce similarly 'worthwhile' scholarship *despite* the fact that we were Africans. A second response was the attempt to reclaim representations of ourselves by asserting that our scholarship was legitimate precisely *because* we were African. It is this second rationale that has buttressed the practice of insider scholarship.

Unpacking 'Insider Scholarship'

Insider scholarship has been around for a long time under many names: indigenous ethnography, auto-ethnography, insider research, native research, endogenous research, research competence by blood, introspective research,

etc., (cf. Messerschmidt 1981; Reed-Danahay 1997). It is noteworthy that many of these designations come from the field of anthropology, which has been in the eye of the conceptual storm around insider scholarship. Anthropology has been marked conventionally by its study of 'Other' cultures. What happens then when the anthropological gaze is turned inwards, when the other becomes the researcher or, in Kenyatta's words, when a rabbit turns poacher? (Kenyatta 1992 [1938]: xviii). The blurring of the lines between researcher and subject has led to much angst in anthropology, and has resulted in wider interdisciplinary discussions. The field of African Studies has been powerfully impacted by this debate because of the importance of anthropology as a foundational discipline in African Studies programmes.

Insider scholarship is not a new practice, therefore. What *has* changed are the terms of the debate. When, in 1981, the anthropologist John Aguilar made his well-cited contribution to a book on the subject of insider research, he acknowledged the near-crisis point to which the increased incidence of insider research had brought his discipline. Aguilar attempted to take stock of this trend, presenting a painstaking tally of the relative merits and demerits of 'outsider' and 'insider' research. The essential criterion was how each 'method' could help or hinder objective, unbiased, scientific research. Aguilar concluded his lengthy examination with a few paragraphs querying the notion of an absolute insider or outsider. By contrast, there is now increased emphasis on the epistemological and political dimensions of insider research, rather than on methods and technique. To illustrate, a relatively more recent set of essays on auto-ethnography (Reed-Danahay 1997) speaks extensively regarding the difficulty of defining national, ethnic, racial or geographic memberships, and thoughtfully explores the impact of complex and dynamic identities on scholarly activity.

A major catalyst for insider scholarship is the general disaffection with positivism. A corresponding embrace of subjectivity opens up representation to interrogation. The point has been increasingly brought home that, to an extent, all representations are interpretations. We can no longer assume that one person, using 'scientific' methods, can get at the 'Truth'. What we have, rather, are versions of truths told from different viewpoints or positions.

The theoretical development that problematises representations as a function of identity is powerful because it immediately creates space for multiple representations. Feminists and post-colonialists, for instance, can juxtapose old representations with new ones from the margins (Gandhi 1998). In this way, insider scholarship can be used strategically as a tool to counter colonising representations of non-Western subjects (Narayan 1997), which are

often the basis for political and economic exploitation. Research by 'natives', 'indigenes' and former 'Others' is thus situated within the larger sociopolitical project of decolonisation and self-determination.

The contours of the theoretical and political move towards self-representation were traced out in the years when African nations were celebrating or anticipating their release from the moorings of direct colonial domination; the opportunity for self-definition—for a deliberate construction and dissemination of self-representations—was a giddy prospect. Identity became an oft-visited site of analysis. The goal was to either fashion new identities, or to reclaim pre-existing ones, to counteract the hegemonic presence of the 'European' image. One example, perhaps overused because of its salience, is that of Negritude. While Negritude can be described in a number of ways, fundamentally, it sought to affirm a distinctive African way of being that was set up in opposition to the (perception) of the Europeans'. In other words, the proponents of Negritude aimed to present a set of representations about Africans created from an 'authentic' location.

For those who engage in this admittedly political project of self-representation, the aim is not to collect varied representations, but to *replace* 'harmful' representations with more realistic, more 'authentic' accounts from the 'inside'. And yet the very paradigm that makes room for different representations is at the same time an obstacle to this political end: If representation is mere interpretation, as some would contend, then can one be more 'right', more 'true' than another? And if there are no fixed identities, can one make claim to an inviolable insider status as validation for one's representations?

Critiques of Insider Scholarship

Over time, other orientations have emerged that proclaim that there is no best location to produce knowledge; that rather there exist multiple, equally viable locations. Ideological perspectives such as universalism, cosmopolitanism and Créolité have been proposed as more useful and accessible metaphors for identity, and more encompassing of the contradictions of contemporary life. These approaches do not attempt to tie Self to race, ethnicity, language, or culture. Rather than opposing tradition to modernity, the urban to the rural, and the African to the European, 'identity is destabilised and de-essentialised and rendered heterogeneous, plural and uncertain' (Lewis 1998).[3]

From these and similar perspectives, the first objection to the idea of insider scholarship is that it promotes a totalising conception of identity. A related critique is that scholarship based on race, geography, nationality, ethnicity, gender, etc., is essentialist and essentialising. Thirdly, insider scholar-

ship is opposed on the grounds that it gives credence to the very Self-Other distinctions that it tries to question. I will respond to these objections briefly here, and then more fully in the next section where I argue for a rethinking of insider scholarship.

The first point to be made is that there is a growing realisation that people constantly negotiate various identities in the ordinary business of living. Consequently the insider-outsider dichotomy is necessarily de-emphasised in favour of an understanding that every researcher is simultaneously an insider and an outsider in any research situation (Zavella 1996). The claim to insider status must, therefore, be indexed for context to prevent it from becoming totalising. It should be used as a marker of one's location in a carefully delineated research situation.

The second critique suggests that the very idea of formulating an insider identity with respect to a societal, national, cultural or other grouping runs the risk of essentialising that group. However, this is not necessarily problematic if we realise that all social categories we appeal to are essentialist in that they are social and historical constructions (Fuss 1989). The real question is not the nature of these categories but the ends to which they are put. Fabien Eboussi Boulaga states that 'race is not a logical or scientific problem, but a political problem in search of an absolute, metaphysical justification' (quoted in Mafeje 2000). We can add that geography, nationality, gender, and ethnicity are similarly political, and can be selectively retained for their political utility.

Finally, the charge that insider scholarship reinforces homogeneous stereotypes of the native, the indigene and the Other/Object (Lal 1996) is perhaps the most damning for African scholars who would want to envisage their work as a way of deconstructing colonial images of their people. A quick dismissal of insider research on these grounds alone is either a facile denial of differences in location, or a wilful ignorance of the politics of the production and use of knowledge. If subscribing to an insider status is reminiscent of colonial notions of Self and Other, it is because those distinctions do exist, have been perpetuated, and would continue to operate even if African researchers chose to ignore them. A more practical response to this political reality is to strategically occupy those locations in order to reconstitute them.

It is important to point out that this debate about the value of insider scholarship is not mere abstraction, or simply an opportunity to score academic points. It is fundamentally a political question, as Narayan (1997) implies when she observes that discussions about identity and representation can be wielded strategically either to empower or disempower scholarship. Insider scholarship is most commonly associated with Western-dominated

academic spaces, into which the insider is allowed so that she may represent her people to Western audiences. Such a strong link is assumed between the scholar and 'her' grouping that she is seen as speaking for others, in which case a specific national/cultural/ethnic/gendered identity may be highlighted to give the greatest credence to her representations.[4] In such an instance, the question is not how good her representations are, but how good a representative *she* is judged to be by her audience (Narayan 1997).

In a paradoxical manner, the insider is at one and the same time privileged as the voice of many others and marginalised by having her scholarship constrained to the local and the specific. Some African scholars may revel in the status of the resident Insider, while others resist the label, repudiating all ties to any one group so they may speak more 'universal' truths. Under these circumstances, the critiques of insider scholarship appear to have merit: Insider scholarship does indeed become totalising, essentialist and stereotypical in assuming a unitary location for the scholar, and in encouraging uni-dimensional representations of a people. It is my argument that the theory and practice of insider scholarship can be redeemed from such unfavourable associations.

Re-centring Insider Scholarship

The common charges levelled against insider scholarship are based on assumptions about audience, about the purpose of scholarship, and about locations of power. I propose a redefinition of insider scholarship that takes into account these elements of audience, purpose and power.

Insider scholarship has often been preoccupied with re-representing 'insiders' to 'outsiders'. One definition of insider scholarship has it as:

> a text in which people undertake to describe themselves in ways that engage with representations others have made of them ... [T]hey involve a selective collaboration with and appropriation of idioms of the metropolis or conqueror. These are merged or infiltrated to varying degrees with indigenous idioms *to create self-representations intended to intervene in metropolitan modes of understanding* (Pratt 1994: 28, quoted in Reed-Danahay 1997: 7-8, emphasis mine).

The political aspect of insider scholarship is clearly acknowledged in the above statement. However, the single-minded goal Pratt advocates of 'infiltrating' or injecting our ideas into the 'metropolis' only endorses the dominance of that which it seeks to topple. I find such scholarship inconsistent with the political end of self-representation. I am advocating an adjustment in perspective so that insider scholarship is not used principally to indicate one's relationship to supposedly more powerful Western audiences.

In the task of orienting itself to better negotiate a new era, the fourth generation has to balance the respective outward and inward orientations of the second and third generations (Mkandawire 1995). Our ambition cannot be merely to speak (back) to an outside audience. Insider scholarship should be local scholarship in terms of its reference points. The local should be the focus of our scholarship—as its audience, its primary beneficiaries, and its agenda setters. In this way, we gradually move power back to the centre. On the other hand, centring African Studies on Africa and Africans does not mean a neglect of the global currents of ideas, or of the imbalance of power. The move to the centre is a crucial starting point [see also Mwangola's emphasis on moving from the periphery to the centre in this volume]. A necessary and complementary move is from the centre outward.

'Shared Struggle' as a Basis for Insider Scholarship

I offer the idea of *shared struggle* as a means of realising the potential of insider scholarship while avoiding its pitfalls. 'Situated knowledge' is a useful foundational concept, in that it acknowledges differentiated locations, and affirms these locations as starting points for the production of knowledge. From the foregoing, the question of *where* you stand is important, because every research project, and indeed all scholarship, has its basis in the personal.[5] Locations are, however, mobile because each person inhabits multiple locations within and across time. To avoid an identity trap, the question of what you stand *for* should be as important as where you stand. In this way, a discursive space can be created for 'an imagined community of ... intellectuals that rise above national, racial, and gendered boundaries in the articulation of politically responsible representations' (Lal 1996: 200). Mohanty similarly appeals to the notion of imagined communities of resistance, proposing that

> it is not colour or sex which constructs the grounds for these struggles. Rather it is the way we think about race, class and gender—the political links we choose to make among and between struggles. Thus, potentially, [scholars] of all colours ... can align themselves with and participate in these imagined communities. *However, clearly our relation and centrality in particular struggles depend on our different ... locations and histories* [Mohanty 1991: 4, emphasis mine].

The last sentence, without prejudice to what precedes it, does imply that the ability to be engaged in a particular struggle—and even our understanding of what the struggle is about—is influenced by experiences of gender, class, geography, class, race, etc. As Mkandawire advises, while one would want to encourage mutual respect and a sense of 'a community of scholars work-

ing on Africa', the power relations underlying knowledge production about Africa continue to keep African scholarship and African scholars outside of the centre. Mkandawire proposes that by 'sheer numbers, existential interest and proximity to the reality, African scholars will play an important role in the generation of knowledge about Africa' (1997: 35). I suggest that an 'existential' interest connotes lived experience which, while not synonymous with 'biology or physical location' (Asante 1997), frequently correlates with such demographic characteristics. It is difficult for someone with an existential interest in the continent to give up on African Studies (and, I suppose, on Africans) as one Africanist scholar famously declared he has done.[6] Existential interest, or lived reality, is likely to inform a commitment to a certain kind of scholarship: 'Because we are all, researchers and subjects, the products of our history and culture, an experience of social and political exclusion is likely to shape more critical thinking and writing about such experiences in the collective, structural domain' (Motzafi-Haller 1997: 217).

In sum, while a particular background may make certain types of scholarship more likely, there is a level of choice. It is not the mere fact of 'native' birth that is important, but rather the connection we make between our experiences and our research. In other words, the idea of shared struggle respects nationality, geography, race, gender, etc., but does not make these labels the sole basis on which scholarship is evaluated.

How Does all this Relate to the Practice of Scholarship?

To leave this discussion at a rhetorical level, without having it inform the way we conduct our work as scholars, would be unhelpful. What I present here are ideas that bear reflecting on, not as a one-time exercise, but as an integral part of our scholarship over time. I call for greater self-reflexivity.

Collins (2002) maintains the need for the scholar—especially one who is in a position of marginality—to map a personal epistemology for her work. At various points in our careers, and for specific research ventures, we should ask ourselves: 'On what basis do I claim insider status?' In my own case, if I call myself an insider as I conduct research on low-income, rural Ghanaian women, I am saying that my positionality within that defined context, at that particular time, is that of someone who by lived experience and by shared interests is a member of a delimited group. I am 'claiming a genealogical, cultural and political set of experiences' (Smith 1999: 12) that I consider to be the basis of my research. But again, we have to allow that others in the research context also define our positionality. Personally, I have to recognise the ways in which I may be considered an outsider by the women I do my research among; the ways in which they would highlight aspects of

my identity (such as education, urban residence, socioeconomic status) which I choose to make secondary to my 'genealogical, cultural and political' locations. In other research contexts, there might be a differential emphasis placed on each of these identities. It is the context that defines what being an insider is, rather than some prior label, and it is important that we be attentive to how the constant shift of positionality (that is, of identity in relation to location) impacts our scholarship.

Again, scholarship based on shared *struggle* implies that research is political both in intent because it is value-driven, and in effect because representations have consequences. It has often been said of African scholars that we do not have the luxury of doing 'mere' academic research. I dare say this is not a condition of African scholarship alone. It may be more accurate to say that perhaps Africans, for the reasons discussed in this article, need be more self-conscious about the fact that research is a political exercise.

Finally, the idea of insider scholarship as *shared* struggle means that research should be inclusive. It cannot be an imposition of one's agenda on others. The struggle itself, as I have stated, has to be a process of negotiation.[7] It is recognising that the presuppositions, the ideas, interests and values that we invariably enter into research with, may not be those of the people with whom we do research. I am mindful of this in my own work because of my presumption to speak on behalf of 'my' research participants. My research agenda is motivated by dissatisfaction with development paradigms that are applied, sometimes indiscriminately, by our governments and by international development agencies. I am wary of the harm they cause when they do not take into account the context of people's lives. My research project is being carried out in the obvious hope that it will influence policy making. Therein lies the danger. If the targets of these programmes do not share my critical perspective, do I put down their non-participation in my struggle as evidence of false-consciousness? Can I come out of the research experience having taken on their struggle—even if their struggle involves strengthening the very programmes I critique in my research? Since insider research attempts to represent both the struggle and those involved in it, it is representation both in the sense of speaking *about* and speaking *for*. Alcoff cautions that 'the practice of speaking for others is often born of a desire for mastery, to privilege oneself as the one who more correctly understands the truth about another's situation' (1991: 29). This is an indictment we should avoid if we intend to engage in scholarship that affirms African peoples as centres of power and knowledge. Self-reflexivity is always key.

Conclusion

I conclude this paper by reiterating the value of insider scholarship for a new generation of scholars. The locations to which insiders lay claim do not make them better scholars (Anyidoho 1983) or necessarily lead them to present their conditions and those of others in a more reliable manner. A badge of 'insiderness' cannot replace critical analysis or be a cloak of immunity to having one's representations challenged (Narayan 1997). However, with self-reflexivity and with intentionality, insider scholarship can be an important basis of knowledge production.

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Notes

1. For a useful analysis of power dynamics in globalised academia, see David Slater's, 'Challenging Western Visions of the Global: The Geo-Politics of Theory and North-South Relations', *European Journal of Development Research*, Vol. 7, no. 2, 1995, pp. 366-388.
2. It is important to note that the identity of the scholar is informed not only by her own self-identification but also by the identities imposed on her by the circumstances of, and the people involved in, the process of knowledge production. While acknowledging that one's identities are not wholly self-determined, for the purposes of this particular discussion I foreground that aspect of positionality that is somewhat within the conscious decision-making of the scholar.
3. Lewis was speaking in specific reference to *Créolité* but the statement holds true for similar orientations to the question of identity, that oppose what they would perceive as the essentialisation of identity and, by extension, the production of knowledge on such grounds.
4. Alternatively, aspects of a researcher's identity may be used to devalue her work, as may happen when she is charged with not being an 'authentic' representative of 'her' people. De-authentication is equated with 'westernisation', which is evidenced by formal schooling, high socioeconomic status, residence outside of one's home country, etc. As Linda Smith (1999) points out, this is a disingenuous practice by which our scholars are accused of being disenfranchised and therefore incapable of relevant representations, while the 'indigenous' people are dismissed for lacking the conversance with

the discourse of academia to speak for themselves. Who then can speak? Smith asks.

5. Much of what we identify as our research agendas derive from questions that we have a personal interest in finding answers to, phenomena that fascinate us, and points we want to prove. There is no such thing as disinterested research.
6. I received the text of Gavin Kitching's 'Why I gave up African Studies' through African Studies related listservs, where it was widely circulated. I understand that he presented a version of the paper at the African Studies Conference in Adelaide, Australia in 2000. As much controversy as this declaration stirred, it should not have shocked those who have read Paul Tiyambe Zeleza brilliant satire of an uncannily similar scenario in *Manufacturing African Studies and Crises.* For further debate on Kitching's papers, see *African Studies Quarterly,* Vol. 7, no. 2 & 3, Fall 2003 at http://web.africa.ufl.edu/asq/index.htm
7. I credit David Donkor with this insight.

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Thoughts on Intellectual and Institutional Links Between African and Black Studies

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Abstract

Black identity and nationalism in the civil rights era were forged through trans-Atlantic and Pan-African solidarity. Both African and African-American intellectuals and institutions played key roles in Pan-African nationalism and the sustenance of civil rights struggles across the Atlantic. However, in the 1970s onwards, these Pan-African links were subverted by vertical dialogues between western, especially white, 'experts' of Africa and Africans; a dialogue that was skewed in favour of Africanist paradigms and knowledge because of the obvious unequal distribution of intellectual resources in favour of white researchers in the global North. This shift was also matched by the preponderance of negative themes about Africa, an increasing amount of ignorance in the west of the realities in Africa and the treatment of Africa as a mere object of curiosity and theory testing. This paper locates the growing 'ignorance' of African realities among African-Americans in the rise and dominance of Africanist Africa, its disengagement from Black Studies, the marginalisation of African-American and African scholarship (conducted by black scholars) in Euro-American scholarship and the de-emphasis of radical and Black intellectual traditions in the mainstream study of Africans. The paper proposes the enhancement of direct horizontal dialogue between Africans and African-Americans instead of the vertical dialogue between Africans and Africanists which has failed to provide an objective presentation of Africa's achievements and failures, gains and losses.

Résumé

L'identité noire et le nationalisme dans la période des droits civils ont été forgés à travers la solidarité transatlantique et panafricaine. Les intellectuels et les institutions africaines et afro-américains ont joué un rôle clé dans le nationalisme panafricain et dans le renforcement des luttes pour les droits civils à travers

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l'Atlantique. Toutefois, à partir des années 1970, ces liens panafricains ont été subvertis par le dialogue vertical entre des «experts» occidentaux, en particulier des blancs, de l'Afrique, et les Africains. Ce dialogue a été faussé au profit de paradigmes et de connaissances africanistes du fait de l'évidente distribution inégale des ressources intellectuelles en faveur des chercheurs blancs au Nord. Ce changement a également été jumelé à la prépondérance des thèmes négatifs sur l'Afrique, une ignorance croissante en Occident des réalités de l'Afrique aussi bien qu'au traitement de l'Afrique comme un simple objet de curiosité et de test théorique. Cet article situe l'«ignorance » croissante des réalités africaines chez les Afro-américains dans le contexte de la montée et la dominance de l'Afrique africaniste, leur désengagement par rapport aux Etudes Noires, la marginalisation des recherches afro-américaines et africaines (menée par des chercheurs noirs) dans la production de connaissance euro-américaines et la désaccentuation, dans les principales études des Africains, des traditions intellectuelles radicales et noires. Cet article propose le renforcement du dialogue direct et horizontal entre les Africains et les Afro-américains en lieu et place du dialogue vertical entre les Africains et les africanistes qui n'a pas réussi à fournir une présentation objective des réalisations et des échecs, des gains et des pertes de l'Afrique.

> If a race has no history, if it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in the thought of the world, and it stands in danger of being exterminated (Carter G. Woodson).

Introduction

The story of the black diaspora began in Africa during the slave trade era or before.[1] Since then, black people, irrespective of their location, have been brutalised and humiliated through the experience of enslavement, colonialism and neo-colonialism. In all these, skin colour has determined how black people are treated. Skin colour is not just about race. Recent scholarship has been content to dismiss race as a mere biological myth and to throw it to the dark alleys of another so-called meaningless category (Gilroy 1993). Race is not simply an invented category. Of immediate concern is an accumulated heritage of hate loaded onto black people in the world who have alternately been treated as uncivilised, primitive, inferior, traditional and thus less than human. It is such attitudes and the hate they spawned that explain the brutalisation and humiliation of black people on plantations in the Caribbean, in segregated ghettos in the US, and in colonial workplaces in Africa. The attitudes and the hate they spawn are real. They grow from racism. Race may be a social construction suspended above reality, but racism is not. Racism identifies and links black folk into a disempowered group though it has also inadvertently united the black race as a viable community capable of

resisting white supremacy. Given this, does it matter whether one is located on the continent or in the diaspora?

The solidarity of black people in the world is not well assured and it therefore matters whether one is within Africa or not. We live in a world where black people exist in mutual 'ignorance' of one another, of their collective experiences before and after the raptures of slavery, of their changing cultures, values and lifestyles in different regions of the globe and of the urgent need for a collective struggle towards emancipation against white supremacy. This ignorance is as much from the African side as it is from the diaspora. It is still common to find some African-American students whose knowledge of basic African geography is very poor. Alternatively, it is also common to hear visiting Africans accuse African-Americans of being lazy and noisy. These may be isolated examples and do not prove the rule. But sometimes, the rule does not have to be proved. More important is that they illustrate that the ideas of Africans and Africa-Americans about each other are tainted by mutual ignorance, suspicion and stereotypes.[2]

This article focuses on the role of African Studies in the US (and its British antecedent) in fostering ignorance about Africa in the US and in alienating black people from each other. Although we are aware of many other explanations for the growing ignorance between black people across the Atlantic, we isolate African Studies because of its role in knowledge production. The study will locate the growing ignorance of African realities in the rise and dominance of Africanist Africa, its disengagement from Black Studies, the marginalisation of African-American and African scholarship (conducted by black scholars) in American scholarship and the de-emphasis of radical and black intellectual traditions in the mainstream study of Africa. Africanist Africa is defined as a body of knowledge about Africa produced, dominated and transmitted by largely white scholars (plus a small cohort of conservative black intellectuals) who have assumed the expert status on Africa. Their knowledge emphasises a warped image of Africa often refracted through the modernisation gaze. It perceives and explains African experiences by analogy, emphasising what Africa ought to be, not what it actually is. This knowledge is Afro-pessimist in orientation, and is more concerned to serve Euro-American foreign policy interests in Africa than the welfare of and social struggles waged by Africans against the abuses of the neo-colonialism and a local comprador ruling class. Given these, the paper observes that African-American image of Africa is fed more by this warped presentation than by the realities on the continent. This presentation has not just fostered ignorance, it has accelerated the decline of Pan-African solidarity. As a consequence, the most affected are the younger generation whose

contacts across the Atlantic are forged through the media or Africanist knowledge. The article proposes enhancement of direct horizontal dialogue between African and African-Americans as a remedy instead of the vertical dialogue between Africans and Africanists that has so far failed to present Africa's achievements and failures, gains and losses.

African Studies and the Rise of Africanist Africa

The African Studies industry in the United States is a child of the American empire. It developed to meet the needs of ever-expanding US corporate and governmental penetration of Africa. This industry is managed by an extended family of interconnected and incestuous 'experts', who, while living off Africa, serve a system pitted against Africa's needs. They are American social scientists, comfortably ensconced in the institutional architecture of the American intellectual environment. Nurtured by foundation and government grants, they operate under the cover of a false neutrality of academic scholarship, which permits them to camouflage their ideological biases and the strategic policy implications of their work (Africa Research Group 1970).[3]

This section makes the argument that African Studies as it is practised in the mainstream US schools has little to do with Africa. Thus, it cannot sufficiently inform its audience about the concrete realities and social struggles of a majority of African peoples. Rather, African Studies is about US foreign interests, interests whose continuing significance were recently emphasised in the debates on funding area studies programmes in the context of the war on terror. Africa is a mere site where these interests are played out. The argument derives from the fact that despite the resources on Africa in the US, the US public is perhaps the most ignorant about Africa (Zeleza 1997). One can attribute this ignorance to the way Americans think about their place in the world. But still, the image African Studies presents about Africa in the US promotes extant imperial stereotypes. Since it dominates as a source of information and knowledge about Africa, the ignorance about the lived experiences in Africa persists. This avenue of information on Africa is backed up by journalistic accounts, accounts that are always done in a hurry and that contrive an equally flawed picture of Africa. Since US foreign interests in Africa have most of the time been imperial, it is no wonder that imperialism is a neglected topic in most African Studies discussions. If it is discussed at all, the postmodernised variant is preferred.

Since inception, African Studies have gone through three defining phases: the colonial era up to 1945, the Cold War era up to the mid-1990s, and the post-Cold War era. These phases are basically framed around Euro-American foreign interests in, and imperial relations with, Africa. Nevertheless,

and in spite of protestations by a few radical Africanists, these interests and relations have defined and determined the canon and content of African Studies. The canon and content have little to do with the welfare of Africans or with local struggles for social justice. They have more to do with what Maxwell Owusu described as 'knowledge as the basis of enlightened policies' (Owusu 1971: 24). This was true of colonial anthropology as it is of African Studies today. It is therefore not far-fetched to argue that African Studies has played a role in creating or perpetuating an 'Orientalised' image of the African people that dominates the Northern perception of other people (Mafeje 1996, Mudimbe 1988).

In the colonial era, African Studies was driven by European imperial interests. Imperialism defined the canon and content of African Studies. The aim at the time was to generate knowledge that made colonial control of Africans easier, knowledge that made what was strange in Africa less so to incoming Europeans. The study of Africa was based in Europe. From their bases in Britain, France, Germany and Belgium, researchers departed to conduct fieldwork in Africa and returned having cannibalised the continent's stores of knowledge. They focused on African languages and customs, their values and cultures but gave their analysis a modernisation slant. In Britain, the study of Africa was institutionalised in 1917 or thereabout when the School of Oriental Studies at the University of London became the School of Oriental and African Studies. This association with orientalism à la Edward Said is instructive. Its stated mission was to train colonial administrators. With bases in Europe dominated by Europeans, African Studies was doubly disconnected from Africa. First, this was a European (not African) study of Africa. Second, there was the distance between the field/object of study and the institutional sites for the study of Africa. Like their current American counterparts, Europeans lacked constant and direct connection to the everyday lived realities in Africa [the significance of everyday lived realities is underscored in Anyidoho's article in this issue].

In the colonial era, the study of Africa was confined largely to the discipline of anthropology (Mafeje 1996). This anthropological emphasis implied that pre-colonial African societies were static and unchanging. The emphasis also supported a particular ideological basis of colonialism. Remember that colonialism was built around two related assumptions. The first was that Africa had no history. The second was that Africans were primitive. Both assumptions served colonial purposes. In the European imagination, societies evolved from simple, largely subsistence modes to complex, largely industrial modes of living. In colonial parlance, the former were traditional and primitive, the latter modern and civilised. Primitive societies were

unchanging and ahistorical. Civilised societies were dynamic and historical. While primitive societies were left to ahistorical anthropology, the civilised societies were the subjects of history. Since societies followed a linear evolutionary logic from primitive to civilised, from ahistorical to historical, or from traditional to modern, colonialism, it was argued, was the only available engine of progress.[4] This way, the idea that Africa was ahistorical fed into the ideological justification of colonialism. In colonial Africa, there was only the history of Europeans in Africa, the rest being darkness, which, as Trevor-Roper said, is not a subject of history. By colonising Africa, Europeans brought civilisation to Africa's backwardness.

Africa's backwardness has never been a self-evident fact. Indeed, Africa's backwardness is a European construction, imagined into existence through the literature of travellers, explorers and missionaries. These were the men who imagined and invented the idea of Africa as the heart of darkness; a static, dark, primitive, violent and cannibalistic continent. Rudyard Kipling referred to this backwardness as the 'white man's burden'. Like missionaries and explorers before him, he implored whites of goodwill to conquer the continent and inaugurate civility. The genealogy of the notion of the 'dark continent' and its timing shows its association with the development of imperial thought. 'Africa', according to Brantlinger (1989: 166), 'grew "dark"' as Victorian explorers, missionaries, and scientists flooded it with light', and 'the light was refracted through an imperialist ideology that urged the abolition of "savage customs" in the name of civilization'. The notion was also useful in justifying the inhuman and brutal treatment of Africans during slavery and colonialism. It normalised inhumanity and engrained in slavers and colonisers a racist attitude.

The missionaries, explorers and traders who constructed the image of darkness are often eulogised as amateur anthropologists. Their writings are the archetype for colonial anthropology. Their works celebrated the virtues of colonialism as a civilising mission. When colonial anthropology was institutionalised, it retained the shackles of imperialism. It defined its role in relation to the civilising mission, accepting its place as the handmaiden of colonialism (Gough 1967; Mafeje 1996). It accepted and used, with reference to Africa, categories of primitive, barbaric, savage, heathen, pagan, and traditional. Africans were not just primitive, they were inferior and less human than Europeans. They were subjects, a term that evokes a relational link to masters. Thus, the Africans of the colonial anthropologists experience were not the experience of historical being it was the experience of 'Others', of natives. Colonialism institutionalised Europe as the reference point on the

basis of which Africa's difference was understood. Did the post-colonial era decolonise the idea of Africa as a pre-historic copy of Europe?

The start of the Cold War ushered in new interests and strategies that redefined the study of Africa but it did not decolonise the idea of Africa. The US and Soviet Union ascended as the new superpowers, although the US retained the Anglo-Saxon heritage in the study of Africa. This ascendance came with the realisation that America lacked adequate knowledge about the rest of the world for its super power status. Area studies centres were therefore established or funded in American universities to supply the requisite knowledge for the control of the world. The African Studies Association of the US was founded with a mandate to inform US policy making with the likes of Melville Herskovits writing directly to the CIA to offer support of whichever kind the CIA would require. As an area, Africa was of special interest. This is how African Studies as we know it today in the US came into being. In particular, the new and contending superpowers had strategic interests to protect. To do this, they had to equip themselves with information in aid of their foreign policy.

During the colonial era, the study of Africa was meant to equip colonial powers to be better able to control Africa. In the Cold War, African Studies served neo-colonial powers in the same way. As such, the study was less about the welfare of African people on the continent and its diaspora. It was about American interests and its need to checkmate its Cold War adversaries. This arrangement perpetuated Northern, especially white, dominance in the study of Africa at the expense of a rich black intellectual tradition already developed in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs); it entrenched Africanist rather than African perspectives on Africa. In marginalising the role of African-Americans in the study of Africa, African Studies intensified white dominance and control of institutions and resources for the study of Africa. In the process, it disengaged from Black Studies, thereby dealing a blow to existing ideas of pan-African unity.

Although Cold War African Studies appreciated the historicity of the continent, Africa was compartmentalised and taught in area studies. Africa was implicitly conceptualised as different from the rest of the human experience and could not, therefore, be located in mainstream disciplines like history, sociology, political science, etc., that studied mainstream societies. It had separate centres, institutes or programmes of African Studies. These programmes/centres of African Studies are institutionally separate from disciplines. As a result, there are in most American universities departments of history, political science, anthropology, economics and sociology that are separate from programmes of African, Asian, or Middle Eastern studies.

Disciplines teach human (largely white) experiences while these programmes teach the experiences of 'others'. While disciplines teach the European/ American experiences as human experiences, programmes emphasise the African experiences as native/ethnic experiences (Mamdani 1998). Like colonial anthropology, programmes and centres, by the mere fact of their institutional separateness, emphasise Africa's or Asia's difference from the Euro-American experience. Consequently, this arrangement has established the 'mainstream' white experience as the norm from which others deviate (Liu 1991: 266).

Also, African Studies in the Cold War era took American racial experience as its point of reference and 'continues to operate within certain parameters set out by American racism' (Amory 1997: 102-3). It reproduced within African Studies the racial politics and attitudes within America. For one, American perceptions of Africa have a lot to do with white American racial attitudes towards African-Americans. The marginality of African-Americans in America in part accounts for the disciplinary marginalisation of Africa as an area. This imagination of difference had been at the heart of the creation and settlement of Liberia and Sierra Leone where white proponents of the 'back to Africa' movement based their support on the view that blacks could not be trusted to live amicably with whites. The establishment of area studies programmes had a similar apartheid logic of creating separate spaces for non-whites and this logic was based on the assumption that what was good for African-Americans was good for Africans. However, this logic homogenises all Africans on the basis of race and silences their diversity.

Area studies in the Cold War era also intensified the whiting of African Studies.[5] Prior to this era, blacks at HBCUs and within black communities had dominated the study of Africa. The work of Martin Delany, W. E. B. Du Bois, Edward Blyden, Leo Hansberry, Ralph Bunche, Alain Locke (the first Black Rhodes Scholar) and Carter G. Woodson stands out in this regard.[6] Woodson founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History in 1915 and the *Journal of Negro Studies* in 1916. Scholars in Du Bois and Woodson's tradition distinguished themselves by comprehensive analysis of Africa aimed at generating knowledge for the dignity and welfare of black people. For this, they were dismissed as subjective race men whose work was perceived 'as polemical, exaggerated, or merely interpretative' (Robinson 2003: 8). But these scholars were transcontinental in approach and emphasised the unity of Africans.

These scholars also recognised that African American history was inextricably linked to African history. 'African American political discourse at the time [in the 1930s] was keenly informed by and deeply responsive to events

in Africa, in the Caribbean, and throughout the colonized world' (Von Eschen 1997: 7).[7] They did not draw distinctions between Africa and its diaspora in the manner in which these are drawn today and neither did they construct sub-Saharan Africa as different from Africa north of the Sahara. They adopted a Pan-Africanist view of the black experience, a view driven by the valid assumption that slavery and colonialism and the racist oppression they engendered were borne out of the international capitalist system of economic exploitation. This reading of capitalist exploitation allowed prominent leaders of the civil rights movement in America and activists like Paul Robeson, Max Yergan, Alphonse Hunton, W. E. B. Du Bois and Walter White to insist that 'anti-colonialism and civil rights marched together'. Through their civil rights struggles, these leaders forged a link between anti-racism and anti-colonialism, arguing that 'racism [was] located in the history of slavery, colonialism, and imperialism' (Von Eschen 1997: 155). They established a black intellectual tradition that interpreted history so as to change the situation of oppressed people. Today, we interpret history but do not seek to make a difference.

Thus, the advent of white Africanists in the study of Africa led to several changes in the study of Africa in the US. Apart from the dominance of white Africanists, their interest to serve American foreign policy and to interpret Africa to a largely white American audience, Africanists also assumed the expert position on Africa. Predictably, African Studies subsequently tried to silence other narratives of Africa by generally omitting 'any reference to the long standing tradition of African Studies at historically black colleges and universities, only rarely giving a nod to African American professional and lay scholars of Africa, and seldom acknowledging the existence of epistemic communities based in Africa' (Robinson 1997: 169). The result has been a neglect of the pioneering role of HBCUs like Fisk, Lincoln, Howard, Morehouse, Wilberforce, Spelman and Atlanta and an explicit statement, associated with Phillip Curtin, that 'at the end of the Second World War North America had no real community of scholars specializing in Africa' (Curtin 1971: 358).[8]

There also occurred a concentration of research resources in African Studies programmes located in Historically White Universities (HWU), and with this, the preponderance of white perspectives on Africa. Thus, the main outlets of knowledge on Africa are concentrated in Africanist publishing houses, books and journals (Veney and Zeleza 2001). A review of five mainstream Africanist journals showed that Africans on the continent rarely get published in these outlets largely due to the subjective predilections of editors and Africanist networks (Zeleza 1997). Also, African Studies asso-

ciations, research networks and publication outlets increasingly fell in the hands of the better-resourced networks and schools. This has made it very difficult to promote alternative perspectives on Africa other than mainstream perspectives of Africanists. It is because of these politics of knowledge production that 'the Africa of African Studies has become the sub-Saharan contraption examined through the gaze of modernization and development' (Zeleza 2003: 190). In adopting the modernisation approach, African Studies has promoted the study of Africa by analogy.[9] Africa is studied on the basis of what it is not rather than what it is (see Mamdani 1996). The Africa of African Studies can most appropriately be described as the Africanist Africa. It is different from the Africa many of us live in.

Is it any wonder then that African Studies always seem flawed in the eyes of most African scholars. The primary reason for this is that its canon, content and theory are based on American foreign interests rather than its relevance for Africa and its concern for social struggles on the continent. For several decades, African scholars have questioned the relevance of African Studies to Africans. Some correctly believed that the study of Africa was simply a career path to some Africanists.[10] Yet the charge of irrelevance persists in the new millennium. This time, it is because of the continued disengagement of African Studies from Africa and African scholars, by its unresponsive attitude towards issues of social justice on the continent[11] and by its patronising and matronising inclination towards Africans. In the view of keen African observers, African Studies continues to be 'less about Africa and more about the United States' (Zeleza 2003: 180). Is it surprising that 'African scholars based on the continent often do not recognize the Africa that is analysed and invoked in ASA panels'? (Kassimir 1997: 161).[12]

This long discussion of the character of Africa studies in the US is meant to suggest (i) that it has not played its central role of informing the American public about Africa and (ii) that it has not played its role in extending and connecting African struggles to similar struggles waged by other disempowered people of the world. On the contrary, it has been concerned with the collection and cannibalisation of raw data that are then used to test pet theories designed in disciplines. Often, these data are lodged in Africana collections and never get out to the public where they are really needed. Publications are also churned out with breathtaking regularity but most of them are written with the reviewers and publishers in mind (Veney and Zeleza 2001). Authors whose works show a commitment to the actual social struggles on the continent find it difficult to penetrate publishing houses and journals. These authors opt to publish with obscure independent publishers, a fact that limits the circulation of their ideas.[13] Indeed, one of the glaring

problems in the study of Africa in the US is that African publications are conspicuous by their absence on most course outlines used in American universities. As a result, American students learn only from American/European authors of Africa. This gives the misleading impression that Africa has no authors and perpetuates the belief that the only credible ideas about Africa come from non-Africans.

The Experience of Black Studies

There are two possible ways through which interested young African-Americans can learn about Africa. The first is obviously from African Studies. This is so given the distance between the continent and the US. The other is from Black Studies. Other channels like the dominant media are full of alarming misrepresentation of Africa and do not constitute a good option. A third way which is briefly discussed below but which is more effective is the learning that goes on within African-American communities themselves. But even African Studies has historically been unfriendly and suspicious of the African-American presence. Melville Herskovits, the well known American anthropologist, discouraged African-Americans from studying Africa, invoking the excuse that they lacked the 'requisite' objectivity.[14] Thus, comparatively few African-Americans study Africa from within African Studies. Many are disappointed by its content. They are suspicious of the dominant racial ideologies within the subject. Others are crowded out of the field by advantaged white students who are exposed to a wider curriculum at high school because of racial advantages embedded in the US education system. For others, it is a simple principle of who ought to teach African issues. This category includes people who are suspicious of the reasons Africa is taught in the US in the first place. All these factors have contributed to the institutional and pedagogical disconnection between programmes of African Studies and Black Studies in US universities and the consequent racial division of labour in which African Studies is dominated by white teachers.

African Studies has a double disengagement from Africa that explains the persistent ignorance many people in the US exhibit about it. The first disengagement separates the practice of African Studies from its object of analysis. I refer especially to the distance between its institutions in the US or Europe and the field of research in Africa. Considering US segregationist tendencies, I also refer to the distance between Africanists and black people, most of whom are segregated away from white schools and residences. This distance renders the issue of how to understand the 'lived experience' within Africa (discussed in this volume by Nana Akua Anyidoho) of immedi-

ate significance. Can Africanists attain the requisite connection to the lived experiences in Africa so as to claim substantive knowledge of the continent?

In order to access data on Africa, many Africanists have had to rely on government publications or on research assistants in Africa. While these sources are useful, their reliability is often questionable. Some sources come with major gaps while others are generated through flawed research processes. The gaps and flaws can be checked by a constant observation of the lived experiences of people on the ground and by a detailed understanding of the way people live and express their concerns. The nearest Africanists have come to achieving sustained connection to the lived experience in Africa was through the participant observation procedure. It is therefore of concern that during the last two decades, very little of the western publications on Africa were based on actual research on the continent.[15] Without adequate funding, many Africanists make short trips to Africa or prefer to use government sources, some of which are compiled from faulty research. How reliable is this research in providing accurate readings of African realities? To what extent, then, are western students taught up-to-date and reliable histories of Africa?

If we concur that the primary concern of African Studies has been to expand 'Western knowledge of African culture, politics, humanities, and the sciences', then there are two bases of evaluating its success: (i) at the level of American foreign policy towards Africa, and (ii) with regard to the general American public understanding of Africa. If what we hear from American officials and from the American public is anything to go by, African Studies has failed in these two areas. Instead, Africanists, like other area studies specialists, are still trapped in the Cold War culture of serving American foreign policy interests. The pressure to serve American foreign interests has grown over the last couple of years following the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington D.C., and Africanists are busy defending themselves to demonstrate how valuable African Studies is to the US.[16] One consequence of 9/11 was heightened US phobia against aliens. This has been played out of proportion by legislation like the Patriot Act which, to use David Cole's recent title, labels all foreigners as 'enemy aliens' (Cole 2003).

This phobia has a fertile breeding ground in the US public understanding of itself and its relationship to the rest of the world. Many Americans still think of America as the world. Their media 'is intensely inward looking and self-absorbed' and does not provide a more informed alternative. Thus, Americans define America's future as everyone's future. As a recent study argues, 'at the heart of relations between America and the rest of the world stands a problem of knowledge. In precise terms, we call it the problem of

"knowledgeable ignorance": knowing people, ideas, civilizations, religions, histories as something they are not, and could not possibly be, and maintaining these ideas even when the means exist to know differently' (Sardar and Davis 2002: 11-12).

With regard to Africa, the situation is worse. Many Africans in the US are confronted with weird questions and arrogant opinions about Africa. Indeed, many Americans still get surprised that an African who arrives direct from the continent can speak 'very good English'. This ignorance is not confined to the poor Americans, especially minorities who have no easy access to information. It is evident in upper and middle class families and is threatening to become a culture among the ruling class. US foreign policies on Africa reveal such feigned or deep-seated ignorance (Apraku 1996 for details). As this culture continues to grow, it further emphasises that either African Studies is yet to achieve its two most important goals or that its agenda has very little to do with Africa. This has fuelled African suspicion of the Africanist enterprise.

The second disengagement is between African Studies and Black Studies. There are numerous dimensions to this problem. But this distance should be traced to the entry of white Africanists into the study of Africa and the concentration of federal and private foundation funding into mainstream white institutions like University of California, Los Angeles, Northwestern University, Boston University and the University of Wisconsin at Madison. This development had the effect, in Deborah Amory's words, of creating 'a racial division of labour between African Studies and Afro-American Studies where white people did African Studies, while black people did Afro-Am [sic]' (Amory 1997:102). This disengagement has meant that Africa is studied independent of its diaspora. Predictably, the distancing has been very costly to the black Pan-African heritage. This distancing partly explains why a whole generation of African Americans has grown in ignorance of the actual African experiences on the continent. Filtered as these experiences are through non-African eyes and packaged through theoretical frameworks that have little to do with the social and economic struggles and celebrations on the continent, the knowledge produced says more about mainstream American perceptions, attitudes and interests than about Africa. It is this mainstream that excludes and marginalises the position and views of African-Americans.

Previously, many young African-Americans learned about Africa through the heritage of black learning in black communities. This heritage was transmitted by word of mouth, through black newspaper commentaries, and by black intellectual publications. Patricia Hill Collins has shown how black women shaped this heritage. Indeed, going by the statistics of male blacks in

jail in the US, one cannot ignore the role of black women in shaping and transmitting what knowledge there was in black neighbourhoods about Africa, knowledge that was institutionalised in the well-publicised Pan-African conferences. Within the black communities, Africa was not just created as an authentic reality, it was also imagined through stories and folk tales that recreated it as a site of peace, harmony, splendour and abundance. This recreation lay at the heart of African American imagination of Africa as home. It also lay at the heart of a thriving aspiration of black unity that animated Pan-Africanism. Pan-Africanism is about unity based on some identity, but as Philippe Wamba shows, that identity is not cultural, it is 'an identity of Passions' (Wamba 1999: 29). However, as Black Studies was formalised and integrated in mainstream US schools and colleges, this heritage has suffered some damage.

Black Studies, even as it disconnects from the heritage of learning in black communities, continues to produce and provide knowledge about the black experience in the US. In the university, Black Studies has its full agenda that limits how much can be taught about Africa. According to Marable Manning, Black Studies was based on a core black intellectual tradition that was 'descriptive', 'corrective' and 'prescriptive'. It aimed to 'richly describe the contours of black life and history ... from the point of view of black people themselves', to 'correct the racist stereotypes and assumptions of black genetic or cultural inferiority' and to 'eradicate racism and empower black people'. This tradition was not just about interpretation, it emphasised action. It emphasised the need to 'utilize history and culture as tools through which an oppressed people can transform their lives and their society' (Marable 2000: 189). Its scope was transcontinental, considering black experiences across the world as connected experiences. But the integration of Black Studies in mainstream disciplines and schools has come at a cost for this translocality. The emphasis has shifted from the core agenda of black intellectual tradition to literary and cultural studies. Questions of political economy, the organisation of power and the concrete understanding of race are increasingly delinked and sidelined. The purpose of such delinking is best known to its practitioners because there is no way cultural studies can proceed without a concrete understanding of political economy. In an age where globalisation is seen more in terms of cultural flows, where language games replace concrete analysis and where the gains of the civil rights era are rolled back by an abnormal fixation on terrorism, one need not wonder why political economy approaches are being de-emphasized.

Also, recent trends in black intellectual work have attempted to introduce invidious divisions between Black Studies and African scholarship on the

continent and between African-Americans and Africans in the US. These divisions are not new; they have a history that is ably described in Eschen's study of *Race Against Empire*. She locates this division in the Cold War politics that framed black protests during the American civil rights struggles as a threat to US security, not segregation itself (Von Eschen 1997: 126). This way of framing the problem encouraged sections of African-American populations to disentangle the struggles against racism in the US from the wider international struggles against imperialism in the world. It resulted in the view, expressed by Walter White, that 'Negroes are Americans' and that 'in the event of any conflict that our nation has with any other nation, we will regard ourselves as Americans and meet the responsibilities imposed on Americans' (Von Eschen 1997: 112). In other words, Blacks were Americans first, and anything else was secondary. This attempt to treat civil rights struggles and nationalism as separate is carried on today by, among others, Gilroy in his *Black Atlantic.*

The view that African-Americans are Americans first and only secondarily black has led to an atmosphere of competition between Africans and African-Americans. It must be acknowledged that transatlantic relations between African and African-Americans 'is nothing if not complex, layered, and twisted in fascinating and sometimes problematic ways'. Based on the fact that about 500 years separate African culture from that of African-Americans, it is understandable why these relations would be laced by stereotypes, suspicion, and competition. Many African-Americans are surprised and even embarrassed by how different Africa is from the Africa of stories and folk tales, the Africa they consumed in black communities. There are several examples of blacks who have openly expressed disappointment with Africa, including Keith Richburg, at the time the Nairobi-based black reporter of the *Washington Post*. Following the Rwanda genocide, Richburg thanked the accident of history that made him an American (Richburg 1997). Richburg failed to understand that Africa could not have lived up to his expectations 500 years after his ancestors made that horrific voyage into slavery. Other African-Americans who have confronted Africa with rigid expectations have similarly been disappointed and embarrassed.[17]

In the academy, this atmosphere of suspicion is associated with a politics of divide and rule in African Studies. In her presidential address to the ASA in 1997, Gwendolyn Mikell pointed at Africanists, observing that 'As we look backward, it becomes clearer that Americans were only slightly less uneasy about how to relate to the first generation of African scholars than they were about how to relate to African American Africanists and it is this unease that must be combated as we deal with the issue of mutuality' (Mikell 1999: 5).

Why have Africanists been less uneasy with Africans than African-Americans? First, many Africans treat access to mainstream American schools and research institutes as a privilege. Forced into political or economic exile by poverty and authoritarian regimes at home, many Africans are offered residence in the US through the patronage of leading Africanists. Also, recent research shows that it has been the preoccupation of Africanists since the 1960s to date to divert the traffic of African students in the US from historical admission in HBCU common in the times of Kwame Nkrumah, for instance, to HWU. In contrast, African-Americans demand equality in accessing mainstream schools as a right. Many are conscious of their rights which they proceed to demand and fight for. Some Africans have joined them in this struggle, although most do and some remain unaware of this. African-Americans have been able to bring their demands onto the table and claim the resources that they, as ex-slaves or descendants of slaves, helped create. Thus compared to Africans who arrive in search of political or economic refuge, and who rely on the goodwill of their white hosts, African-American demands have a firm grounding in civil rights. Their demand has threatening potential for Africanists who control access to African Studies.

There are also struggles and conflicts between African migrants to the US and African-Americans that undermine transatlantic links. These rotate around stereotypes and ignorance of each other. This is fostered as blacks continue to see each other 'through the eyes of the other', as Du Bois put it. 'Unable to penetrate the veil of racism, many migrants consider African Americans lazy, violent and obsessed with race while many African-Americans see the migrants as inferior, ignorant and uncivilized' (Njubi 2002: 12). This stereotyping has resulted in open conflict over jobs as the case of recent struggles at Virginia State University, a historically Black university, showed. Given this state of affairs, and the fact that mainstream schools find Africans less threatening than African-Americans, the latter 'are beginning to justifiably feel like a "minority within a minority"'(Njubi 2002: 12). The presence of African migrant has in a sense acted as a valve to employ blacks, but it is a strategy that ensures the further marginalisation of native-born African-Americans. African scholars have not always been sufficiently sensitive to this development. In fact, others like Tunde Adeleke, have arrogated themselves the right to (mis)interpret African-American experiences and perceptions to largely white audiences.[18]

The more sensitive and complex problem in African and African-American relations concerns the memory of slavery. This continues to fuel debate and suspicion among black people. The fruitful side of this debate focuses on questions of memory and how slavery should be remembered. The slave

castles in Ghana provide a good example. The struggle over the meaning of Elmina Castle in the Cape region is emblematic of the fragmented memory of the black experiences. While for Ghana, the castle represents a long history stretching from 1482 when the Portuguese built it, to its 1637 Dutch capture, and the 1872 British occupation and finally to independent Ghana, African-Americans are attracted to it because of the slave dungeons through which their ancestors were shipped into the holocaust of slavery. As Bruner argues, the African-American interest is obviously restricted to an era in the long history of the castle from a trading post to slave dungeon to military fortification to colonial administrative centre to prison, school, and office (Bruner 1996: 292). This has repeatedly raised the question of what memory of Elmina should be preserved especially when its history offers conflicting possibilities. In 1994, this conflict of meaning climaxed as Ghana sought to renovate the castle for the sake of tourism. As a country with deep economic challenges, Ghana has often viewed the castle in economic terms as a tourist attraction. Ghanaians do not always, for understandable reasons, share the African-American focus on the castles as historic representation of the painful black experience of slavery. In any case, some African-Americans are inclined to blame locals for the evil of slavery since their ancestors were sold into slavery by locals. For some Ghanaians, African-Americans have no stake in the castle because, like other visitors, they are *obruni* (foreigners) like other Americans but unlike black visitors from within the continent. Some Ghanaians complain about African-American indifference to their economic situation and wonder at the emotions of black visitors to the castles.

The study of slavery has therefore produced two broad intellectual trends. On the one hand, it has led to some constructive engagement and collaboration between Africans and African-Americans while, on the other hand, it has spawned suspicion. In the first trend, there is work that engages the notions of memory not simply as a form of remembering but also as a domain of forgetting. This literature appreciates the contested meaning of the legacies of slavery. As the work of Kofi Anyidoho and Sandra Richards on *Memory and Vision: Africa and the Legacy of Slavery* under the aegis of the CODESRIA African Humanities Institute illustrate, this dimension of the debate brings into fruitful dialogue both African scholars on the continent and the diaspora scholars and renders the distinction between them less useful. But, in the second trend, there are those African-Americans who blame Africans for the horror of enslavement and demand apologies. Represented by Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s television series *Wonders of the African World*, and Achille Mbembe's 'African Modes of Self-Writing', this version of the problem is rooted in unspoken mainstream institutional racism propagated through

conservative black intellectuals and deploys US racial categories to analyse African identities. In the Wonders series, Gates Jr. blamed Africans for the horrendous slave trade and coerced African informants into acknowledging that Africans were indeed solely responsible for the trade. He further extracted an apology from another informant over their role in enslaving African-Americans.

Gates Jr. was following a well-trodden tradition. J. D. Fage had argued that slavery already existed in Africa and Europeans simply built on an existing system.[19] John Thornton writes to 'support the idea that Africans were active participants in the Atlantic world, both in African trade with Europe (including the slave trade) and as slaves in the New World'.[20] Thornton argues that slave trade was firmly in the control of Africans. For him, Europeans lacked the necessary military power to take effective control of the trade and the use of slaves was already prevalent in Africa and its political system already had legal relations of slavery for political purposes. But Thornton's findings are only applicable to Africa before 1680. Like Fage, he fails to note that after 1680, the trans-Atlantic slave trade became 'something radically new and unimaginable' (Depelchin 1999: 170).

The main difference between Thornton and Gates Jr. is racial. As a black person, Gates Jr. can say things about Africans that a white person would prefer to whisper in privacy. Thus, his role in this debate is one that African Studies reserves for certain cadre of African intellectuals whose thinking is permissive enough to blame the victims. No wonder, the African related discussion of 'Wonders' boomed with questions on Gates Jr.'s pernicious intentions. African-American critics of Gates Jr. described him as 'a black ambassador of Eurocentrism and white supremacy' who demonstrated 'a severe detachment from African people' (Tobert quoted in Magubane and Zeleza 2002: 53). Regarding Gates Jr.'s claim that Africans were largely responsible for slave trade, critics observed that the claim was ahistorical and decontextualised. Some critics correctly questioned Gates Jr.'s credentials as a historian or an Africanist. Wayne C. Jones wondered: 'On what and whose authority did he become an expert in anything about Africa or Africans?' (Zeleza 2003: 329). Of course, many critics rightly thought that the superficiality and misrepresentation of the 'Wonders' series were intentional. As Lawrence Mbogoni observed, 'I would not accuse him of not knowing what he was doing. He had a specific, may I say, ideological objective in doing this program and he knew what he was doing or wanted his program to achieve' (Zeleza 2003: 330). And of course, the PBS knew why they chose a professor of English to do a series on African history! The aim of such a series will remain up for speculation. But the objective of drawing a

wedge between Africans and African-Americans by scampering over European culpability has been noted. The responses from Africans and African-Americans discredited this objective.

Obviously, all black scholars do not agree on what use our scholarly endeavours should be put or on the future of black unity. Indeed, a healthy debate about some of the basic assumptions, frameworks and methodologies is useful for a black intellectual tradition. But the aim of these debates should be to better the welfare of black people and to enhance the transatlantic links that will bridge the mutual ignorance of black experiences. Disagreements are unhealthy if their aim is to disempower our struggle entrench imperialism and dismantle the insurgent spirit of black people.

This article has shown the many ways in which African Studies has been a problem in the construction of knowledge about Africa and its diaspora. It has also shown how relations between black people in Africa and the US have worsened because of the knowledge gap across the Atlantic. The study does not, however, vouch for African Studies controlled exclusively by black people. Africa has benefited from non-black perspectives on Africa and cross-regional and interracial collaborations. Some of the books used in the study of Africa in Africa are actually authored by white Africanists and many black scholars of Africa have gone through the helpful guidance of well-meaning Africanists. Over the years, as Africanist books became more expensive and African libraries collapsed under the weigh of structural adjustments, younger African scholars have survived without many of these links. As such, the role of African Studies among some of these scholars has diminished greatly. This generation of African scholars is more interested in a real transition to equality, a respect for the place of the African scholar and black people in African Studies. This generation is less understanding than the previous generation that studied abroad and depended on western patronage. In its endeavour to have control over the study of their societies, this generation is unlikely to be as tolerant as the previous ones. That explains why this article has generalised the critique by lumping together committed white friends of Africa with those whose baseline goal is career advancement or supplying information to those organisations that are implicated in destroying Africa's heritage and its future. For this sweeping condemnation, I can do no better than quote Mkandawire:

> If we do not always seem to appreciate these efforts by others to understand Africa and if our demands to be heard seem a trifle extravagant, it is because too often in our history the quest for knowledge of Africa has been motivated by forces or arguments that were not for the promotion of human understanding, let alone the welfare of the Africans—there were at times to

> reinforce preconceived prejudices, or for mastering instruments of domination of our societies. Although much has changed over the years, considerable research driven by these motives still exists, feeding African suspicions of even those whose quest for knowledge about Africa is driven by genuine interest in understanding the African continent as an important site for the performance of the human drama (Mkandawire 1997).

Conclusion

In conclusion, let me state the two things. First, I do not subscribe to the view that African 'voices' need to be heard more in African Studies. Mainstream African Studies in the US has the amazing capacity to ignore those it does not want to hear and to imagine that the voices eventually die when they are ignored. Black people have spent too much time trying to be heard and engaging in what is too often a fruitless vertical dialogue. In short, vertical dialogue has not worked. We need to enhance horizontal dialogue among all people who are concerned with fighting the abuses meted out against the lower classes of people of which black people are a majority. I use lower classes for the sake of inclusivity. We need all those committed and true friends of a just insurgent cause against the ruling classes of the world and their beneficiaries. The ruling class has a token space for black people and we must be wary of them to. As Patricia Hill Collins says, the selections and authorising of a few representative black people can be an effective way of 'stifling subordinate groups' (Collins 2000: viii). Horizontal dialogue will involve committed black people and all those who genuinely identify with the cause. It is a dialogue that once thrived, linking Asia, Africa, and the black diaspora. It is a dialogue that can thrive again. Already, these initiatives have started with one Africa organisation, CODESRIA, bringing about a series of Afro-Asiatic dialogues.

Secondly, it must be stated that there are no people in history who have developed pride in their past and constructed their identity on the basis of knowledge produced for them by others. My contention is that the international intellectual division of labour can be changed if black people seize on the opportunities presented for horizontal dialogue among Africans. African Studies has fed its audiences with images of Africa's hopelessness, wars, diseases, famines, its abnormal mutilation of women genitalia, its genocides, street children, etc. The American audience knows very little about the virtues of Africa, its successes, victories and achievements. Many Africans know that though their lives were poor by American standards, America was not their index of measuring comfort, safety and wealth. The grass-thatched and mud-walled house where we spent most of our youth and early adult life

was the safest place on earth. For in these houses, we could sleep without latching the door and have the best sleep ever. Unfortunately, this is the Africa that you will never get in the books or on CNN. It is an Africa that can best be presented by one who lives and experiences it or by one with sustained intimate connection with it. It is this Africa that carries the pride and connection underlying the Pan-African ideal.

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Notes

1. Ivan Van Sertima, *They Came Before Columbus*, New York: Random House, 1976 shows that the African presence in America predates the slave trade.
2. This ignorance is susceptible to journalistic stereotypes, those peddled by the visual images of Hollywood, and yet others found in academic books. Consequently, many westerners think of Africa as a primordial place where Africans still live in caves or on trees. Call this the Africa of *The Gods Must Be Crazy*. In the US, people wonder how someone could manage living in such a continent allegedly dominated by disease, wars and ignorance. After all, did not George Bush Jr. say that 'Africa is a nation that suffers from incredible disease'? Or did not the London magazine *The Economist* find it apposite to headline its cover story on Africa in 2000 'Hopeless Continent'? Furthermore, there are books about Africa that paint the picture of anarchy and chaos, books that argue that Africa works through disorder. These books hold the image of Africa as the 'heart of darkness'. Kaplan's *The Coming Anarchy*, for example, is replete with images of crime, horror, death and darkness. And Kaplan was so important that his speculations on Africa were faxed to every American embassy in Africa during the Clinton era. At the academic level, Jean-François Bayart, Patrick Chabal and their colleagues also write in this mode. They emphasise the increasing normalisation of criminal activities in Africa as the particular path of Africa's development. Arguing that the continent is sliding back into the heart of darkness, they suggest that the consequences of this return, including dissidence, war and banditry, will not necessarily lead to the destruction of the state but to its formation. This, for them, is Africa's unique way. Africa responds to its own internal logic in which disorder prevails

and its instrumentalisation to achieve the designs of political actors has been normalised (Bayart 1999; Chabal and Daloz 1999).

3. Africa Research Group, *African Studies in America – The Extended Family: A Tribal Analysis of US Africanists; Who They Are, Why to Fight Them*, Cambridge: Mass. 1970.
4. For an excellent critique of this linear reading of time, see Souleymane Bachir Diagne, 'On Prospective: Development and a Political Culture of Time', in *Africa Development*, Vol. XXIX, no. 1, 2004, pp. 55-69.
5. This paragraph is based on the excellent work of William G. Martin and Michael O. West, eds., *Out of One, Many Africa's: Reconstructing the Study and Meaning of Africa*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
6. For an impressive array of black scholarship on Africa, see Elliot P. Skinner, 'Afro-Americans in Search of Africa: The Scholars' Dilemma', in Pearl T. Robinson and Elliot P. Skinner, (eds.) *Transformation and Resiliency in Africa*, Washington D C: Howard University Press, 1983; Faye V. Harrison, 'The Du Boisian Legacy in Anthropology', in *Critique of Anthropology*, Vol. 12, no. 3, 1992 and Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousnes*s, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993.
7. Pearl T. Robinson, 'Area Studies in Search of Africa', UCIAS Edited Volume 3, Article 6, 2003 does very well in reviewing black scholarship on Africa and the politics of knowledge production in Area Studies with a specific focus on Africa.
8. This neglect of HBCU and the epistemic communities in Africa is particularly glaring in Jane I. Guyer, *African Studies in the United States: A Perspective*, Atlanta: African Studies Association Press, 1996.
9. Mahmood Mamdani showed the validity of this claim in his review of Goran Hyden's study titled *No Shortouts to Progress*. See Mamdani, 'A Great Leap Backward', in *Eastern African Social Science Review*, Vol. 1, no. 1, 1984.
10. As early as 1970, Smock charged that American researchers pursued research that had little relevance for Africa and that only served to further their own careers (Smock 1970: 24). Victor Uchendu warned that African Studies 'is nothing if it provides no service to Africa. It served the interests of colonial governments; it has a responsibility to serve independent Africa, a major consumer and audience of its studies' (Uchendu 1977: 10).
11. For some exceptions to this disengagement, see Allen Isaacman, 'Legacies of Engagement: Scholarship Informed by Political Commitment', in *African Studies Review*, Vol. 46, no. 1, 2003, pp. 1-41.
12. Nothing illustrates this better than the fact that there are no centres/programmes of African Studies in African universities modelled along the lines of those in the North except the racialised ones in South Africa. Most universities on the continent teach Africa as a core part of the disciplines. For us on the continent, Africa is not an area different from other areas. Its experience is a central part of the overall human experience. The few institutes of African Studies in Africa

are meant to emphasise Africa as a point of departure to understanding the human experience, not to lodge Africa as a marginal and separate area that is different from the larger human experience.

13. Indeed, a few concerned publishers have come up that regularly rescue manuscripts of this cadre. They include CODESRIA which rescued Jacques Depelchin's (1992) engaging study of the Belgian plunder of Zaire and Africa World Press which has consistently published manuscripts rejected by mainstream publishers. But once published, these studies rarely appear in course schedules in mainstream western universities. When they appear, it is often clear to those more conversant with Africa-based publications that the Africanist responsible has actually not browsed, leave alone read, them. Thus, for instance, one easily comes across a reading list prepared in 2004 for African history comprehensive examination for graduate students at a Northern university that lists Tiyambe Zeleza, '*A Modern Economic History of Africa, Volume 2: The Twentieth Century* (Dakar: CODESRIA, 1997)'. Of course, one could excuse this one for having some interest in an African writer; many others actually do not care.
14. The use of 'racial mediated hierarchies' to limit African-American participation in research expeditions was deployed to dismiss formidable black scholars like Alain Locke and Leo Hansberry. See Robinson, 'Area Studies in Search of Africa', pp. 8-9.
15. For a study on the flawed relationships between armchair researchers and research assistants, see Margo Russell and Mary Mugyenyi, 'Armchair Empiricism: A Reassessment of Data Collection in Survey Research in Africa', in *African Sociological Review,* 1, 1, 1997. The argument that many Africanist publications were not based on actual research in Africa is derived from John McCracken, 'African History in British Universities: Past, Present and Future', in *African Affairs*, Vol. 92, no. 367, (April 1993), pp. 239-253 which is specific to the history.
16. The American House of Representatives' Subcommittee on Select Education Hearing on 'International Programs in Higher Education and Questions about Bias' sitting on June 19, 2003 considered and proposed to create an International Education Advisory Board with appointed members from homeland security, the Department of Defense and the National Security Agency, 'to increase accountability by providing advice, counsel, and recommendations to Congress on international education issues for higher education'. Stated simply, this board is meant to monitor Title IV funded programmes and ensure they teach and research issues that serve American security and foreign policy interests. See this link for details: http://edworkforce.house.gov/hearings/108th/sed/titlevi61903/wl61903.htm
17. Sections of this paragraph are from Philippe Wamba, *Kinship: A Family Journey in Africa and America*, New York: Plume, 1999.

18. See Anthony Kwame Appiah, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992 and Tunde Adeleke, *UnAfrican Americans: Nineteenth-Century Black Nationalists and the Civilizing Mission*, Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998. Adeleke, for instance, has been critiqued for a lack of historical contextualisation of his argument which leads him to exaggerate his main conclusions. See Wilson J. Moses's review in *Labor*, no. 49, Spring, 2002, p. 310 also found at http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/llt/49/
19. J. D. Fage, 'Slaves & Society in Western Africa', *Journal of African History*, 21, 3, 1980. Also see Joseph E. Inokori, 'Slavery in Africa and the Transatlantic Slave Trade', in Alusine Jaallon and Stephen E. Maislish, eds., *The African Diaspora*, Texas: A & M University Press, 1996 for a different perspective.
20. John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1680*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 7. For a critique see Jacques Depelchin, 'Braudel and African History: Dismantling or Reproducing the Colonial/Capital Paradigm', in William G. Martin and Michael O. West, eds., *Out of One, Many Africa's: Reconstructing the Study and Meaning of Africa*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999.
21. For a perspective on what the young generation of African scholars expect from their senior scholars, see Mshaï S. Mwangola, 'Nurturing the Fourth Generation', Paper Presented at the CODESRIA 30th Anniversary Celebrations Conference on 'Intellectuals, Nationalism and the Pan-African Ideal' in Dakar, Senegal, October 2003. The revised version of this paper is included in this issue.

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Exploring Intersections: The Language Question Again!

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Abstract

Many African countries have undertaken transitions to democratic rule since the early 1990s. While giving many people the rare opportunity to vote in competitive and pluralistic elections, there have been limits to the empowering effects of these transitions for many. The paper argues that the continued use of English, French and Portuguese in state and academic activities has minimised the empowering effects of these democratic transitions. The use of such languages contributes critically to limiting the ability of many Africans lacking fluency in them to participate in two important moments that define the possibilities and limits of democratic decision-making. First, it limits their ability to participate in discourses that determine what aspects of social realities should be subjected to democratic decision-making and what aspects should be insulated from popular participation. Second, it minimises the ability of many to contribute to discourses that define the appropriate ways of contesting whatever elements of political economies are included in the democratic space. International politico-economic institutions and external epistemic communities have had excessive influence on these two moments of decision-making. The paper argues that generations of African scholars have collaborated in this process of disempowerment by refusing to take a concerted and determined stance against the dominant role of French, English and Portuguese on the continent. Because of this role, we should regard African scholarship as a force seeking to create a space for itself within a closed discursive and practical space rather than a radical force seeking to eliminate closure of discursive and practical spaces generally.

Résumé

Beaucoup de pays africains, depuis le début des années 1990 ont entrepris la transition vers un régime démocratique. Les limites des effets d'autonomisation de beaucoup de ces transitions ont cependant été notées, malgré le fait que beaucoup de gens ont enfin l'occasion de voter dans des élections compétitives

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pluralistes, Cet article souligne que l'utilisation continue de l'anglais, du français et du portugais dans les activités étatiques et académiques a réduit les effets d'autonomisation de ces transitions démocratiques. L'utilisation de ces langues limite davantage la capacité de nombreux Africains, qui ne les maîtrisent pas bien, de participer à deux moments importants qui définissent les possibilités et les limites du processus de prise de décision démocratique. Premièrement, cela limite leur capacité de participer à des discours qui déterminent quels aspects de la réalité sociale devraient être soumis à la prise de décision démocratique et quels aspects devraient être isolés de la participation populaire. Deuxièmement, cela réduit la capacité de beaucoup de gens de contribuer à des discours qui définissent les moyens adéquats de contester tous les éléments d'économies politiques inclus dans l'espace démocratique. Les institutions internationales politico-économiques et les communautés épistémiques externes ont eu une influence excessive sur ces deux moments de la prise de décision. L'article souligne que des générations de chercheurs africains ont collaboré à ce processus de désautonomisation en refusant de prendre une position concertée et déterminée contre le rôle dominant du français, de l'anglais et du portugais sur le continent. A cause de ce rôle, nous devrions considérer la recherche africaine comme une force visant à se créer une place dans un espace discursif et pratique fermé, plutôt qu'une force radicale visant à éliminer la fermeture d'espaces pratiques et discursifs en général.

Introduction

The three issues of democratisation, language policies, and academic freedom and responsibility in African societies have received considerable attention from many African intellectuals (Ake 1992; Wali 1963; Achebe 1975; Mkandawire 1997; Mamdani and Diouf 1994). Much of the scholarship on these issues has sought to bring out the emergent insights that explorations of the intersections between these issues produce (Mamdani 1994; wa Thiong'o 1998; Prah 1995; Mkandawire 1997). I follow in the footsteps of these studies by reflecting on the intersections of three issues of relevance to African societies. These are the issues of the empowerment of African masses, the language practices of African scholars, and the location of African academics in struggles for empowerment in African societies. I undertake this exploration of these intersections by posing a specific question. What role have African scholars played in the struggle for more participatory, competitive and autonomous politics in African societies?

Avoiding both wholesale glorification and wholesale vilification of African scholars I suggest that African academics have been at one and the same time both progressive and reactionary. They have simultaneously engaged in acts of empowerment and of marginalisation. African scholars have most often been the vanguard in struggles against the usurpation of the autonomy of African societies by domestic political elites, international political and

economic forces and international epistemic communities. On the other hand (and at the same time), through their conduct of the overwhelming majority of scholarship and debate in English, French and Portuguese, African academics have contributed to the expropriation of the autonomy of the majority of Africans who lack fluency in these languages.

African scholars have constituted a force struggling for a niche within a *closed* [1] political space, rather than a radical force seeking to subvert the very idea and practice of enclosure of political spaces on the continent. The extroverted character of the language of African scholars has been but one facet of the general dependent and extroverted character of the political economy of African countries (Hountondji 2001: 225). The language possibilities of African scholars have been limited by this general context of dependence and extroversion. But the overwhelming use of English, French and Portuguese by African scholars and political actors generally in debating the central questions that impact the life chances of African societies was never an inevitable outcome. By refusing to take a concerted stand against the dominant nature of these languages as the only real medium of debate among academics and politicians on the continent, African scholars have contributed to disempowering the many people on the continent who are not fluent in them.

Shared Attributes in Atomised Struggles

The role of African scholars in emancipatory struggles on the African continent brings to mind histories of the usurpation of autonomy and of struggles against it in various societies. Three such recent struggles are the nationalist struggle against colonialism, the Pan-Africanist struggle against the threats posed to 'independent' African nations, and pro-democracy struggles against domestic authoritarian leaders. Efforts have been made to emphasise the common projects that anti-colonialism and Pan-Africanism represented (Nkrumah 1970). Less effort has gone into linking ongoing struggles against domestic authoritarianism with earlier nationalist and Pan-Africanist projects. The tendency to atomise these struggles has often led to a de-emphasis of the fundamental commonality that ties all of these projects together. All of these projects represent efforts by people in various African societies to establish more participatory, competitive and autonomous political spaces in their societies.

The atomisation of these struggles and the consequent de-emphasis of the common aspiration that ties them together have also led to their perversion in ways that have often left them with little emancipatory content. The nationalist struggle against colonialism often tends to slide into indigenisation and the replacement of foreign despots by indigenous ones, with little change

to the fundamental structures and practices of oppression (Mamdani 1996; wa Thiongo 1982; Armah 1986). Similarly, Pan-Africanist efforts often become attempts at creating supra-state entities to compete against the US and Western Europe with little attention to the nature of politics within each of the components of this potential union (Rathbone 2000). And as has been regularly pointed out, democratisation degenerates into multi-partyism and 'free, fair and regular' elections with little attention to whether these processes in fact alter the disempowered condition of the majority in these societies (Ake 1994; Ihonvbere 1996). The perverted versions of all of these struggles then become compatible with, and often instruments for, the further disempowerment of populations in these countries (Ake 1994). What role have African academics played in these ongoing struggles for more participatory, autonomous and competitive politics in African societies?

Locative Narratives and Counter-narratives

The dominant narrative of the location of African scholars in ongoing conflicts on the continent is that of valiant and often victimised strugglers against ruthless behemoths intent on usurping the autonomy of African societies (Mkandawire 1997; Sall 2001; HRW 1991). This locative narrative is in some senses proper. There is abundant evidence of the struggles carried on by African scholars against domestic political elites, international politico-economic institutions and external epistemic communities.

The struggle of African scholars against domestic authoritarian leaders in a sense represents a breach in familial circles. Activists who also happened to be scholars often headed many nationalist movements. Nkrumah, Nyerere, Kenyatta and Senghor are notable examples. Many of these leaders took authoritarian paths on the assumption of power. They also infringed on the autonomy of academic institutions by defining the over-arching goal of African universities as the contribution to the amelioration of the critical and pressing needs of society without allowance for debates on what constitute 'critical and pressing needs' (Mamdani 1994: 2; Mkandawire 1997: 18; Hagan 1994: 40). They attempted to exercise even more direct control through the determination of staff and faculty appointments and promotions as well as course offerings (Hagan 1994: 3). The carrot of funding and the big stick of state coercion have been the primary means of ensuring this control (Mkandawire 1997; Sall 2001). Many scholars irked by these infringements have countered domestic authoritarianism through subversive activities in classrooms and publications (Sall 2001), direct participation in opposition politics and protests through conferences and declarations on academic freedom.[2]

Beyond domestic authoritarianism many African scholars have always been conscious of the exploitative character of the international politico-economic environment within which African states are located. In the 1970 and 1980s many African scholars subscribed and contributed to Marxist world systems and dependency theories that criticised the exploitative domination of poorer third world countries by more powerful countries in the international system (Ake 1992; Amin 1977; Rodney 1972). In the 1980s and 1990s the dictatorial tendencies of international financial institutions like the IMF and World Bank have come under increasing attack from African scholars (Onimode 1989). The outrageous nature of some of the policies of these institutions,[3] the authoritarian manner of implementing these policies and the lack of positive results of most of these programmes have been rightly criticised by many African scholars (Mkandawire and Soludo 2003).

Paralleling this usurpation of the political and economic autonomy of African societies by international institutions has been the long-standing tradition of non-Africans dominating the production of knowledge on Africa (Zeleza 1997). From the early works of anthropologists, missionaries and colonial officials to efforts of contemporary Africanists, non-Africans have always dominated the study of Africa (Mkandawire 1997: 26; Anyidoho and Murunga in this volume). The act of knowledge production constitutes both exercises in representing social realities and in producing these social realities (Zeleza 1997; Mudimbe 1988). This marginalisation of Africans in the production of knowledge on Africa represents a facet of the wider politico-economic marginalisation of Africa in the world system. It has had many important consequences. First, the ways in which Africa has been perceived for centuries has always been determined by non-Africans, who for various reasons have painted overly negative pictures of the continent (Bohannan and Curtin 1984: 6; Davidson 1984: 16-17; Ki-Zerbo 1981: 2). Second, these representations have determined and justified external interventions that have often been detrimental to societies on the continent (Nkrumah 1964: 8). Third, since the space of knowledge production itself is an industry for creating and harnessing economic and political resources, the marginalisation of Africans in this space also denies African scholars economic resources and political agency (Mkandawire 1997: 26-34; Ake 1979). It is this marginalisation and its resultant harms that has provoked the so-called Africans vs. Africanists contest in the study of Africa. African scholars have pointed out this marginalisation and its resultant harms, and have sought to create greater space for Africans in the production of knowledge on Africa (Mkandawire 1997; Zeleza 1997).

A few African scholars have countered the portrait of the African scholar as a valiant struggler painted above. They have accused all (Shivji 1993) or some African scholars (Ki-Zerbo 1994: 32; Mkandawire 1997: 22) of quietism and even collusion in the face of authoritarianism. They have pointed out that African scholars have been especially willing to ignore authoritarian tendencies where such restrictions do not directly affect their academic and personal pursuits (Mamdani 1994: 248; Hagan 1994: 44).

It is with regard to debates over the language choices of African states and academics that 'the profoundly anti-democratic orientation' of the 'post-independence African intelligentsia' (Mamdani 1994: 253) has been most forcefully demonstrated. At the pain of over-simplification, and for heuristic purposes only, I will classify positions on the choice of languages in Africa societies into two. A first school has been critical of the use of the languages of former colonisers. While portraying languages like French, English and Portuguese as un-African, this school has argued that written literature is African only when it is done in African languages (Wali 1963: 333; wa Thiong'o 1986). Further it has questioned the possibility of expressing uniquely African experiences in these 'foreign' languages (Wali 1963).

The poverty of this take on the language debate has been its restrictive conception of Africanity. These scholars have written off the possibility that languages like English, French and Portuguese that have been widely spoken on the continent for generations are African (wa Thiong'o 1986; Wali 1963). This position locates Africanity outside of the lived experiences of generations of Africans, and imprisons it in *a* slice of the pre-colonial past.[4]

A second school has pointed out the significant number of Africans on the continent that have used these languages for decades, and the mixed character of language practices in many African societies (Achebe 1975; Menang 2001). They have raised in a very pointed manner the question of why languages like English, French and Portuguese are not African (Achebe 1988: 30; Menang 2001).[5] These scholars who are sympathetic to the use of these languages by African scholars have cited the ability of African scholars to weight these languages with the unique experiences of their societies (Achebe 1975) and the ability of these languages to facilitate communication among Africans from different societies (Achebe 1975: 57; Mphalele 1963: 9). They have also cited the political and economic costs of adopting one African language in societies that have multiple languages (Menang 2001).

Unfortunately this historicising of Africanity has gone along with a rather cavalier attitude towards Africans lacking the capital that fluency in languages like French, English and Portuguese *have been made into* in African countries. The inability of the majority of Africans to participate in the inte-

grated spaces that the use of these languages allows some Africans has not seemed to concern these scholars. These scholars in their own way restrict the sphere of Africanity, excluding the majority of Africans or trivialising their presence. Ngugi wa Thiong'o rightly castigates these scholars for creating 'the self-illusion of democracy by excommunicating sections of the population from the category of the people...' (1998: 92).

Two Modes of Disempowerment

What have been the modes of disempowerment that the language practices of African scholars have effected? It is when this question is posed that the overly restrictive understanding of the disempowering effects of the languages practices of African scholars seeps through even in the work of more progressive scholars like Ngugi wa Thiong'o. The dominant locative narrative of African scholars as valiant strugglers leading their societies to liberation runs deep. Traces of this narrative are present even in counter narratives like those of Shivji (1993), Mafeje (1994) and Ki-Zerbo (1994) that decry the non-organic character of African intellectuals. It is also present in Ngugi's prescription of the roles of 'scout and guide' as those that African scholars should assume (1998: 95). These critics take African scholars to task for not playing their role as guides and teachers of their societies and for not being organic intellectuals in these societies (wa Thiong'o 1998: 90; Shivji 1993; Mafeje 1994; Ki-Zerbo 1994). The mode of disempowerment effected by the language practices of African scholarship is then characterised as an *inaction*—a refusal to offer guidance and leadership, or to be socially responsible (Diouf 1994: 329). Ngugi wa Thiong'o uses the image of 'the split between mind and body in Africa' (1998: 89). The refusal of scholars (heads) to link up with the masses (bodies) is said to have created a continent of 'bodiless heads and headless bodies' (wa Thiong'o 1998: 89).

This scholarly messianism appropriates the duty of leading African societies for African scholars. It then berates them for adopting language and scholarly practices that prevent them from playing such leadership roles. This narrative fails to question whether African societies have in fact willingly given African scholars the duty to lead them and speak on their behalf.[6] More importantly, it minimises the role of African scholars in the disempowerment of African populations. By limiting this role to a refusal to offer leadership, it fails to consider the ways in which African scholars have actively contributed to the usurpation of the autonomy of many people in African societies.

Two primary modes of disempowerment that African scholars have contributed to through their language practices have little to do with the failure of scholars to provide leadership, whether organic or non-organic, to their

communities. First, African scholars have contributed to the usurpation of the rights of the majority of Africans to participate in discourses that determine what aspects of social realities are subjected to democratic contestation. Second, they have contributed to shrinking the capacity of the majority of Africans to participate in the delimitation of the legitimate ways of contesting over those aspects of social realities that are accepted as subject to democratic contestation. African scholars have collaborated in radically reducing the ability of the majority of Africans to participate in discourses that define what Said referred to as the 'narathemes that structure, package and control discussion' (2003: 5) on and about societies on the continent.

Democracy has been constructed as a process that allows the public to participate through free, fair and regular 'voting' in decision-making. Such decisions concern among other things the choice of leaders or the adoption and rejection of policies. In all countries that practice democracy in various spheres of decision-making, the democratic space is governed by two primary decisions. The first establishes what aspects of social realities are considered subject to democratic contestation. This choice sets out those aspects of social realities the public can decide on through voting and what aspects are insulated from popular decision-making.

In many cash-strapped developing countries, the World Bank, IMF and international epistemic communities with neoliberal orientations have campaigned with great success for the exclusion of macro-economic policy from democratic contestation (World Bank 1997: 152; Mkandawire and Soludo 2003). 'Insulating' macro-economic policy from popular contestation has been portrayed as a means of preventing what are seen as irresponsible publics from making distributive choices that ruin economies (World Bank 1997: 152; Naim 1985). Instead decision-making on such policies are portrayed as best left with 'technocratic' teams (whether the 'Berkeley Boys' or the 'Chicago Boys') that are better equipped to make the hard choices necessary for 'sound' macro-economic governance.[7] Thus political leaders in many developing countries make efforts to implement stabilisation and structural adjustment policies even when vast majorities in their countries are against them (Herbst and Olukoshi 1994). The message is simple. It is not within the power of such majorities to decide on these policy areas.

A second choice delimits what are considered as legitimate ways of contesting those aspects of social realities that are agreed on as being subject to democratic contestation. This choice delimits what methods—debating, voting, engaging in civil disobedience, striking and launching violent revolutions—are considered legitimate instruments in the contestation of issues. It also

establishes the proper ways of talking about issues. Further, it lays down the extent of decisions that can be made on various issues.

'Efforts at humbl[ing] the masculinities underpinning the structures that target women'[8] have become the subject of contestation in the democratic spheres of many African countries. Public debates are ongoing with regards to what rights women should be accorded in various societies. However, these debates are not entirely ungoverned in these societies. In fact there are often norms that circumscribe such discussions. In many countries it is considered reasonable and now somewhat fashionable to call for the establishment of ministries of gender, women and children affairs, and the establishment of women's wings in political parties.[9] On the other hand a glance at the make-up of cabinets in various African countries shows clearly that giving females proportional or equal representation in cabinets has not become an acceptable option in efforts at increasing gender equality in societies on the continent. Similarly, the question of the language of the state and scholarship is admitted to democratic contestation in many African countries. But calling for either the replacement or *complementing* [10] of languages like English and French with African languages is portrayed as unrealistic radicalism (Menang 2001) even though there is not much that is particularly unrealistic about these positions.

It must be noted that these choices as to what aspects of social realities to subject to democratic contestation, and how to contest those approved for democratic contestation, are not god-sent, irreversible choices that people can do nothing about. In fact both of these choices are established by people in various societies through complex debates, negotiations and often, forceful imposition. The choices made on both of these fronts do change over time. The important point to note here is that neither of these choices are the direct result of the voting patterns of the mass of people that constitute majorities in democracies. On the contrary, these choices most often limit the options available to the voting mass of people in a democracy as well as the ways in which they can pursue these available choices.

Discourses and negotiations that set limits highlighted above on democratic spaces in many African societies have for a long time been carried on almost exclusively in languages like French, Portuguese and English. The main participants in such debates have been domestic political elites, African academics, international epistemic communities and international politico-economic institutions. Majorities in these societies lack sufficient fluency in these languages to intervene 'seriously' in the debates.[11] These linguistic arrangements have suited international politico-economic institutions and international epistemic communities rather well. They have always sought,

largely successfully, to exercise a disproportionate amount of influence on such decision-making in societies on the continent.

African scholars have thoroughly denounced the marginal role that they have been allowed in these debates. African academics have regularly condemned the disproportionate influence of international epistemic communities and politico-economic institutions on such decision-making (Mkandawire 1997).[12] But scholars have been slow to appreciate *a* fundamental basis of the marginalisation of African publics in such debates—the fact that these debates are mostly held in languages in which most Africans lack sufficient fluency.

By contributing to the continuing debate on fundamental issues affecting the life chances of African societies using languages like French, English and Portuguese, many African scholars have collaborated in the usurpation of the rights of these populations to participate in discussions that affect their societies. African scholars have refused to take a concerted stance against the overwhelming use of these languages in delimiting what aspects of social realities are subjected to democratic contestation, and how selected aspects are contested. By so doing, they have colluded with the very domestic elites and international institutions and epistemic communities that they often denounce and oppose, to deprive the majority of Africans of the ability to take meaningful part in such discussions.

It is true that African scholars have not had a lot of easy alternative languages to choose from in the pursuit of their scholarly activities. Indeed the choice of English, French and Portuguese as official languages by political leaders and the dominant nature of English and French as languages of international commerce and scholarship make the alternative of scholarship in local languages extremely difficult. The difficulties faced by scholars like Ngugi wa Thiong'o who have tried the latter option are instructive (Gikandi 2000). But the use of languages in which the majority of Africans are not fluent should not in anyway be regarded as inevitable. It is conceivable that some consensus in the scholarly community could have influenced the decisions state leaders make on language choices, especially given the situation of scholars in the educational as well as political systems of countries. No such consensus exists but in places where bold moves at linguistic empowerment have taken place, like Tanzania, it was a result of the concerted effort of the Nyerere regime. Some scholars have been outrightly hostile to efforts at questioning existing language policies and practices (Mphalele 1963: 7-8; Soyinka 1963: 9). Others have regarded the current language policies and practices as the *bearable* cost of the ability of African scholars from different societies to communicate with each other (Achebe 1975: 57). Others yet

still have regarded the situation as inevitable (Achebe 1975: 62; Menang 2001). Those scholars like Wali, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Prah who have seriously questioned the language policies of scholars and states seriously tend to be portrayed as unrealistic nativists (Mafeje 1994: 61; Achebe 1988: 63; Menang 2001).

Conclusion

The marginalisation of the majority of Africans that the language practices of African scholars have partly effected represents the less rosy and less advertised legacy of the activities and policy preferences of African scholars. So while fiercely resisting the authoritarianism of domestic political leaders and international authoritarian forces, African scholars have at the same time collaborated in the exclusion of the majority of Africans by the very domestic and international forces they have been resisting. While asserting like Mkandawire that 'Natives do know, and know a lot about their conditions' (1997: 30), African scholars have circumscribed the sphere of the knowing by inscribing literacy in Portuguese, French or English as a precondition for belonging in the category of the 'knowing native'.

The new generation of African scholars must of necessity face up to and give serious thought to the disempowering effects of its language practices on majorities in various societies on the continent. While trying to reclaim our subjecthood from external forces we must give some attention to examining the ways in which our practices have (even if unintentionally) contributed to the infringement of the subjecthood of the less formally educated on the continent. Ultimately, each scholar should have the freedom to choose the languages in which s/he wishes to express his or her scholarship. This freedom should not, however, prevent us from reflection on the not-so empowering consequences that our choices have on societies on the African continent. Neither should we seek to avoid recognition of the disempowering effects of our choices through the deployment of various, 'realistic' or postmodern analyses. Reflections on the less palatable sides of our practices might help us become more visible in and relevant to the societies of which we go to great lengths to portray ourselves as insiders.

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have been selective in incorporating their suggestions, I bear sole responsibility for the views expressed in this essay.

Notes

1. The discursive and practical spaces within which African scholars operate are closed ones. As Murunga points out in this volume, and as Mkandawire (1997) among others have pointed out before, African scholars themselves are often the victims of marginalisation by foreign epistemic communities, international economic and political institutions like the IMF/Bank as well as domestic political elites.
2. See the Kampala Declaration on Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility and Dar-es-Salaam Declaration on Academic Freedom and Social Responsibility of Academics (Reproduced in Mamdani and Diouf, 1994: 349-363).
3. One of the more outrageous policy recommendations of the World Bank was the 1986 (mis)diagnosis that Africa did not need university education (Imam and Mama 1994: 73).
4. Languages like English, French and Portuguese, which were only introduced on a large scale after this period, are not considered African despite the long use of these languages by segments of African populations. Gilroy calls such essentialism 'the fantasy of frozen culture' (2000: 13). The urge to define Africanity in terms of what came immediately before the onslaught of colonialism is itself an effect of the psychological violence wreaked on African minds by the colonial intrusion. The move to minimise this 'epochal character of colonialism' (Irele 1992: 207) seen in works like those of Bayart (1993) and Ellis (1999) is in fact very wrong-headed.
5. This question is especially relevant when we consider the fact that many in places like Britain and France who are now considered 'legitimate' native speakers of these languages had these languages imposed on them by conquering royalty.
6. Democratic politics requires those that are led to offer leadership to leaders. It is doubtful whether African societies have offered leadership responsibilities to African scholars. In fact the ability of African scholars to assume leadership positions in these communities and speak on behalf of them is often largely due to the lack of fluency of the majority of Africans in English, French and Portuguese through which discourses about the continent are carried out. These language practices thus accomplish the simultaneous process of empowering African academics while disempowering masses lacking sufficient fluency in these languages. Many African academics thus also double as policy makers. Adeptness at these two tasks does not always coincide. In fact they might hinder each other in some cases.
7. The lack of positive results from decades of stabilisation and adjustment programmes raises questions about the soundness of the governance offered through these policies (Mkandawire and Solubo, 2003). For a good discussion

of the role of bureaucrats in African policy-making and implementation, see Thandika Mkandawire, 'The Spread of Economic Doctrines in Postcolonial Africa', mimeo.

8. I am using the words of Olukoshi and Nyamnjoh here (2003: 1).
9. Such cabinet posts go by different names. In Kenya they are termed 'Gender, sports and culture', in Sierra Leone, 'Social welfare, gender and children's affairs', and in Ghana, 'Women and children's affairs', to give just a few examples.
10. I do not mean supplementing here. I mean complementing as exists between Setswana and English in Botswana, and Swahili and English in Tanzania, for example.
11. Non-Western educated people in many African societies have carried on vibrant parallel discourses on everyday realities in their societies. But their infrequent interventions in 'high discourse' have not been looked on with favour. Their interventions have often been dismissed as 'uneducated' opinions (Yankah 1996).
12. Also see the contribution of Murunga in this volume.

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Senghor et la pensée de l'universel : l'éclairage leibnizien

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Résumé

Pour saisir la profondeur et l'originalité de la pensée de Léopold Sédar Senghor, il est nécessaire de se concentrer sur ses sources. Parmi ces sources, Senghor lui-même fait souvent référence à des auteurs tels que le révérend Teilhard de Chardin ou Bergson. Le philosophe allemand Leibniz n'est jamais mentionné. Néanmoins, la conception leibnizienne de l'universalité est très proche de celle de Senghor, comme nous allons l'illustrer dans les lignes suivantes.

Abstract

To grasp the depth and originality of Léopold Sédar Senghor's thought, it is necessary to focus on its sources. Among these sources, Senghor himself often refers to writers such as the Reverend Teilhard de Chardin and Henri Bergson. Senghor, however, never mentioned the German philosopher Gottfried Leibniz. Yet, Leibniz's conception of universality is very close to Senghor's, as we will illustrate in this article.

On connaît le Panthéon des auteurs de prédilection de Léopold Sédar Senghor. Leibniz ne figure pas parmi les auteurs qu'il cite volontiers. Je n'en tiendrai pas moins ferme la thèse que le meilleur éclairage pour comprendre ce que Senghor entend mettre sous la notion d'universel ou plutôt sous le rapport du particulier à l'universel vient de ce philosophe allemand du XVIIe siècle.

Leibniz est mort, à Hanovre, le 14 novembre 1716, dans un isolement et une impopularité toujours plus grande, et enterré misérablement. Pour toute messe, il ne reçut que le sobriquet dont l'avaient accablé ses nombreux

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adversaires qui, à partir de son nom Leibniz, le nommaient « Herr Leibniz glaubt nichts », « Monsieur Leibniz ne croit en rien ».

Nous voyons là, l'une de ces injustices dont l'histoire a le secret, car s'il est un penseur qui ne mérite guère ce surnom, c'est bien le philosophe allemand Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz.

Lui qui refusa, toute sa vie durant, que la moindre découverte, la moindre pensée, la moindre idée d'un homme ne lui fût étrangère.

Son père, Friedrich Leibniz, était jurisconsulte et professeur de morale à l'Université et disposait d'une bibliothèque très riche sur laquelle se jeta avec avidité Leibniz, alors âgé seulement d'une dizaine d'années. Il apprend très jeune les langues qui représentaient les clés du savoir : le latin et le grec. Il poursuivra des études de philosophie, d'histoire, de droit. En 1666, il soutient, à Altdorf, sa thèse de Doctorat en droit, *De casibus perplexis in jure* (Des cas complexes en droit), et présente en 1667 une *Nova methodus discendae docendaeque jurisprudentiae* (Nouvelle méthode pour apprendre et pour enseigner la jurisprudence). Contrairement à son contemporain René Descartes, le philosophe allemand ne considère pas la politique comme un champ de bataille qu'un philosophe doit éviter pour se consacrer exclusivement à la recherche de la vérité. En 1670, à l'âge de 24 ans, il devient conseiller à la cour suprême de l'Electorat de Mayence et effectue, dans le reste de l'Europe, des voyages qui le mènent en France, en Angleterre, en Hollande et lui permettent de nouer de nombreux contacts avec des savants et des philosophes, parmi lesquels Arnauld, Malebranche, Spinoza, etc.

Le souci d'embrasser la totalité du savoir qui l'avait jeté sur les trésors de la bibliothèque paternelle le conduit à accepter le poste de bibliothécaire, pour ne pas dire de simple bibliothécaire, à Hanovre en 1676. Une bibliothèque n'est-elle pas, en effet, non seulement le lieu de la préservation et de la conservation des supports du savoir que sont les livres, mais aussi le lieu qui rend possible le dialogue entre des pensées venues d'âges divers, d'êtres de cultures et de civilisations différentes ?

De fait, Leibniz est le véritable père de *l'Encyclopédie,* lui qui, toute sa vie durant, en caressa le projet. Il faut faire l'inventaire des pensées humaines, comme un général passe en revue ses troupes, afin de réunir et de mesurer ses propres forces. En effet, dit-il, lorsqu'il doit décrire la situation de la pensée des hommes, c'est l'image d'une armée en déroute qui lui vient à l'esprit. Ce qu'il exprime en latin :

> « Mihi si dicendum quod res est statum humanae cognitionis considerantem in mentem venit imago exercitus, in fugam conjecti… a quo nulla signa nulli ordines servantur… »(Leibniz 1703:Philalèthe VI 18)

Sans l'encyclopédie, nous sommes pauvres au milieu de l'abondance, car nous ne savons pas nous-mêmes ce que nous possédons déjà, et ne pouvons pas nous en servir au besoin.

Pour être complète, elle devra enseigner tous les procédés des arts et métiers et recueillir jusqu'aux tours de main des artisans qui peuvent être à l'origine ou l'occasion de découvertes ou d'inventions présentant un intérêt scientifique réel.

Cette encyclopédie ne doit pas se contenter de suivre un ordre purement alphabétique, mais doit parvenir à montrer qu'en réalité, toutes nos idées, si complexes soient-elles, ne sont que des combinaisons d'un nombre fini d'idées simples qu'il s'agit de mettre à jour. La pensée ne serait alors qu'un art combinatoire, qu'un calcul mathématique, et on pourra se débarrasser des paralogismes et des erreurs de raisonnement comme on corrige de simples erreurs de calcul. Car Leibniz, historien, philosophe, juriste, fut aussi et surtout un grand logicien et mathématicien, dont les œuvres marquent un tournant dans l'histoire de la logique.

Un homme, si soucieux du connaître et du faire connaître, quelle faute a-il commise pour mériter que de lui il soit dit qu'« il ne croit en rien » ?

C'est justement cette *faute* qui, par-delà les siècles, fait de la pensée leibnizienne un véritable éclairage pour mieux comprendre la conception de l'universel proposée par le président Léopold Sédar Senghor.

En effet, au milieu d'une Europe en proie à l'européocentrisme, Leibniz a élevé la voix, pour signifier aux religieux, aux philosophes, aux savants, que l'histoire de l'humanité ne saurait s'écrire ni se dire si elle ignore ou passe sous silence l'apport des Chinois, des Arabes, en un mot, de toutes les civilisations : « Dans peu, dit-il, il faudra aller fouiller chez les Chinois et les Arabes, pour achever l'Histoire du genre humain » (Couturat 1903:225).
Selon Leibniz, il faut recueillir « le meilleur de tous côtés », non seulement parce que le *jam inventum* (déjà trouvé) peut être source d'inventions, mais parce que toute civilisation particulière porte en elle l'universel. Ne croyons-nous pas entendre Senghor lorsqu'il montre que la civilisation de l'universel est une civilisation « […] que toutes les ethnies doivent bâtir ou périr ensemble. Celle-ci ne serait pas intégrale, elle ne serait pas humaine s'il y manquait un seul aspect de la condition humaine » (Senghor 1977:563). Senghor, comme Leibniz, considère qu'il ne s'agit nullement que l'Europe impose au monde sa civilisation comme civilisation universelle. « Il s'agit que tous ensemble —tous les continents, races et nations—nous construisions la Civilisation de l'Universel où chaque civilisation différente apportera ses valeurs les plus créatrices parce que les plus complémentaires » (Senghor 1977:61)

La pensée leibnizienne offre de multiples entrées permettant de montrer sa conception de l'universel. Nous choisissons de commencer par la prise de position historique, empirique de Leibniz dans ce qui fut appelé « la querelle des rites », avant d'en dégager les fondements métaphysiques.

Leibniz, contrairement à bon nombre de ses contemporains, a compris, comme le dit Senghor, que toute civilisation meurt de sa pureté, c'est-à-dire périt si elle ne s'ouvre pas aux autres. Il considère que Louis XV a manqué d'intuition et n'a pas compris l'étendue de l'apport de l'Égypte au monde entier. Il s'agit alors d'éviter de commettre de nouveau une erreur analogue, en méconnaissant l'importance de l'Asie pour l'humanité tout entière. L'essentiel est de savoir quelle est la meilleure approche de l'Asie.

Aux yeux de Leibniz, ce sont les missionnaires jésuites qui la proposent. En effet, les Jésuites ont spontanément marqué un profond respect pour la civilisation chinoise et une tolérance plus intellectuelle que religieuse.

Ils ont réussi à conduire l'empire chinois, si soucieux de se prémunir de toute ingérence étrangère, à accepter de les laisser prêcher la foi chrétienne. Un édit est solennellement promulgué le 22 mars 1692 pour la liberté du christianisme. Les Chinois avaient leurs traditions, leurs croyances considérées par l'église romaine comme de simples rites païens et idolâtres, constituant des obstacles à une stricte observance du culte catholique. Cette intransigeance conduit Rome à prôner l'interdiction pure et simple de ces rites. Le 22 avril 1709, le souverain pontife prend la décision de réactiver le décret de 1704 qui interdisait les rites chinois. Leibniz aussitôt prédit ce qui devait arriver, à savoir l'expulsion des missionnaires.

Un père jésuite, le révérend père des Bosses, se sentant impuissant face à l'intransigeance de Rome cherche un soutien théorique auprès de Leibniz afin d'avoir les armes conceptuelles lui permettant de montrer à Rome que la violence d'une interdiction ne saurait constituer une véritable solution.

Le bibliothécaire-philosophe, qui demande inlassablement qu'on importe des livres chinois en Europe, qu'on ouvre des écoles chinoises où des lettrés viendraient aider à les traduire et les comprendre, s'engage dans le débat. Il précise d'emblée qu'il ne peut pas convertir les Chinois, mais qu'il peut apporter une contribution sous la forme d'une analyse philosophique. Leibniz écrit à Verjus, en décembre 1697 : « Je souhaiterais, mon Révérend Père, de pouvoir contribuer à mon tour, en quelque chose de particulier, à votre saint et beau dessein, mais je doute fort que je vous y puisse servir autrement que par mes travaux en général » (Leibniz 1987:148).

Leibniz, en effet, accorde une grande importance philosophique à la Chine. Olivier Roy (1972) pense que cet intérêt est dû au fait que Leibniz a l'impression, pour la première fois outre-mer, d'avoir affaire à une civilisa-

tion comparable à celle de l'Occident. Leibniz obtient de précieux renseignements par les missionnaires. Par exemple, dans sa lettre à Leibniz, du 8 novembre 1702, le père Bouvet écrit que le système presque entier de la vraie religion se trouve renfermé dans les livres classiques chinois. Il estime qu'il y manque, certes, le Christ et la Révélation, mais que l'essentiel s'y trouve.

Les Chinois sont-ils donc des athées, des païens voués aux flammes de l'enfer ou bien ont-ils un spiritualisme leur permettant d'espérer le salut ? Si tel est le cas, faudrait-il encourager le déisme au détriment de la Révélation ?

Leibniz va montrer que mépriser une civilisation, c'est penser qu'elle ne peut rien nous apporter et qu'elle attend tout de nous. Leibniz soutient que même dans le domaine des sciences comme les mathématiques, les Chinois ont réalisé de grands progrès. Il écrit :

> « À continuer ainsi, je crains que bientôt les Chinois ne nous surpassent en mérites : je le dis, non pas que je leur envie cette lumière nouvelle, car je les en féliciterais plutôt; mais parce qu'il serait souhaitable qu'en retour nous apprissions ce qui serait encore de grande importance pour nous, savoir l'usage de la philosophie pratique et une meilleure règle de vie – pour ne rien dire ici de leurs autres arts » (Leibniz 1987:64).

En d'autres termes, Leibniz montre que l'universel s'inscrit dans une parfaite réciprocité, et que ce que je reçois m'appartient toujours déjà, tout comme ce que j'ai à donner appartient à l'autre.

Nous citerons, à titre d'exemple, ce que Leibniz doit à la Chine dans sa conception de l'*Encyclopédie* et pour la constitution d'une logique mathématique binaire. Il est, en effet, fasciné par le caractère idéogrammatique de la langue chinoise. Son écriture ne se réfère guère à la prononciation, mais aux idées, c'est-à-dire à la nature même des choses. Cette autonomie de l'écriture, par rapport à la prononciation et à la parole, est une garantie de rigueur et de stabilité. De plus, le projet encyclopédiste de Leibniz a de quoi se nourrir dans la langue chinoise, car il pense que l'écriture chinoise est une combinaison de caractères fondamentaux, d'éléments de base qui seraient l'alphabet des pensées.

Si nous pouvions découvrir la clef des caractères chinois, nous trouverions quelque chose qui servirait à l'analyse des pensées.

De plus, Leibniz a découvert les écrits d'un ancien prince chinois, Fohi, dont le système. Selon lui, renferme l'invention de l'arithmétique binaire. Dans une lettre au père des Bosses, il explique :

> « Fohi, le plus ancien prince et philosophe des Chinois, a reconnu l'origine des choses dans l'unité et le néant, c'est-à-dire que ses figures mystérieuses montrent quelque chose d'analogue à la création ; elles contiennent

> l'arithmétique binaire que j'ai retrouvée après tant de milliers d'années, encore qu'elles indiquent aussi des choses plus hautes, où tous les nombres s'écrivent par deux notations seulement, le 0 et le 1 » (Leibniz 1987:188).

Leibniz n'est pas un éclectique ni un conciliateur pour le plaisir, voire la lâcheté, de concilier. Selon lui, chaque civilisation, chaque philosophie dit confusément — c'est-à-dire partiellement — le vrai, l'universel à son niveau. Il faut savoir comprendre le rapport de chaque chose à l'universel. Et c'est là que nous comprenons toute la portée de l'expression senghorienne, « le rendez-vous du donner et du recevoir ».

Nous devons nous faire des dons réciproques pour édifier la seule civilisation qui soit proprement humaine, la civilisation de l'universel. C'est pourquoi Leibniz effectue un renversement que ne lui pardonnent pas ses adversaires. Il pense qu'en réalité, c'est l'Europe qui a besoin des Chinois et non l'inverse :

> « L'état des choses chez nous me paraît tel, par le débordement de la corruption, qu'il me semblerait quasi nécessaire que les Chinois nous envoyassent des missionnaires pour nous enseigner l'usage et la pratique de la Théologie naturelle, comme nous leur en envoyons pour leur enseigner la révélée. Si l'on choisissait un sage pour arbitre, non de la beauté des déesses, mais de l'excellence des peuples, je suis persuadé que la pomme d'or reviendrait aux Chinois… » (Leibniz 1987:188).

De tels propos se veulent provocateurs, car bien entendu pour Leibniz toutes les civilisations au même titre sont porteuses d'universalité, mais il souhaite que l'Europe prenne conscience de la nécessité de s'ouvrir si justement elle ne veut pas périr de sa pureté et de l'illusion de détenir le modèle d'une civilisation universelle.

C'est pourquoi il va défendre l'idée selon laquelle, on ne saurait convertir les Chinois qu'en commençant par les reconvertir, c'est-à-dire par les enraciner davantage dans les valeurs de leur propre civilisation. La conversion au christianisme suppose d'abord une conversion des Chinois à eux-mêmes, comme le dit Christiane Frémont : « à l'esprit et à la religion de l'ancienne Chine ». Ils y trouveront une ouverture vers le catholicisme, car ils comprendront que ce qu'est le Dieu chrétien à l'univers n'est qu'une intensification de ce que le principe immatériel de leurs ancêtres, le *Li,* est au principe matériel, le *Ki.*

Christiane Frémont écrit dans sa présentation du *Discours sur la Théologie naturelle des Chinois* (1987:33) : « La conversion au christianisme suppose d'abord une conversion des Chinois à eux-mêmes, à l'esprit et à la religion de l'ancienne Chine, avant l'arrivée des sectes venues de l'Inde, avant l'athéisme des modernes ».

Pour Leibniz, l'accès à l'universel est avant tout un enracinement dans le particulier, parce que l'universel se présente toujours d'abord sous les traits du particulier. Ce qui permet de mesurer l'importance de ce que dit Léopold Sédar Senghor :

> « L'universel, c'est d'abord l'héritage culturel d'une ethnie, d'une nation. Car seul l'homme solidement enraciné dans sa civilisation originaire peut assimiler activement les apports extérieurs, comme l'arbre qui, planté dans un riche humus, s'épanouit, fleurit à l'eau et au soleil » (1977:152).

Ainsi, de même que Leibniz montre que pour les Chinois l'universel prend d'abord le visage de la civilisation chinoise avant de s'enrichir d'apports extérieurs, Senghor, s'adressant aux Arabo-berbères affirmait :

> «[…] l'universel c'est, pour vous Arabo-berbères, et pour commencer, la civilisation arabe » (1977:152).

Leibniz montre donc, contrairement à ceux qui prônaient l'interdiction pure et simple des rites chinois, qu'il n'y a aucune contradiction entre le christianisme et les cultes traditionnels chinois. Le *Ki* et le *Li* chinois ne sont pas en contradiction avec Dieu, les anges et les saints.

Le philosophe allemand s'efforce de montrer que le *Li* est la substance universelle de toutes choses et qu'il peut être conçu comme l'entéléchie et, par conséquent, comme une forme immatérielle. Il considère que le *Li* des Chinois est la souveraine substance que nous adorons sous le nom de Dieu, le *Ki,* quant à lui, désignerait la matière.

Or, le poète-président a pensé et vécu profondément, sans conflit, la religion traditionnelle sérère et la religion révélée chrétienne. Enfant, il accompagnait sa mère au lieu de culte consacré à Djidiack Selbé Faye. Son oncle Tokô Waly a aussi joué un rôle très important dans cette initiation :

> « Tokô Waly mon oncle, te souviens-tu des nuits de jadis quand s'appesantissait ma tête sur ton dos de patience ?
>
> Ou que me tenant par la main, ta main me guidait par ténèbres et signes ?
>
> Toi Tokô Waly, tu écoutes l'inaudible
>
> Et tu m'expliques les signes que disent les Ancêtres dans la sérénité marine des constellations » (Senghor 1948:36-37).

Lorsque à l'âge de 7 ans, Senghor est introduit dans le christianisme, lorsque son père le confie à la mission catholique de Joal, se produit-il en lui un conflit, une rupture entre la religion traditionnelle et la nouvelle religion ? Le fait que Senghor entre au séminaire de Ngasobil et y demeure jusqu'en 1922 signifie-t-il que désormais, le Dieu d'Abraham, d'Isaac et de Jacob a effacé

de son cœur Roog Seen et les Pangool ? Nous trouvons une réponse à cette question dans *La poésie de l'action :* « Les esprits de l'animisme et le Dieu catholique avec ses Anges et ses Saints, vivaient en bonne intelligence chez moi » (1980:38).

Pour mesurer véritablement toute la portée de l'expression « en bonne intelligence », il ne suffit pas de rappeler certains faits, à savoir les offrandes et les prières qui ont été faites tout au long de la carrière de l'ancien président de la République ou sa participation à des cérémonies religieuses traditionnelles. Il faut aller plus loin et souligner que cette « bonne intelligence » a une justification théorique dans la pensée de Senghor : Roog Seen, par son unicité, sa transcendance, son caractère caché et invisible porte en lui l'universalité du Dieu chrétien unique qui se cache tout en se dévoilant à travers sa création. Le Dieu chrétien est, pour ainsi dire, une intensification de Roog Seen, l'universel n'étant, en fin de compte, qu'une intensification du particulier. En effet, dans la religion traditionnelle sérère, nous trouvons au sommet de la pyramide Roog Seen, incréé, qui, à l'image des religions révélées, est unique et créateur de toute chose. La tâche de la religion traditionnelle consiste à répondre aux interrogations de l'homme sur l'origine du monde, sur sa propre origine, sa vie, sa destinée et sa mort. Après Dieu, viennent les ancêtres, puis les hommes vivants, ensuite les animaux, les végétaux et les minéraux. Jacqueline Sorel présente ainsi la découverte du christianisme par le jeune Léopold Sédar Senghor : « Á Djilor, Sédar ignorait l'Évangile. Á Joal, Léopold va en connaître l'existence ».

Pour un enfant rompu aux coutumes sérères, était-ce une réelle surprise ? Sédar apprend qu'il y a un Dieu unique—il le savait déjà mais il le nommait Roog,—que les saints servent d'intermédiaires—à Djilor, ne les appelle t-on pas Pangools ?—et qu'il faut prier pour obtenir les bienfaits de Dieu. Le monothéisme sérère n'est pas en contradiction avec le catholicisme » (1995:23).

Ainsi, Leibniz tentait de faire comprendre aux intransigeants pères de l'Église romaine que les Chinois sont christianisables, parce que leur conception particulière de l'univers porte déjà en elle l'ouverture sur l'universel, et que seul un enracinement dans le particulier peut être un tremplin vers l'universel. La démarche leibnizienne permet de bien comprendre qu'un Sérère est christianisable, c'est-à-dire est un chrétien possible, de la même manière qu'un Chinois ou un Arabe. S'enraciner dans sa culture particulière, plutôt que de conduire l'homme à tourner le dos à l'universel, le dispose bien au contraire à accueillir l'universel dans toute sa grandeur et sa puissance. Ainsi, pour le président Léopold Sédar Senghor, le Christ crucifié et ressuscité se

présente t-il comme le « Seigneur universel ». Dans un article, « De la religion traditionnelle à la christologie dans l'œuvre poétique de Léopold Sédar Senghor » (1998), le frère Henri Birame Ndong écrit :

> C'est ce même Christ, crucifié et ressuscité, que Senghor donne à l'humanité comme pôle d'attraction dans l'élaboration de sa théorie de la civilisation de l'Universel. Soucieux qu'il est de l'homme et de la dignité du pauvre, sa prose s'accomplit dans sa poésie qui convie tous les hommes à des rapports complémentaires dont la base essentielle sera l'apport des valeurs humaines propres à chaque peuple, mais celles-ci sous-tendues par des valeurs spirituelles.

Les Chinois, tout comme les Sérères ont, pour ainsi dire, une théologie naturelle. La Révélation cesserait alors d'être le point décisif de l'histoire religieuse du monde. Les « païens » ont, eux aussi, une connaissance des principes fondamentaux de toute religion : Dieu, esprit, immortalité de l'âme. La foi de la religion naturelle est, en fin de compte, quelque chose de simple qui repose sur la certitude de l'existence de Dieu et l'immortalité de l'âme. Comme le dit Emilienne Naert à propos de la conception de Leibniz : « La foi de la religion naturelle est […] quelque chose d'extrêmement simple et dans ses fondements et dans l'attitude d'âme qu'elle exige du croyant »(1968:99).

Christiane Frémont propose l'image d'une pyramide pour montrer que, même si la religion révélée est considérée comme étant celle qui exprime le plus clairement l'universel et se trouve au sommet de la pyramide, du sommet à la base infinie, s'étagent les religions approchantes, de la théologie naturelle aux obscures superstitions.

En effet, pour Leibniz, la religion naturelle est simple, parce que c'est la raison, la lumière naturelle qui nous en dicte les principes. La raison, selon lui, est la voix naturelle de Dieu. C'est pourquoi, le philosophe allemand ne se contente pas de dire que la religion révélée ne doit pas contredire la religion naturelle, mais affirme avec vigueur que la religion révélée a besoin de l'appui de la religion naturelle. Il considère d'ailleurs que la voix naturelle pourrait suffire au salut de l'individu. Autrement dit, même sans la Révélation et les Saintes Écritures, les hommes, suivant la raison, ne laisseraient pas de parvenir à la vraie béatitude. C'est parce que les hommes ne font pas un bon usage de leur raison que la révélation est devenue nécessaire.

De plus, la raison étant universelle, la religion naturelle est en droit universelle.

Ainsi, selon Leibniz, cette universalité de la raison fonde la possibilité d'une convergence religieuse du monde dans une théologie rationnelle.

Cependant, que Senghor lui aussi attribue à la raison la simplicité et la profondeur de la religion traditionnelle à la raison, rien n'est moins sûr.

Chez le président-poète, cette théologie relèverait davantage de ce que nous pourrions appeler, à la suite de Jacqueline Sorel (1995), un « sentiment-idée ». L'homme a l'intuition—un mélange d'émotion et de raisonnement—de son appartenance à un cosmos, une totalité vivante.

Il est capable d'avoir une vision en profondeur du réel, « sus l'écorce des choses ». Ici, l'éclairage leibnizien semble céder la place à l'éclairage bergsonien, lorsque Bergson définit l'intuition de la manière suivante : « La sympathie par laquelle on se transporte à l'intérieur d'un objet pour coïncider avec ce qu'il a d'unique et par conséquent d'inexprimable » (1934:205).

La pensée de Senghor et celle de Leibniz se rejoignent donc pour dénoncer le recours à la violence et inviter les hommes à se rejoindre dans le dialogue des cultures, afin de rendre possible l'émergence de l'universel. Il n'est pas pire violence que de vouloir imposer aux autres sa propre culture comme modèle universel, alors que toute culture a sa pierre à apporter à la construction de l'universel.

C'est là l'un des points essentiels de la métaphysique leibnizienne. Dans son ouvrage *Discours de métaphysique* (1686), le philosophe allemand montre que toute créature, dans sa singularité, exprime l'universel. Dieu et la créature ont la même rationalité, tout est conspirant, en raison de l'harmonie qui règne dans l'univers. Toute culture exprime la totalité, de son point de vue. Aucune culture ne peut prétendre être la culture universelle, mais c'est de la multiplication des points de vue, du concert de toutes les cultures que s'élèvera le chant de l'universel. Seul Dieu est doté d'ubiquité, mais les créatures doivent savoir qu'en ce qui les concerne « *non omnia unus videt* » (« un seul ne voit pas tout »).

L'idée de Leibniz selon laquelle toute chose est un miroir vivant de l'univers permet de comprendre pourquoi Tokô Waly apprend à son neveu à voir et à entendre l'invisible et l'inaudible dans les hommes, les animaux, la végétation et même dans le moindre grain de sable.

Nous pouvons lire aussi la signification de la pensée senghorienne de l'universel dans la démission d'Aimé Césaire du Parti Communiste français. Par ce geste, il a montré que le modèle français n'est pas un modèle universel, mais qu'il est possible de venir au communisme à partir de sa propre culture. Ce serait renoncer à soi-même que de se fondre, voire se dissoudre purement et simplement dans le Parti communiste français.

La pensée de Senghor, comme celle de Leibniz, ne cessent de nous enseigner que le vrai, l'universel est pluridimensionnel, et que c'est cela même qui le rend vivant, dynamique. De même que Leibniz demandait aux Chinois d'assumer pleinement leur appartenance à une civilisation dont ils ignoraient

eux-mêmes la richesse, Léopold Sédar Senghor nous a appris, à nous Africains, la dignité de la Négritude :

> « Quand les Russes, les Chinois et les Asiatiques, les Juifs, les Arabes et les Latino-Américains ont entrepris, et avec succès, de créer, sur leurs valeurs anciennes, de nouvelles civilisations, il est temps, encore une fois, que les élites négro-africaines cessent de répéter des slogans fabriqués ailleurs, cessent d'être des consommateurs de culture, pour créer et apporter, ainsi, leur contribution irremplaçable à la Civilisation de l'Universel » (1977:313).

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Le désordre du monde

Babacar Ndiaye*

Résumé

Le début du XXIe siècle se caractérise par l'accumulation et la consécution vertigineuse d'événements graves : crises, actes terroristes aveugles et guerres. Cet état de fait est au fondement d'une analyse critique, sans pessimisme ni complaisance, de la situation qui prévaut dans le monde. Celle-ci s'apparente profondément à un désordre. Par-delà ce constat et en guise de simple contribution, quelques pistes indicatives sont explorées pour la résorption de ce dérèglement du monde.

Abstract

The beginning of the twenty-first century is characterized by the exponential accumulation succession of serious events: crises, indiscriminate terrorist acts and wars. Void of any pessimism or complacency, this article constitutes the foundation of a critical analysis of the situation prevailing in the world. This deeply resembles disorder. Beyond this acknowledgement, and as a simple contribution, some indicative tracks are explored for the elimination of this world disorder.

La chute du mur de Berlin (1989) avait suscité un immense espoir de libération, d'ouverture et d'évolution convergente de tous les peuples. La fin du paradigme de la guerre froide laissait donc présupposer des lendemains meilleurs et enchanteurs avec un nouvel ordre stable.

Or, à ce jour, le monde s'ancre davantage dans l'instabilité, l'absence de traçabilité de sa trajectoire quasi-erratique, ainsi que dans l'inexistence

* Nous sommes malheureusement au regret d'annoncer que Babacar Ndiaye nous a quitté. Il est mort dans l'attentat d'Alger contre les Nations unies, le 11 décembre 2007. Nous publions son texte en l'état, sauf corrections mineures.

We are unfortunately sorry to announce that Babacar Ndiaye has passed away. He was one of the victims who died in the attack on the United Nations office in Algiers, on 11 December 2007. We publish his text as it was written, except for minor corrections'.

chronique d'un vrai modèle référentiel accepté et réalisable à court ou moyen terme. Déjà, Maurice Druon, dans un aperçu de l'état du monde, souhaitait « inviter tout d'abord à considérer notre monde tel qu'il est […] monde à la fois élargi et rétréci, divisé et lié […]. Rétréci, par les communications qui mettent tous les peuples en contact immédiat, visuel, auditif ou physique, les uns avec les autres. Monde divisé par les désordres, les conflits, les affrontements ethniques, les rivalités historiques, économiques, religieuses, idéologiques. Mais monde lié également par ses besoins, ses craintes, ses aspirations ».

En fait, il semble s'instaurer et s'instituer, sous les apparences d'une mauvaise passe, un système protéiforme synonyme d'un capharnaüm, logiquement et moralement inconcevable au XXIe siècle.

Le désordre caractéristique de notre monde est une surprise permanente dont les modalités de gestion ne sont pas aujourd'hui des plus appropriées et qu'il convient de résoudre au plus vite.

La surprise au quotidien

Au regard des événements récurrents qui secouent le monde, la surprise au quotidien est de mise. Le choc et la panique sont d'actualité et le mettent à rude épreuve du fait de nouvelles dérives, des modes d'actions extrêmes employés, voire même des avatars de la mondialisation.

Les nouvelles dérives surprenantes

Le troisième millénaire débute par le choc et l'accélération d'une violence anormale. Il maintient en émoi les populations, directement ou indirectement. À ce rythme d'accumulation de dérives, le monde glisse inexorablement vers l'abîme, loin de ses références habituelles.

D'emblée, tout porte à croire que le monde évolue sans repères justes, ni fiables. De nouvelles dérives semblent s'installer durablement dans la conduite des affaires, sans qu'il soit possible de les freiner ou de les arrêter immédiatement. En effet, la situation, en perdurant, devient endémique. Mais c'est plutôt son degré d'acuité ainsi que ses manifestations déconcertantes qui posent problème. Ainsi, aux mensonges d'État succèdent des exécutions extrajudiciaires orchestrées à des niveaux très élevés ainsi que des manipulations inadmissibles de l'information à des fins électoralistes.

De même, face aux agissements peu orthodoxes des gouvernants, les citoyens ont l'immense impression de subir une sorte de manipulation et de *hold-up* de leur délégation de pouvoir. Ils perdent toute emprise sur les mandataires. La démocratie directe n'étant pas possible en permanence, ils subissent régulièrement les décisions qui ne rencontrent pas leur aval. Par

conséquent, entre les rendez-vous périodiques et espacés des consultations électorales, il leur reste la rue pour déverser leur rancœur, leur opposition, voire leur défiance vis-à-vis des décideurs pourtant investis en leur nom pour un contrat à durée déterminée renouvelable à échéance. Le rythme auquel les manifestations se succèdent à travers le globe, dans les rues des grandes villes, pour des causes souvent légitimes, montre combien les dérives surprenantes envahissent le monde et poussent les individualités et les organisations à réagir. C'est de cette manière que la surprise traduit une réalité constante qui rythme la vie, surtout par rapport à des questions d'envergure ou à des enjeux décisifs, comme la guerre, touchant la paix et la sécurité du monde.

Donc, les nouvelles dérives prennent les citoyens en otage et contribuent à déstabiliser un monde en mal de repères. Certaines options s'orientent délibérément vers le chaos pour atteindre des buts hypothétiques par le biais d'un cap incertain et problématique. Tout cela est à l'image de certains modes d'action inconcevables à l'œuvre.

Des modes d'action inconcevables

À l'évidence, le monde apparaît comme un grand théâtre d'affrontements. Il ne s'agit en aucun cas du paradigme du choc prédit suivant les hypothèses huntingtoniennes qui réduisent le monde en un gigantesque champ de bataille selon les lignes de front culturelles. Au contraire, si choc il y a, c'est un choc à rebours et par surprise, suivant en cela les choix des États et les options des groupuscules non-représentatifs. Alors, ces adversaires réels ou potentiels s'emploient à des modes d'action différents, mais dont le dénominateur commun est, parfois dans des cas précis, leur irrecevabilité.

Certes, le terrorisme érigé en stratégie de déstabilisation du monde reste inconcevable et moralement injustifiable. En tant que mode de destruction brutale, souvent suicidaire, il se trouve en dehors de la sphère de l'affrontement direct et normé qui convient dans les cas d'opposition ou de différends entre parties. Les résultats catastrophiques que le terrorisme produit, en termes de bilan macabre et d'impact psychologique, en font un mode d'action illégitime. Or, dans le monde d'aujourd'hui, le terrorisme s'ancre davantage dans les mœurs déshumanisées de beaucoup de franges marginales extrémistes qui se développent un peu partout. En témoignent la fréquence élevée des actions terroristes ainsi que les bilans toujours plus lourds enregistrés depuis les attentats du 11-Septembre jusqu'à celui de Madrid, en passant par ceux de Bali, Casablanca, Djerba, Alger, Istanbul, etc. Face à ce fléau en pleine expansion, la réaction des États s'organise de diverses façons.

De fait, il faut barrer la route, voire inverser la tendance du développement du terrorisme et des tentatives de son érection comme modèle efficace d'institution de la peur panique dans les sociétés démocratiques. En revanche, parmi tous les modes d'action en œuvre, l'un des plus contestables demeure l'idée même de guerre préventive *pre-emptive*. Les mesures guerrières anticipatives et punitives faussent l'idée même de légitimité et de justice qui doivent, en principe, accompagner toute action de coercition de force. Pourtant, dans ce cas ciblé, le droit de la force brute semble l'emporter sur la force du droit équitable, dans la mesure où l'évacuation des éléments matériels et l'absence de base légale privent toute guerre préventive de fondements fiables. En conséquence, tout en essayant de régler certains problèmes bien localisés, ces types d'actions programmatiques renforcent le développement de sentiments négatifs puissants déjà bien ancrés dans certaines populations et régions du monde, en dépit de la direction contraire de la stratégie d'influence américaine. Dans ce contexte, l'action étatique s'assimile *de facto* à une modalité impropre, parce que porteuse de germes qui laissent présager une inscription du problème supposé réglé dans la durée. La guerre en Irak, par exemple, a un impact certain sur le développement exponentiel du sentiment anti-américain déjà porté très haut par la question palestinienne. En tant qu'expression la plus achevée du *hard power*, elle ne rencontre pas l'assentiment de toute la communauté internationale qui ne peut que se résigner ou manifester son désaccord, souvent à travers « un état permanent d'hypocrisie diplomatique ».

En définitive, ces deux figures aux antipodes l'une de l'autre et massivement mises en œuvre dans le contexte présent, dessinent des modes d'action qui ne peuvent recevoir qu'une caution marginale. Au regard de la situation actuelle et des faits en cours à travers la géographie des conflits, telles sont les modalités pratiques les plus médiatisées qui gouvernent la déstabilisation profonde et le désordre du monde. D'une manière moins brutale, la mondialisation contribue aussi au désordre du monde.

Les avatars de la mondialisation

A priori, la mondialisation est porteuse du principe d'espérance. Elle est la dynamique qui incarne la nouvelle donne au plan économique et relationnel. Concrètement, la mondialisation se traduit par des échanges massifs, la vitesse des procédures et de l'information à travers la planète, etc. Néanmoins, la mondialisation est aussi le lieu de l'ambivalence. Elle a ses forces, mais également ses grandes faiblesses, dont l'exclusion contre lesquelles se bat le mouvement altermondialiste.

En premier lieu, la mondialisation crée une situation d'exclusion sans précédent. En effet, l'emprise procédurière des grandes firmes internationales sur les échanges dope considérablement le libéralisme outrancier. Il y a une sorte d'hégémonie du libéralisme, avec ses instances supranationales de direction que sont le Fonds monétaire international et la Banque mondiale. De ce fait, les États ont perdu une certaine maîtrise de leur propre économie désormais rivée à la vitesse supersonique de la mondialisation. Par conséquent, suivant les lois du marché mondial et ses exigences statistiques, il y a une profonde modification de la donne intérieure en matière économique, et par extension dans le domaine social. Le contre-coup de cette dynamique nouvelle se fait sentir au niveau des collectivités locales et humaines périphériques et donc forcément au plan individuel. C'est pourquoi, le mouvement altermondialiste a vu le jour et se développe de façon vertigineuse, dans le but de faire face aux avatars de la mondialisation, en tant que forme de contre-pouvoir d'envergure planétaire.

En second lieu, l'exclusion est cette création de zones géographiques et économiques quasi-étanches. Bien que le vœu pieux eût été de réaliser un bond qualitatif et quantitatif de tous les pays et de la société mondiale vers la modernité ou la postmodernité, ce pari semble d'emblée voué à l'échec. En réalité, cette prouesse n'est pratiquement pas réalisable. La preuve se révèle simplement des échecs répétés constatés lors des deux dernières assises de l'Organisation mondiale du commerce (OMC). Le diktat subtilement imposé par les pays du Nord s'est vu opposé un refus catégorique des pays du Sud. La raison tient au fait que les conditions proposées allaient dans le sens de l'asphyxie économique des pays en développement. Or, la volonté de niveler vers le haut aurait exigé que des efforts d'encouragement, des pratiques favorables et préférentielles, ainsi qu'une volonté de combler le retard de certains pays par une valorisation de leurs ressources soient à la base des propositions d'accord. Tout laisse à penser que la volonté était inexistante. Ainsi, ce côté de la mondialisation approfondit la rupture entre le Nord et le Sud, maintient le fossé économique et pérennise le cloisonnement géographique préjudiciable à toute idée de communauté globale intégrée. Sous les apparats de l'isotropie, se trouve en réalité un véritable rideau de fer sous tension sur lequel viennent régulièrement s'échouer, malheureusement, des flots d'immigrés clandestins fuyant la misère.

Ainsi, par certains côtés, la mondialisation contribue au désordre du monde. Elle participe au maintien d'un écart, voire d'une partition de fait entre les États, au lieu de traduire en acte l'interconnexion des différentes entités d'un monde uniforme et isochrone.

Les nouvelles dérives mettent le monde dans une situation d'urgence endémique. Les réponses apportées emploient des modes d'action inappropriés. De son côté, la mondialisation crée, dans son sillage, l'exclusion. Toutes ces raisons maintiennent un état permanent de surprise. Le rôle du leadership mondial devrait, en principe, participer à la régulation du monde par une gestion plus équitable et moins sujette à controverses. Force est de constater que cela n'a pas été le cas jusqu'ici.

Leadership et gestion chaotiques du monde

De prime abord, le poids économique, politique et militaire de certains États leur confère d'office un rôle primordial dans la guidance des relations internationales. Ce leadership indéniable se décline aussi en terme de responsabilité en matière de sécurité, de stabilité et de tranquillité dans le monde. Or, le XXe siècle et son prolongement en ce début de XXIe siècle se révèlent meurtriers et chaotiques au regard des guerres démultipliées, des risques encourus et des dangers auxquels les populations de tous bords sont en permanence exposés (maladie, famine, drogue, pollution, terrorisme, etc.). Si la responsabilité reste globale et partagée, elle se définit au prorata des capacités plus ou moins considérables des entités étatiques, et par conséquent au regard de leur pouvoir d'orientation, d'influence, d'infléchissement et d'intervention sur le cours des événements, au profit exclusif de la communauté humaine dans son ensemble. Dans les faits, cette vision idéale, naïve et candide, se heurte violemment au mur de l'unilatéralisme, des modèles inadaptés et des intérêts nationaux hypertrophiés.

Un unilatéralisme dangereux

Le danger de l'unilatéralisme se situe au moins à deux niveaux distincts et complémentaires : d'un côté, il crée le désordre par ses procédés très peu consensuels, de l'autre il exacerbe les passions proportionnellement au désordre induit.

D'abord, la position privilégiée de leader ne se traduit pas systématiquement en attitude démocratique. Elle a plutôt la maladroite tendance à se métamorphoser en une ferme volonté de puissance dont la manifestation la plus actualisée est l'unilatéralisme. Celui-ci se traduit en une imposition de volonté, de choix et d'options sans tenir compte des autres ou de l'intérêt global. Il consiste à se refuser à tout débat contradictoire et surtout à toute prise en compte d'opinions divergentes ou contraires. Au nom de la force que confère le leadership, il y a une sorte de confusion volontaire entre l'intérêt particulier et la volonté générale qui débouche inexorablement sur des orientations critiquables, des choix exclusifs et controversés et des décisions

minoritaires. Tout cela contribue donc à l'éclosion et à l'entretien du désordre à l'échelle planétaire. L'illustration la plus récente de cet unilatéralisme en acte est l'échec des discussions au Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU au sujet du déclenchement de la guerre contre le régime de Saddam Hussein : les États-Unis se sont affranchis du cadre onusien et ont fait fi du désaccord ouvert de la France, de la Chine et de la Russie. Contrairement à la première guerre du Golfe de 1991, qui avait reçu l'assentiment et le soutien de tous, ainsi que la double légitimité—celle découlant de l'agression et celle de la résolution de l'ONU—, la guerre de 2003 a été fondée sur une vision unilatérale. Cette forme de leadership participe au désordre international et crée par ailleurs des précédents graves et dangereux.

Ensuite, les modalités unilatérales de décision sur des questions d'enjeu global contribuent également à l'entretien du désordre mondial. Par la démultiplication des déçus et l'apparition de nouveaux mécontents, l'unilatéralisme fertilise continuellement le terreau du radicalisme "terroriste" qui menace la paix. En reflétant l'injustice, la force brute et une hégémonie flagrante, l'unilatéralisme participe à l'éclatement du monde et à l'antagonisme perpétuel de groupes qui auraient pu coexister pacifiquement. Malheureusement, tout semble indiquer que la cécité et la préservation d'intérêts ou d'alliances guident les choix qui ne font qu'exacerber les sentiments d'abandon, de mépris et d'injustice. C'est dans ce cadre que s'interprète le soutien isolé et très marginal au plan de retrait des territoires palestiniens de Gaza par les hautes instances politiques américaines. Avec un tel scénario, le leadership attendu d'une grande puissance est non seulement biaisé, mais il est surtout le catalyseur d'une rupture de confiance et l'ouverture vers des voies extrêmes de confrontation avec l'adversaire.

L'unilatéralisme est une tentation qui met en péril le monde, à l'instar des modèles pas toujours adéquats proposés pour assainir un monde en proie au désordre.

Des modèles inadaptés et rejetés

Parmi les échecs qu'enregistre le leadership planétaire, il y a effectivement le refus de modèles inadaptés censés enrayer le désordre mondial. Toutefois, ces exemples savamment forgés par des experts en stratégie et portés sur les fonds baptismaux par les voix politiques autorisées se révèlent non seulement arbitraires, mais aussi irrecevables par leurs destinataires. Il en est ainsi de certains projets de remodelage géopolitique et de catégories référentielles appliquées à l'analyse de la situation du monde.

La sortie de crise passe nécessairement par un remodelage géopolitique du monde. Le modèle par excellence combine à la fois, par un savant dos-

age, la démocratie et le libéralisme. Aujourd'hui, les locomotives du leadership mondial érigent la bonne gouvernance, la démocratie et l'économie de marché en critères absolus et indices spécifiques auxquels les États doivent s'arrimer à l'intérieur des grands ensembles sous-régionaux et continentaux. C'est un rêve réalisable. En revanche, il peut se changer en cauchemar, car la remise en cause accélérée de l'immobilisme de certaines sociétés pourrait bien se révéler une entreprise périlleuse. Une démarche processionnelle qui prendrait le temps utile à l'ancrage solide des réformes dans les habitudes aurait certainement plus de chance de succès. Dans la mesure où ce choix s'inscrit dans la durée, il y a moins de risques de tomber dans des travers insoupçonnés et non-souhaitables. Le projet américain du Grand Moyen-Orient (GMO) relatif aux pays arabo-musulmans, en dépit du soutien de partenaires inconditionnels, ne fait pas l'unanimité. Au contraire, cette initiative étrangère est en bute à un refus catégorique de l'Égypte, de la Jordanie et de l'Arabie saoudite notamment. Mort-né, ce projet a de fortes chances de se ranger parmi les modèles inadaptés.

En plus de l'inadaptation de certains modèles, des catégories référentielles posent de nombreux problèmes. En effet, du diagnostic de la crise sécuritaire il ressort des qualifications de l'état des choses et de ses causes. Le grand risque de cette conceptualisation est le glissement de sens, l'interprétation abusive et surtout la confusion avec d'autres champs de rationalité. C'est pourquoi la prudence devrait être de mise en la matière, afin d'éviter les dérapages lexicologiques et sémantiques qui seraient inexorablement exploités à contre-courant. En réalité, dans un monde de communication et d'information, en plus de la diversité culturelle, toute référence catégorielle mérite une analyse sérieuse. Par exemple, les catégories de Bien et de Mal sont très relatives. Elles dépendent de l'optique propre et du cadre d'émission. De surcroît, elles ont généralement une connotation plus religieuse et morale que politique. Et c'est là où réside principalement le grand risque de confusion. Par rapport aux extrémismes qui se drapent d'atours religieux, brandir de telles catégories c'est plus ou moins les rejoindre dans leur sphère d'intelligibilité ou, au moins, les renforcer dans leur intime conviction. C'est aussi la raison pour laquelle ces références ne sont pas strictement appropriées. Plus qu'à l'époque de Nietzsche et de Heidegger, l'humanité a besoin de cheminer *par-delà le bien et le mal,* sinon le monde risque de s'engouffrer dans le dédale des *chemins qui ne mènent nulle part*.

Un modèle préfabriqué, qui de plus l'est du dehors, ne peut s'imposer à quelque région ou peuple. La recherche du compromis, de l'adhésion et de la participation sont des atouts qui peuvent permettre d'éviter des écueils, un éternel recommencement et surtout de faux départs sur la voie de

l'ordonnancement du monde. Tel serait un des facteurs déterminants d'un monde comme système harmonieux, par-delà le primat exclusif des intérêts nationaux.

Le primat des intérêts nationaux

La hiérarchie des préférences place logiquement les intérêts nationaux avant toute autre considération. Ce choix est un des soubassements de la géopolitique et de la géostratégie. Cependant, dans bien des domaines spécifiques que le monde a en partage, les intérêts nationaux particuliers ont moins d'importance que l'effort collectif de résolution des problèmes qui se posent ; car dans de tels cas de figure, les voix des experts et des organisations internationales devraient non seulement convaincre, mais aussi susciter l'adhésion. Cela n'est pas toujours l'option privilégiée.

D'une part, la stratégie d'influence des empires modernes est intimement liée à leurs préoccupations et à leurs intérêts nationaux. Au risque de transgresser les règles élémentaires des relations internationales, il est souvent fait obstruction à la norme pour atteindre des objectifs politiques, économiques et stratégiques. Le primat de ce type d'intérêt induit le désordre. Mieux, il consacre le règne et le triomphe du chaos. En effet, il y a un minimum de respect des règles communes pour que l'ordre puisse exister et régir les relations entre les États. Si certains transgressent les dispositions communes, qu'elles soient écrites, coutumières ou basées sur la jurisprudence, le désordre se substitue à l'ordre, au modèle et à l'exemplarité. Pourtant, il est du ressort des puissances de montrer la voie, de donner le bon exemple et de servir de référence. Or, il n'en est pas ainsi chaque fois que le besoin se fait sentir. À ce titre, l'entrée en vigueur de la Cour pénale internationale (CPI) a montré comment la primauté des intérêts nationaux a failli bouleverser profondément l'ordre précaire du monde, par le non-renouvellement du mandat des missions de maintien de la paix. Et pourtant la nécessité d'une justice internationale compétente et partagée par tous ne peut que s'inscrire dans l'optique de l'assainissement du monde. De même, sur le plan environnemental, la non-ratification du protocole de Kyoto contribue à pérenniser une certaine forme de désordre que d'autres États pourraient librement transposer, en réplique, dans la non-signature d'autres traités et conventions.

D'autre part, cette stratégie délibérée de blocage se dédouble d'une imposition de la puissance. La mainmise qui tente de s'exercer sur les ressources stratégiques s'inscrit dans cette veine. Aujourd'hui, la géostratégie semble opérer un glissement rapide par une transmutation et une occupation du domaine géo-énergétique. La logique du contrôle des principales sources de production du pétrole conditionne la stabilité du monde. De la plus ou moins

grande facilité à contrôler l'or noir dépend le degré plus ou moins important d'ordre dans les régions concernées. Ainsi, le Moyen-Orient, en tant que première région de production pétrolière, est entré en effervescence depuis la première guerre du Golfe. Cette instabilité a une origine bi-univoque : si elle n'est pas le fait de puissances hégémoniques qui vont à la recherche de la précieuse matière première, c'est à cause des extrémismes s'opposant à la fois à ces marchés et à l'oppression des régimes tyranniques qui en bénéficient. Pour ainsi dire, le primat des intérêts nationaux est un puissant levier qui interfère dans le désordre du monde.

Globalement, une négligence des aspects collectifs planétaires par rapport à des intérêts nationaux toujours surdéterminés conduit à l'entropie. Cela débouche sur le désordre, au regard des questions qui nécessitent un consensus, un accord et une démarche collective sans (auto) exclusion.

Tout compte fait, la problématique du leadership et de la gestion du monde offre une image chaotique. Elle ne semble obéir à aucune règle. Alors, se pose une difficulté majeure à lire objectivement la trajectoire des États pris singulièrement au sujet de la suite réservée aux enjeux collectifs et supranationaux. C'est la raison fondamentale pour laquelle l'urgence d'une thérapie s'impose pour sauver le monde, s'il reste vrai que celui-ci est toujours un système, au sens physique du terme.

Une thérapie urgente et nécessaire

Le désordre du monde implique, dans une visée moins critique et plus constructive, une thérapie placée sous le double signe de l'urgence et de la nécessité. En effet, le génie humain peut infléchir la situation et la ramener à des proportions moins dramatiques. Il s'agit donc de freiner la tendance erratique observable et de déterminer des bases claires, stables et acceptables qui puissent réintroduire l'harmonie et surtout la lisibilité dans les relations internationales. Comme pendant les phases délicates et les seuils critiques déjà atteints, le sursaut est possible. Sa probabilité dépend de certains facteurs de pondération, comme la spécificité locale et l'idée de justice, ainsi que de la place accordée aux personnes morales dont l'ONU est l'incarnation la plus adaptée, pour le moment, sous réserve de quelques réformes et d'un bon usage.

L'incontournable prise en compte des spécificités

De façon pratique, le monde comme système ne saurait véritablement ignorer les particularités propres aux différentes régions, aux entités nationales et surtout aux peuples. La spécificité, au lieu d'être un facteur de scission, est plutôt un élément de pondération qui sied bien à la diversité caractéristique

des composantes du puzzle planétaire. En tant qu'élément incontournable, elle s'apprécie à deux niveaux.

D'un côté, il y a la dimension pragmatique. En fait, à la place du modèle précuit qu'il s'agirait de plaquer *de facto* à une situation donnée, il suffit simplement de puiser dans les possibilités locales parmi les plus proches des standards et surtout les plus adaptées au contexte en question. Tout en étant pratique, cette option, plus *soft* et moins frustrante, offre l'opportunité d'une certaine forme de familiarité et de proximité. Elle bouleverse moins les us et coutumes, ainsi que les sentiments et les convictions. Ce pragmatisme donne même l'impression d'une reconnaissance de valeurs spécifiques ainsi que leur valorisation au-delà des limites géographiques et culturelles de la nation ou des populations concernées. Deux illustrations confirment cette optique. D'abord l'implication des structures traditionnelles afghanes dans l'élaboration de la loi fondamentale, suite à la défaite du régime des talibans. Cette implication a certainement permis d'éviter la germination d'un sentiment d'imposition, et par conséquent d'une attitude de rejet. Ainsi, tout en étant proche d'une démocratie directe, car les délégués à la *Loya Jirga* sont représentatifs de leur tribu, cette mise en valeur d'une spécificité locale offre presque tous les avantages d'une démocratie réelle et reste conforme au souhait de réformer la société considérée. Ensuite, les *Gacaca* rwandais donnent l'exemple d'une particularité locale exploitée à bon escient. Quels que soient leurs valeurs et leurs résultats, ces tribunaux traditionnels contribuent à la fois à la manifestation de la vérité et au processus de reconstitution du tissu relationnel entre Tutsi et Hutu. Eu égard à l'ampleur du génocide, au nombre très élevé de personnes impliquées à divers degrés, et surtout à l'impérieuse nécessité de réconcilier la nation avec elle-même, cette contribution ne saurait être négligeable.

De l'autre côté, il y a la dimension incompressible. La culture reste une forme on ne peut plus achevée de la spécificité. Ainsi, loin d'être une source de division, une ligne de front et un facteur polémogène, elle peut être constitutive d'intégration. Du fait des contacts inévitables entre cultures, il y immanquablement échange, dépassement, progrès par synthèse, assimilation et finalement enrichissement réciproque. Si tant est qu'en la matière aucune culture ne puisse se développer en autarcie, la rencontre et le dialogue interculturel apportent une plus-value comme contribution à la paix et à la stabilité du monde. Les particularités locales ont donc un rôle à jouer. Cela se traduit concrètement en un apport à la civilisation de l'universel, dans la lignée de l'humanisme de Pierre Teilhard de Chardin et du cosmopolitisme cher à Léopold Sédar Senghor. Aujourd'hui, la Francophonie constitue le modèle d'espace de convergence culturelle. Elle a, à la fois, une dimension

culturelle, voire interculturelle et des aspects académiques et politiques sans conteste. « La Francophonie est ainsi le lieu d'une certaine forme d'altérité positive, non pas verticale, mais horizontale, parce qu'espace du brassage et du métissage culturel qui doivent déboucher sur une personnalité nouvelle, une personne morale imposante sur l'échiquier international et un dialogue égalitaire multilatéral de dimension mondiale ». Autrement dit, la culture peut et doit contribuer à la paix et à l'ordre.

Au final, la contribution de toutes les entités s'avère indispensable pour rétablir l'ordre du monde. En puisant dans les particularités et dans la culture de chaque partie, il est possible de remédier au désordre constaté par la création de nouvelles valeurs et de références globalement partagées. C'est de cette manière que se construit l'identité de l'humanité par la balance.

La nécessité d'une justice internationale

Afin de mieux réguler le monde, il faut obligatoirement inviter ou forcer toutes les entités à respecter les règles communes. La nécessité d'une justice se fait plus sentir au plan international, car elle enraye la réalité selon laquelle le monde est à géométrie variable. Aussi longtemps que sous le même rapport et dans les mêmes conditions deux faits identiques et produisant le même effet ne seront pas traités de la même manière, il y aura peu de chance d'ordre dans le monde. Cet ordre est incarné par la justice internationale, au propre comme au figuré.

Au propre, la justice est dite dans les tribunaux, les cours et les chambres. Lorsque toute tentative de règlement à l'amiable ou par médiation échoue, le droit doit être dit et rigoureusement appliqué. Suivant cette optique, il n'y a que la justice qui puisse permettre d'atteindre cet objectif. En effet, elle seule est en mesure d'extirper le droit de la force. Mais encore faut-il que tous y adhèrent sans réserve pour permettre de partir sur des bases communes. Hélas, tel n'est pas le cas aujourd'hui et on en est encore loin. Pourtant, la justice a pris une place primordiale dans la liquidation des grands contentieux du siècle passé. Pour preuve, le tribunal spécial institué après la Seconde Guerre mondiale ou les tribunaux spéciaux pour l'ex-Yougoslavie (TPIY) et le Rwanda (TPIR) qui continuent de juger ces passifs récents. Mieux, l'ONU a dans ses démembrements la Cour internationale de Justice de La Haye. Certes son domaine de compétence est limité et ses modalités de saisine sont trop formelles mais il reste que cette cour contribue à la justice dans le monde. Face au cadre restreint de ses matières spécifiques, la CPI a été instituée avec peine et grand bruit. La réticence manifestée par les États-Unis a présidé à la naissance aux forceps de cet outil d'équilibre du monde en juillet 2002. Eu égard à ce handicap de taille, il est même loisible de s'interroger

sur l'efficacité attendue de cet instrument, si le gendarme du monde refuse de se plier à ses compétences.

Au figuré, la justice devrait sous-tendre l'action de tous, sans exception. Cette justice non-écrite contribue à la suppression des paradoxes flagrants qui se lisent dans le monde. C'est elle qui concourt à l'éradication des disparités handicapantes, sources de conflits. Cette forme de justice est l'expression même du respect d'autrui, quelle que soit sa puissance, sa place et sa capacité à réagir. C'est une auto-discipline que toutes les entités se devraient d'observer scrupuleusement afin d'éviter d'empiéter dangereusement et douloureusement dans les domaines de définition des autres. Ainsi, on pourrait parvenir à tempérer les ardeurs des uns et à donner confiance aux autres : si la menace pèse sur les premiers du fait de la puissance des seconds, il n'y a aucune possibilité de tranquillité et de paix, et, en conséquence, d'ordre à l'échelle planétaire. La justice dont il s'agit est cette prise en considération de la coexistence entre les entités et donc des lieux communs qui les unissent. À la limite, elle est une conditionnalité qui précède la justice au sens propre. Plus précisément, la justice au figuré, considérée par rapport à celle des tribunaux, est ce que la moralité est à la morale sociale. Étant donné que le bon sens est la chose la mieux partagée, suivant le précepte cartésien, il y a espoir qu'à la lumière de l'expérience acquise, le monde puisse se retrouver sur le meilleur chemin qui soit, du fait de ses différentes composantes, avant tout mécanisme régulateur extérieur ou supérieur.

La place et le rôle prioritaires de l'ONU

De toute évidence, l'ONU reste l'instrument qui a marqué le siècle dernier, du fait de son rôle depuis la fin de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale. De surcroît, cette organisation, qui regroupe aujourd'hui 192 pays, a consacré son énergie à la résolution de presque tous les conflits depuis sa création, et poursuit son action malgré les difficultés rencontrées. C'est la raison fondamentale qui explique qu'elle a encore une place et un rôle dans le contexte d'un monde en proie au désordre. Aussi, se doit-elle de s'y adapter.

Sans conteste, l'ONU est encore un instrument de relations internationales crédible. C'est le plus grand forum des nations. Elle se saisit des problèmes les plus brûlants qui désorganisent le monde : les tensions, les crises et les conflits. Au-delà de cette saisine, elle intervient sur les théâtres pour le maintien, le rétablissement ou l'imposition de la paix. À ce titre, l'ONU a une place et un rôle prépondérants qu'il faut préserver et améliorer dans le sens de l'efficacité. Mieux, malgré les quasi-revers enregistrés (intervention désastreuse en Somalie, génocide et massacres de masse au Rwanda et en Bosnie-Herzégovine), elle a connu des succès, même limités, ailleurs. Le cas

le plus édifiant est celui de la Sierra Leone. Dans ce pays d'Afrique de l'Ouest, l'organisation internationale a déployé sa plus grande force de ces dernières années. Elle a accompagné ce pays déchiré dans la voie du rétablissement d'institutions étatiques, y compris l'institution d'un tribunal pour juger les crimes de guerre. Aujourd'hui, l'ONU est présente au Kosovo, en République démocratique du Congo et à Haïti. Cela traduit son utilité. Enfin, ses organismes spécialisés s'investissent dans leur domaine de compétence, à travers le monde, là où le besoin se fait le plus sentir, à la hauteur des moyens disponibles.

Toutefois, l'ONU reste marquée du sceau des grandes puissances entre les mains desquelles sa politique ressemble, à bien des égards, « à une peau de léopard ». Par conséquent, l'organisation devrait s'adapter à l'évolution du monde et se départir des critères qui ont présidé à sa naissance, au rang desquels il y a au moins la grande question du Conseil de sécurité et de sa bureaucratie. À elle seule, cette problématique est un programme. Ainsi, les membres permanents du Conseil de sécurité disposent de prérogatives supérieures, comme le droit de veto. Mais, au moment de la signature de la Charte en 1945, l'idée qui sous-tendait ce droit était le consensus entre les puissances. Or, de plus en plus, le veto est un instrument d'opposition et d'expression des réticences particulières, au nom des intérêts nationaux. Il y a donc la nécessité de réformer en profondeur le Conseil de sécurité et surtout d'élargir la représentativité, en considération de l'évolution du monde, à défaut de donner une force supplémentaire à l'Assemblée générale. En s'attaquant à sa bureaucratie légendaire, l'organisation pourrait améliorer ses prestations et ses résultats. Les types nouveaux de conflits obligent à réadapter la posture. En se créant des liaisons courtes ou des boucles rapides de décision, elle éviterait le fiasco ou les lenteurs dans l'exécution de ses attributions. Le rapport Brahimi[1] avait déjà donné l'élan qui se concrétise de plus en plus dans le quotidien de l'ONU.

Conclusion

L'état du monde n'est certainement pas des plus reluisants. La situation est caractérisée par des événements graves qui plongent les citoyens dans l'émoi à travers les dérives, les modes d'action concurrents inadaptés et l'exclusion. De même, la gestion du monde est à l'évidence très perfectible, car elle est chaotique du fait de l'unilatéralisme, des modèles imposés et rejetés ainsi que de l'hypertrophie des intérêts nationaux. En revanche, la résorption de cet état des lieux passe obligatoirement par une thérapie urgente et nécessaire qui tourne autour de la prise en compte des spécificités, d'une justice et d'un rôle central de l'ONU.

En vertu du principe d'espérance et sur la base des capacités de réaction de l'humanité, l'espoir est permis… car mieux vaut tard que jamais.

Note

1. Document A/55/305-S/2000/809 du 21 août 2000.

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Intellectuels africains, patriotisme et panafricanisme : à propos de la fuite des cerveaux

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Résumé

Sous les apparences d'une simple description sociologique, la notion de fuite des cerveaux cache un jugement de valeur sur les devoirs des intellectuels à l'égard de leurs patries. On ne parlerait pas de « fuite » si l'on ne considérait pas tout intellectuel comme étant d'abord rattaché à un pays particulier, à un continent particulier, et ayant à son égard une certaine « obligation patriotique » de contribuer, de toute la force de ses capacités intellectuelles, à son développement, à sa prospérité et à son rayonnement. Les intellectuels qui ont choisi l'expatriation pourraient être accusés d'avoir voulu accorder la préférence à leurs intérêts particuliers, et de s'être désolidarisés de manière coupable du destin de leurs pays, de leur continent, de leur peuple, d'avoir manqué au devoir d'apporter une contribution, si modeste soit-elle, à la construction de sociétés africaines justes, démocratiques et prospères, et à la mise en œuvre des projets nationalistes et panafricanistes qui ont fleuri autour des indépendances. Mais peut-on considérer d'emblée le patriotisme (ainsi d'ailleurs que le nationalisme) comme une vertu et la fuite des cerveaux doit-elle être indexée en terme de vice ? N'est-il pas des situations où c'est la fuite des cerveaux elle-même qui devrait être considérée comme une vertu, au moins en ce qu'elle pourrait permettre de mettre au service de l'humanité entière et de sa propre société (à travers des États qui les reconnaissent et les valorisent) des talents qui autrement se seraient sclérosés ? Ces questions qui, en réalité contiennent implicitement notre hypothèse, constituent les lignes directrices de la réflexion que nous avons développée dans cet article.

Abstract

Under the guise of a simple sociological description, the concept of brain drain hides a value judgement on the duties of intellectuals towards their homelands. We would not talk about 'drain' if every intellectual was not primarily consid-

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ered as attached to a specific country, a specific continent, and as having some 'patriotic duty' to contribute, with all his/her intellectual capacity, to the development, prosperity and influence of their homeland. The intellectuals who have chosen emigration could be accused of prioritizing their interests, and shamefully dissociating themselves from the destiny of their countries, their continents and their peoples. Those intellectuals could be blamed for having failed to make a contribution, however modest it could be, to the construction of fair, democratic and prosperous African societies and to help in the implementation of those nationalist and pan-Africanist projects that were envisioned around the early post-independence period. Yet, is patriotism (as well as nationalism) to be considered as a virtue, and should brain drain be regarded as a vice? Aren't there situations where brain drain itself could be regarded as a virtue, at least in the sense that it could help to put at the service of humankind and its own society (through states that recognize and value it) talents that otherwise would have been left untapped? These are some of the questions, which in fact implicitly contain our assumption, guiding the reflection that we have developed in this article.

Introdution

Il y a quelques années, la Commission économique des Nations unies pour l'Afrique (cf. Programme-Cadre pour la mise en place, le renforcement et l'utilisation des capacités essentielles en Afrique, Addis-Abeba, 1996) fournissait à propos de la fuite des cerveaux les statistiques suivantes : entre 1960 et 1975, ce sont 27 000 hauts cadres africains qui ont quitté leur continent pour s'établir en Occident. Une décennie plus tard, ce chiffre atteignait 40 000 personnes (représentant par ailleurs le tiers des personnes les plus qualifiées). De 1985 à 1990, on estime à plus de 60 000 le nombre de médecins, d'ingénieurs et de professeurs d'université qui ont émigré de leurs pays. Et aujourd'hui, on pense que cet exode s'est accru, de sorte qu'ils seraient autour de 20 000 ceux qui, chaque année, vont vers l'Europe et l'Amérique à la recherche des meilleures opportunités de travail et d'épanouissement.

Pareilles statistiques, comme bien d'autres qui existent au sujet de la fuite des cerveaux, sont rarement dénuées de toute arrière-pensée normative. Sous les apparences d'une simple description sociologique, la notion de fuite des cerveaux cache en elle-même un jugement de valeur sur les devoirs des intellectuels à l'égard de leurs patries. On ne parlerait pas de « fuite » si l'on ne considérait pas tout intellectuel comme étant d'abord rattaché à un pays ou à un continent particulier et ayant à son égard une certaine « obligation patriotique » de contribuer, de toute la force de ses capacités intellectuelles, à son développement, à sa prospérité et à son rayonnement. La fuite des cerveaux s'apparenterait alors à une démission, voire à une trahison de la part de ceux-là même sur qui les États fondaient tous leurs espoirs de mise

en œuvre des idéaux nationalistes et panafricanistes qui avaient fleuri autour des années des indépendances. Les intellectuels qui ont choisi l'expatriation pourraient être accusés d'avoir voulu accorder la préférence à leurs intérêts particuliers, et de s'être désolidarisés de manière coupable du destin de leurs peuples, de leur continent, d'avoir manqué au devoir d'apporter une contribution, si modeste fût-elle, à la construction de leurs sociétés.

La question pourrait se poser d'emblée de savoir en quoi le patriotisme, le nationalisme et le panafricanisme peuvent être considérés comme des vertus, et si dans la même logique, la fuite des cerveaux pourrait être indexée comme un vice. Le deuxième ordre de préoccupation consisterait à apprécier l'impact réel de la fuite des cerveaux sur le développement et le progrès de l'Afrique. Il faudrait alors pouvoir montrer que seul l'attachement physique d'un cerveau à un lieu déterminé peut lui permettre d'œuvrer pour le compte de ce lieu et qu'il est impossible d'agir sur un lieu à partir d'un autre lieu.

Le patriotisme, le nationalisme et le panafricanisme sont-ils des vertus ?

L'opuscule du philosophe américain Alasdair MacIntyre, intitulé *Is Patriotism a Virtue?* (1984) pose de façon explicite la question du caractère vertueux du patriotisme. L'auteur y définit le patriotisme comme « une espèce de loyauté à une nation déterminée, que peuvent afficher ceux-là seuls qui possèdent en propre cette nationalité spécifique » (Berten 1998:288). MacIntyre complète sa définition en précisant : « le patriotisme se définit généralement et spécifiquement par une attention particulière portée non seulement à sa propre nation, mais également aux caractéristiques, mérites et exploits de sa propre nation » (280). La loyauté à une nation est ensuite comparée à la fidélité conjugale dans la mesure où le patriotisme requiert un « attachement particulier à une nation » (291), une obligation pour chacun de privilégier au maximum les intérêts de sa communauté.

On peut s'en tenir à cette définition du patriotisme pour comprendre le nationalisme qui, en fait, recouvre globalement la même signification, à quelques nuances près. Être nationaliste, c'est en effet montrer un certain attachement à sa nation, aussi bien sous forme de loyauté préférentielle que sous forme de dévouement pour son devenir. Le panafricanisme correspond à peu près à la même préoccupation : œuvrer pour la libération de la totalité de l'Afrique du joug de la domination étrangère et aussi pour son unité et son développement social, économique et politique. Les historiens nous font savoir que le terme « panafricanisme » apparaît aux Caraïbes vers la fin du XIXe siècle pour désigner un mouvement de révolte des Africains confrontés à l'esclavage en Amérique et à la domination coloniale des Européens en

Afrique. C'est dans ce contexte que se développe la première version du panafricanisme, qui inscrit, au rang de ses préoccupations les plus urgentes, non seulement l'émancipation des Africains mais aussi, pour certains de ses ténors tels que Edward Blyden et Marcus Garvey, le retour des Noirs vers la terre de leurs ancêtres. Comme l'écrit Nwayila Tshiyembe (2002),

> Le rêve panafricain, né sur le continent américain au tournant des XIXe et XXe siècles, se donnait pour mission de réhabiliter les civilisations africaines, de restaurer la dignité de l'homme noir et de prôner le retour à la « mère patrie »—celle des racines de la diaspora.

Le problème de la valeur morale du patriotisme, du nationalisme, et finalement aussi du panafricanisme réside dans le caractère circonscrit, limité et potentiellement exclusiviste de son champ d'intérêt. En ayant pour visée l'intérêt de l'Afrique et des Africains, on pourrait soupçonner le nationalisme et le panafricanisme d'aller à l'encontre de la morale, si du moins l'on prend l'universalité comme critère essentiel de celle-ci. L'action morale requiert, de ce point de vue cosmopolitique, un arrachement aux contingences et aux intérêts individuels ou communautaires plutôt qu'un attachement à un peuple déterminé et à une histoire particulière. Dans cette conception de la morale, « penser et agir moralement exige de l'agent moral qu'il s'abstraie de toute particularité sociale et de toute partialité » (Berten 1998:291). En privilégiant les intérêts de sa communauté, on pourrait dire que le patriote ou le nationaliste agit de façon intéressée, partiale et que son action est déterminée par des contingences empiriques qui lui ôtent toute moralité.

Certaines figures du nationalisme, comme d'ailleurs certains accents pris par le panafricanisme dans l'histoire, justifient dans une certaine mesure une telle défiance. On rappellera par exemple le nationalisme allemand des années trente, essentiellement xénophobe, qui poussa les autorités allemandes à intervenir dans les pays voisins en alléguant la protection des minorités allemandes prétendument menacées. On peut aussi songer à certaines formes d'afrocentrisme telles celle incarnée aux USA par Leonard Jeffries, Professeur au City University de New York. Ce dernier n'hésitait pas à promouvoir un antisémitisme ouvert (en accusant les Juifs d'avoir financé le commerce des esclaves noirs) et un racisme virulent (en défendant la thèse de la supériorité des Noirs sur les Blancs, traduite par la faible quantité de mélanine chez ces derniers). Le panafricanisme de Marcus Garvey illustre, lui aussi, les dérives possibles d'un attachement trop particulariste aux intérêts d'un peuple déterminé. Dans l'église qu'il avait lui-même fondée, l'African Orthodox Church, les anges étaient peints en noir et le diable en blanc. Il envisagea la création d'une Maison noire comme réplique de la Maison blanche, pour y faire siéger pendant quatre ans celui qui présiderait aux destinées des Noirs

des États-Unis. Et parmi ses principaux rêves, il y avait le retour de tous les Noirs en Afrique, projet pour lequel il fonda d'ailleurs une compagnie maritime dénommée *Black Star Line*. Garvey se présentait lui-même comme « le premier des fascistes », et préconisait les méthodes les plus violentes, y compris contre les Noirs qui n'approuvaient pas ses démarches et ses programmes.[2] On peut ajouter à ces illustrations des dérives du nationalisme l'exemple du kimbanguisme (mouvement religieux indépendant fondé par le catéchiste méthodiste du Congo belge Simon Kimbangu en 1921) pour le raisonnement selon lequel l'Afrique étant le berceau de l'humanité, le peuple africain doit être tenu pour un peuple élu de Dieu[3] et les Noirs des êtres supérieurs aux Blancs.

Ces exemples pourraient donc justifier que tout nationalisme soit regardé avec une certaine défiance, laquelle s'alimente, comme nous l'avons suggéré plus haut, dans les conceptions universalistes et cosmopolitistes de la morale, dont le kantisme constitue l'une des versions les plus élaborées. Chez Kant, en effet, l'action morale requiert de l'agent moral qu'il s'affranchisse de toute détermination empirique (spatio-temporelle) et passionnelle provenant des intérêts particuliers qu'il veut défendre. Or l'attachement à un pays ou à un continent rétrécit le cercle éthique de l'agent moral pour le ramener à la dimension des intérêts particuliers. Dans le sillage du kantisme, le philosophe australien Peter Singer englobe dans la même objection le racisme, le nationalisme, le patriotisme et même l'amitié. Les points importants de sa thèse sont résumés par Bernard Baertschi :

> Les *racistes* violent le principe d'égalité en donnant un plus grand poids aux intérêts des membres de leur propre race quand ils entrent en conflit avec les intérêts des membres d'une autre race.
>
> Les *nationalistes* violent le principe d'égalité en donnant un plus grand poids aux intérêts des membres de leur propre nation quand ils entrent en conflit avec les intérêts des membres d'une autre nation.
>
> Les *patriotes* violent le principe d'égalité en donnant un plus grand poids aux intérêts des membres de leur propre patrie quand ils entrent en conflit avec les intérêts des membres d'une autre patrie (Baertschi 2002:62).

À la lumière de ces critiques universalistes et libérales du nationalisme et du patriotisme, on pourrait affirmer qu'aucun individu n'a à considérer l'attachement à son peuple comme un devoir. Au contraire, pareil attachement serait une violation de l'interdit moral de privilégier les intérêts de son milieu. Par conséquent, le choix pour un intellectuel de s'installer sous d'autres cieux ne tombe pas dans les rets d'une critique morale de la fuite des cerveaux,

à moins que ce choix soit déterminé par la *seule* motivation de la maximisation de ses intérêts égocentriques. Comme disait Cicéron, citant Pacuvius : « Ma patrie, c'est là où je suis bien », ou plus récemment H. G. Wells : « Notre véritable nationalité est l'humanité » (Miller 2002:32). Non seulement l'intellectuel qui émigre exerce son droit à la mobilité géographique et sociale, mais encore il met ses compétences au service de l'humanité, plutôt que de les laisser s'émousser dans sa propre communauté. [4] C'est par ce désintérêt pour les préoccupations nationalistes et panafricanistes qu'il exprimerait son impartialité et son attachement à des valeurs universelles.

À cette conception libérale de la morale et du patriotisme, fondée sur le refus des préférences particularistes, s'oppose celle qui fait des particularités sociales, communautaires et culturelles, le cadre de référence qui donne sens et contenu à l'identité humaine et à sa moralité. Comme dit MacIntyre (Berten 1998:297), « d'une manière générale, ce n'est qu'au sein d'une communauté que les individus deviennent capables de moralité et sont soutenus dans leur moralité ». Il n'existe pas de morale universelle, détachée de tout enracinement communautaire. L'homme étant par nature, selon les mots d'Aristote, un « animal politique », celui qui se définit indépendamment d'une communauté peut être assimilé à un monstre ou à un être dégradé. Ce statut de sujet politique ou communautaire implique un devoir d'allégeance à la communauté à laquelle on appartient, la communauté qui précisément nous définit comme sujet politique, et même comme sujet tout court. La première des vertus pourrait donc être cette allégeance elle-même, toutes les autres vertus ne pouvant être accomplies qu'à l'intérieur du cercle éthique circonscrit par notre communauté.

> L'attachement à ma communauté, à la hiérarchie d'une structure de parenté définie, d'une communauté locale particulière et d'une communauté naturelle déterminée est, de ce point de vue, un prérequis à toute morale. Ainsi, le patriotisme et toutes les loyautés analogues ne sont plus seulement des vertus, mais passent au rang de vertus fondamentales (Berten 1998:298).

Bernard Baertschi parle du « charme secret du patriotisme », à travers une défense de ce qu'il appelle le « principe de proximité morale ». Selon ce principe, il n'est point illégitime d'avoir une certaine préférence pour ceux qui nous sont proches. Or, en général, c'est la communauté à laquelle on appartient qui crée les conditions premières de la proximité : d'abord factuelle, cette proximité crée les relations causales (d'interaction réciproque) et symboliques sur lesquelles peut aussi se fonder une proximité culturelle, religieuse, morale, etc. La proximité morale fonde le raisonnement moral selon lequel si tel individu est plus proche de moi que tel autre, ses intérêts importent plus pour moi que ceux du second.

Ce raisonnement s'expose sans doute à l'objection de paralogisme naturaliste. Car d'une déduction factuelle, on passe à une déduction normative du type "les intérêts de tel individu proche de moi *doivent* beaucoup plus compter pour moi que ceux des autres". Mais l'objection n'est valable que si l'on suppose que les normes éthiques ne doivent pas s'enraciner dans la réalité humaine elle-même. Or, comme tente de l'expliquer Bernard Baertschi il s'agit simplement du « fondement anthropologique de l'éthique normative, et sous la réserve qu'il en existe une justification éthique » (Berten 1998:69-70). Par notre appartenance à une communauté (réalité anthropologique), nous partageons la même histoire, mais aussi les valeurs de compassion, d'amitié, de solidarité, etc. C'est cette proximité qui circonscrit le cercle éthique à l'intérieur duquel nous avons des devoirs, même si ce cercle ne doit pas être considéré comme étant fermé à une perspective universelle. Faire de la communauté le cercle éthique prioritaire ne consiste pas à poser une communauté contre d'autres communautés, mais simplement à montrer d'un point de vue anthropologique qu'une perspective universaliste risque de se réduire à une pure abstraction. C'est toujours d'abord à l'égard des personnes appartenant à notre communauté que nous avons des devoirs moraux, à moins que nous ne préférions nous tourner vers la personne humaine en général, que, dans un certain sens et pour reprendre l'idée de Joseph de Maistre, nous ne rencontrons jamais.

> Ce n'est jamais envers des personnes en général, ni même envers des concitoyens abstraits que nous avons des responsabilités morales – sources de devoirs –, mais face à des individus, Pierre ou Paul, qui sont des personnes et des concitoyens, c'est-à-dire des êtres qui, dès l'abord, sont membres de diverses communautés avec lesquelles nous entretenons des rapports de proximité, larges ou serrées (Berten 1998:78-79).

Il n'y a là aucune contradiction avec les principes d'impartialité et de justice, qui, en fait, ne supposent pas *nécessairement* un cercle éthique élargi à l'humanité entière.

Afin d'éviter que les deux morales opposées—morale universaliste et morale communautariste—ne nous enferment dans un dilemme, il est heureusement possible de les concilier de façon féconde en disant que le patriotisme ou le nationalisme signifie simplement l'allégeance au projet de constitution d'une communauté historique, lequel projet se réalise par des actions et des événements déterminés. Être patriote, c'est partager les efforts grâce auxquels une nation ou une communauté se crée, se constitue et se réalise au fil de l'histoire. Et dans la mesure où seul *le projet* justifie l'allégeance patriotique, et pas nécessairement la simple affinité raciale ou ethnique, il est tout aussi patriotique de s'opposer à certaines formes que

peut prendre la réalisation de ce projet et qui sont susceptibles d'en dévier la trajectoire idéale. Que cette allégeance soit tournée électivement vers la promotion d'une communauté particulière et non de l'humanité en général ne lui enlève pas son importance et même sa valeur morale. L'humanité est en réalité organisée en communautés particulières appelées chacune à assurer sa survie en tant que communauté. Cette survie dépend de l'allégeance et du dévouement de chaque individu qui, par sa contribution, réalise sa propre survie, celle de sa communauté et celle de l'humanité en tant qu'ensemble de communautés.

Donc, bien qu'il y ait tout lieu de craindre que le patriotisme, le nationalisme et le panafricanisme soient immoraux, en ce que la maxime qui les détermine est fondée sur des réalités particulières, voire sur des intérêts partisans, ces réalités et ces intérêts ne sont pas nécessairement contraires à la promotion de l'humanité qui ne se présente pas autrement que comme une « communauté de communautés ».

La « fuite » des cerveaux et le devoir de contribuer à la construction de l'Afrique

Rousseau disait des cosmopolites qu'ils « se vantent d'aimer tout le monde pour avoir le droit de n'aimer personne » (Baertschi 2002:75). Et avant Rousseau, Platon dans *Le Criton* faisait voir à travers l'acceptation par Socrate de la sentence injuste du tribunal d'Athènes qui le condamnait à boire la ciguë combien était important l'attachement d'une personne à sa patrie. À son ami Criton qui lui offrait l'opportunité de s'évader pour échapper à cette mort injuste, Socrate répondit par une prosopopée des lois :

> N'est-ce pas à nous que tu dois la vie et n'est-ce pas sous nos auspices que ton père a épousé ta mère et t'a engendré ? Parle donc : as-tu quelque chose à redire à celles d'entre nous qui règlent les mariages ? Les trouves-tu mauvaises ? [...] Et à celles qui président à l'élevage de l'enfant et à son éducation, éducation que tu as reçue comme les autres ? Avaient-elles tort celles de nous qui en sont chargées, de prescrire à ton père de t'instruire dans la musique et la gymnastique ? [...] Après que tu es né, que tu as été élevé, que tu as été instruit, oserais-tu soutenir d'abord que tu n'es pas notre enfant et notre esclave, toi et tes ascendants ? [...] Qu'est-ce donc que ta sagesse, si tu ne sais pas que la patrie est plus précieuse, plus respectable, plus sacrée qu'une mère, qu'un père et que tous les ancêtres, et qu'elle tient un plus haut rang chez les dieux et chez les hommes sensés... ? (*Le Criton* 50c-51b).

L'évasion de Socrate, selon cette prosopopée, aurait paru comme un acte d'ingratitude sacrilège : « La patrie est plus précieuse, plus respectable, plus

sacrée qu'une mère, qu'un père... ». La cité fournit à chacun tout ce qu'il y a de plus important pour une vie humaine accomplie : la vie et l'éducation. Elle est donc en droit d'attendre en retour une allégeance à ses institutions, à la fois sous la forme d'une obéissance inconditionnelle à ses lois et d'une contribution à l'amélioration de celles qui sont défectueuses. La prosopopée admet en effet la possibilité d'un changement des règles considérées comme mauvaises, afin que, par ces améliorations, les lois s'accordent toujours avec l'idéal de bien qu'elles sont censées traduire. Point n'est besoin, pour ce faire, de prendre le chemin de la révolution, moins encore de l'exil : « Il faut faire ce qu'ordonnent l'État et la patrie, sinon la faire changer d'idée par des moyens qu'autorise la loi » (*Le Criton* 51b).

Sur le modèle de la prosopopée des lois, l'intellectuel émigré pourrait entendre la complainte suivante :

Nous avons consenti pour toi d'énormes sacrifices en construisant des écoles et des universités pour assurer ta formation et des hôpitaux pour veiller sur ta santé. Comment peux-tu, une fois ta formation achevée, quitter ta patrie sans te soucier de ce que deviendront toutes ces institutions qui t'ont tout donné ? Serais-tu heureux d'apprendre que les écoles, les hôpitaux, les usines ont disparu faute de personnes qualifiées pour les faire fonctionner ? Accepteras-tu que ton pays dépérisse parce que ceux qui étaient censés le développer ont choisi d'assurer leur bien-être particulier ailleurs ?

Il y aurait dans le subconscient de chaque intellectuel une sorte de « démon » prêt à lui adresser de telles remontrances au cas où il voudrait se dérober de l'obligation de contribuer à l'édification de l'Afrique. Ce démon aurait pour mission « sacrée » de rappeler en quelque sorte l'éthique patriotique contraire à l'attitude des *free riders* enclins à maximiser leurs intérêts par la recherche d'emplois fortement lucratifs sous d'autres cieux (Van Parijs 1993:309-342). Il serait difficile pour l'intellectuel dont les prouesses sont reconnues et vantées dans un pays différent du sien que la gratification qu'il pourrait légitimement tirer de cette reconnaissance ne soit pas au moins tempérée par la frustration de ne pas pouvoir faire bénéficier directement cette ingéniosité à sa propre communauté. De l'étranger où il excelle, il ne peut être indifférent à l'histoire de sa communauté, à ses succès qui le comblent de fierté, mais aussi à ses échecs qui le remplissent de honte et de regret. C'est pourquoi l'on peut raisonnablement soutenir, avec David Miller, que « la communauté nationale historique est une communauté d'obligation. Parce que nos prédécesseurs ont travaillé dur et versé leur sang pour construire et défendre la nation, nous qui y sommes nés, héritons l'obligation de continuer leur travail, dont nous nous déchargeons en partie sur nos contemporains et en partie sur nos descendants » (2002:36). Les nations seraient vouées à la

disparition si leurs membres ne faisaient pas de cette tâche de participer à leur construction une véritable obligation morale et patriotique. Il faudrait, pour ceux qui partent, que les raisons de partir ne soient pas antipatriotiques et que le geste même de partir, le geste de se détacher, puisse être déterminé et justifié en même temps par un certain attachement à sa patrie.

Chez MacIntyre qui attache comme on l'a vu beaucoup de prix à l'allégeance d'un individu à sa communauté, cette allégeance est conditionnelle : on ne peut en effet attendre des individus l'allégeance à une communauté politique dans laquelle la notion de bien commun n'a aucune signification et qui s'apparente à un casino où chaque joueur s'efforce de maximiser son gain.

> Une communauté nationale qui renierait systématiquement sa propre histoire véritable, une communauté nationale dans laquelle les liens tissés par l'histoire ne seraient pas les liens proprement fédérateurs de la communauté (ceux-ci ayant par exemple été remplacés par des liens d'intérêt mutuel), serait une communauté à l'égard de laquelle le déploiement d'une attitude patriotique s'assimilerait, à tout point de vue, à une attitude irrationnelle. (Berten 1998:305)

L'attachement à une patrie n'est raisonnable, du point de vue suggéré ici par MacIntyre, que si cette patrie développe le sens de l'appartenance commune, à travers des politiques et des institutions dont le fonctionnement exprime sans ambiguïté l'idéal de solidarité et de bien commun.

Or, les États africains, depuis les indépendances jusqu'à nos jours, ont rarement présenté le visage de véritables communautés politiques, dans le sens que les anciens donnaient à cette notion de communauté. Chacun de ces États peut certes faire prévaloir une certaine unité symbolisée par un nom (le Cameroun, le Tchad, le Gabon, par exemple), un drapeau, un territoire (aux contours plus ou moins bien définis dans certains cas), un pouvoir (plus ou moins stabilisé), etc., mais il ne s'agit dans la plupart de cas que d'une unité formelle, artificielle, qui est au fond minée par des clivages identitaires entretenus par des entrepreneurs politiques en mal de conquête ou de conservation du pouvoir. L'histoire de ces sociétés se tisse souvent autour de la problématique du pouvoir à conserver ou à conquérir, ce qui les réduit à des espaces d'affrontements feutrés ou ouverts. Chaque acteur s'efforce, au mieux de son ingéniosité, à tirer son épingle du jeu, en tâchant soit d'obtenir le maximum d'avantages possibles, soit de résister, simplement, au risque permanent de disparition.

Les sociétés africaines qui sont concernées par la fuite des cerveaux, *en tant que problème,* par rapport à leur besoin de l'expertise des intellectuels sont en général celles qui, dès la période des indépendances, ont adopté à l'égard de la classe des intellectuels trois types d'attitudes :

1. l'intimidation, pour ceux qui, déployant leur sens de la lucidité critique, ont tenté de mettre à nu les défaillances, les ruses, la mauvaise foi, le cynisme et les fuites en avant des détenteurs du pouvoir. C'est ce qui explique le fait qu'un nombre important d'intellectuels émigrés soient des exilés politiques.

2. La stérilisation du génie intellectuel par son asservissement à l'idéologie et aux pratiques sordides des régimes politique en place.

3. La précarisation et la clochardisation des intellectuels, comme au Cameroun où, en moyenne, les salaires des agents de l'armée, de la police, de la gendarmerie, de la justice et de tout ce qui constitue ce que Louis Althusser a appelé « appareils répressifs d'État », de même que ceux des journalistes des médias d'État (« appareils idéologiques d'État ») ont pu atteindre autour des années 1994 le double, voire le triple des salaires des médecins, des chercheurs, d'enseignants d'universités, etc.

La fuite des cerveaux, dans ces conditions, peut être considérée comme la réponse la plus appropriée, la plus vertueuse, à l'obligation pour chaque intellectuel de valoriser les dons qu'il possède. Et on devrait pouvoir y voir une forme de patriotisme qui n'est plus allégeance directe et physique à sa communauté, mais à l'humanité à travers une autre communauté qui rend possible la valorisation du génie intellectuel. Quand le principe régulateur de l'existence dans une société se réduit au *struggle for life,* il appartient à chacun de trouver les meilleures stratégies de sa survie. Et quand, parallèlement à l'impossibilité d'assurer cette survie à l'intérieur, se profile l'opportunité de le faire ailleurs, il est rationnel, voire raisonnable, de recourir à cette opportunité.

On pourrait voir dans ce départ une certaine lâcheté, l'attitude la plus vertueuse devant consister à affronter le danger de l'intérieur.[5] Fallait-il par exemple qu'Aristote quittât Athènes pour éviter, selon sa propre justification, qu'un autre crime ne soit commis contre la philosophie, après celui qui avait été perpétré contre Socrate ? En acceptant de mourir suite à une condamnation et à un procès injustes, Socrate disait que les raisons de mourir valent parfois mieux que les raisons de vivre. Mais pour ce qui concerne les cerveaux, un cerveau vivant, même loin du lieu où on souhaite qu'il se trouve, vaut toujours mieux qu'un cerveau mort dans son propre terroir.

Cette allégeance à l'humanité à travers d'autres communautés constitue, dans bien des cas heureusement, un autre moyen efficace pour les intellectuels de contribuer au développement de leur propre communauté. Il est en effet loisible de voir, à travers de nombreux exemples, que la mise en valeur de compétences des intellectuels africains, sous d'autres cieux, a énormément contribué à l'essor de l'Afrique elle-même, sur le triple plan culturel, économique et politique. Sur le plan culturel, les grands idéaux du

panafricanisme et de l'indépendance doivent leur impulsion aux Africains de la diaspora. C'est bien aux Caraïbes, aux États-Unis et au Brésil que le panafricanisme a vu le jour, bien avant que ne s'y associent, depuis l'Afrique, des intellectuels et hommes politiques comme Kwame Nkrumah, Kenneth Kaunda, Julius Nyerere, Jomo Kenyatta, Haïlé sélassié, Namdi Azikiwe, Peter Abrahams, etc. Confrontés à la discrimination et au mépris, ces Africains ont pu développer un sens très aigu de leur appartenance à une culture déterminée, et initier des démarches pour la reconnaissance et la mise en valeur de cette culture. Le combat pour l'abolition de l'esclavage, auquel nombre d'entre eux étaient plus directement confrontés, ne pouvait pas ne pas s'accompagner d'un combat pour la libération de l'Afrique. On peut ici évoquer la conférence panafricaine organisée à Londres en 1900, sous la houlette du Trinidadien Henry Sylvester Williams et le Haïtien Benito Sylvain, à partir d'une organisation, la *pan-african association,* qu'ils avaient mise sur pied dès 1897. On peut ajouter l'action de Olaudah Equiano (Gustavo Vassa), esclave affranchi installé en Grande Bretagne, qui, au XVIIIe siècle, avait parcouru tout le Royaume-Uni pour mener une campagne contre l'esclavage et plaider pour son abolition. Le congrès panafricain des militants africains, organisé à Manchester en 1941, joua un rôle historique de premier plan dans le processus de la décolonisation. C'est sous la houlette d'un autre Trinidadien, George Padmore, que s'organisa également à Manchester le 5e congrès panafricain, lequel adopta un manifeste formulant l'engagement suivant : « Nous sommes résolus à être libres... Peuples colonisés et assujettis du monde, unissez-vous. » On pensera aussi au rôle des intellectuels africains présents en France, comme Léopold Sédar Senghor, Alioune Diop, autour des revues comme *Présence africaine*, sans compter le mouvement de la Négritude qui a joué (et joue encore) un rôle ô combien important dans la formation des jeunes Africains.

Sur le plan scientifique, il y a, comme l'écrivent Anne-Marie Gaillard et Jacques Gaillard, des pays « qui finissent par gagner » (2002) dans cet exode des cerveaux. Certaines études ont certes pu établir le coût du manque à gagner dans les pays dont une bonne proportion des plus qualifiés s'expatrie (Sethi 2000:39). Mais le *brain drain* peut se transformer en *brain gain* si ceux qui partent veulent contribuer au développement scientifique de leurs terroirs. On en a quelques exemples en Asie, Afrique et Amérique latine, où des pôles de collaboration scientifique et des réseaux de connexion avec les expatriés ont été mis en place. [6] «Ces réseaux cherchent d'avantage à canaliser la science et la technologie plutôt que les hommes et cherchent également à initier des coopérations avec les pays développés accueillant leurs élites »(Gaillard 2002).

L'apport économique de la diaspora africaine n'est pas moins remarquable. Le président ougandais, Yuweri Museveni n'hésite pas à considérer les Ougandais de l'extérieur comme étant « l'exportation la plus importante du pays ». Leur apport se chiffre à 400 millions de dollars par an, montant largement supérieur à ce que rapporte le café qui est pourtant le premier produit agricole du pays. On pourrait trouver des chiffres similaires dans d'autres pays, comme par exemple au Ghana, où l'apport des nationaux installés à l'étranger se situe entre 350 et 450 millions de dollars par an. Des travaux sur la contribution des travailleurs maliens et sénégalais résidents en France révèlent la même importance de la diaspora. Parlant du cas des Maliens, Libercier et Hartmut (1996) écrivent :

> Sur une dizaine d'années, ils ont financé 146 projets représentant un budget total de 19,4 millions de francs français, dont 16,6 millions de francs étaient financés sur leurs économies, les 2,8 millions restants ayant été offerts par des ONG avec l'aide des donateurs internationaux. C'est ainsi que la réalisation de 64 % de l'infrastructure des villages de la région de Kayes est attribuée aux travailleurs migrants.

L'apport économique des Africains de la diaspora se conjugue donc à leur apport culturel et scientifique pour montrer que s'il y a eu « fuite » des cerveaux, cette fuite est bien loin d'avoir causé l'échec—si échec il y a eu — des grands idéaux du nationalisme et du panafricanisme. Au contraire, loin que la « fuite » ait (toujours) été dommageable pour l'Afrique, elle a contribué à l'aider à penser la question de son identité, à édifier ce qu'elle a de meilleur, comme aussi peut-être ce qu'elle a de pire. Si la contribution des Africains de la diaspora au développement du continent (qui, d'après certaines données, est supérieure à l'aide internationale au développement) n'a pas réussi à sortir l'Afrique de sa marginalité et de sa misère de plus en plus grave, il faut maintenant s'interroger sur les facteurs qui entretiennent cette déchéance. Et peut-être la présence de « cerveaux » africains dans ces lieux où se joue une bonne partie du sort de l'Afrique peut-elle aider à éviter que lui soient toujours réservés les mauvais lots.

Conclusion

Les deux préoccupations qui auront retenu notre attention dans cette réflexion nous conduisent à penser que la notion de fuite des cerveaux doit être délestée de la charge culpabilisante qui l'a toujours accompagnée. Si on la considère comme l'expression d'un manquement à l'obligation patriotique de se dévouer pour sa communauté, il faudrait encore que le patriotisme soit considéré d'emblée comme une vertu. Or, cette position ne va pas sans dire. Et même quand on ne partage pas absolument l'approche cosmopolite de la question

(selon laquelle le particularisme qui caractérise essentiellement l'attachement patriotique est contraire à la morale), on doit pouvoir admettre que ce qui donne sens au patriotisme, ce n'est pas la pure fidélité à une communauté, mais l'allégeance à un projet de constitution de bien commun. Il faut donc d'abord présupposer l'existence de pareil projet pour que le choix de l'exode soit considéré comme une « fuite », une *dérobade* par rapport à l'obligation d'apporter sa contribution au développement de ce projet. Dans le contexte africain, il y a eu des projets visant la promotion de l'Afrique en tant que communauté unique de destin. Et si ces projets n'ont pas été mis en œuvre, comme ils avaient été pensés au départ, ce n'est pas aux intellectuels émigrés qu'on pourrait en imputer la responsabilité. Car en fin de compte, ce n'est pas au niveau de l'exode *géographique* des cerveaux qu'il faudrait situer la « fuite », comme on le fait toujours, mais au niveau d'une évasion vers des préoccupations n'ayant aucun rapport avec ce dont l'Afrique a besoin pour se libérer et se développer. Et dans ce cas, la notion pourrait pertinemment s'appliquer à la débauche des cerveaux qu'on observe chez ceux qui restent et qui préfèrent s'aliéner aux régimes tyranniques qui leur garantissent leurs intérêts égoïstes plutôt que de se mettre au service de leur peuple. En somme, la fuite des cerveaux ne se trouve pas toujours là où on croit la voir.

Notes

1. Garvey taxait par exemple Dubois d'« ennemi déclaré de la race noire » et de « mulâtre paresseux et vendu ». Cf. Decraene,Ph., 1959, Le panafricanisme, n° 847 de la collection « Que sais-je », Paris: PUF, p. 18.
2. On trouve un schéma quasi identique dans l'Église hollandaise réformée, en Afrique du Sud de la période de l'Apartheid, qui, fournissant les fondements religieux du système de ségrégation raciale, affirmait que les Afrikaners étaient le peuple élu de Dieu et les Noirs une espèce subordonnée. Cf. Mandela, N., 1995, Un long chemin vers la liberté, Fayard, p. 138.
3. De nombreuses études ont en effet montré que, pour certains pays au moins, le départ des intellectuels est dû en partie à l'impossibilité pour ces pays de les absorber dans leur marché de l'emploi.
4. C'est l'une des objections contenues dans le commentaire critique de ce texte par Nana Akua Anyidoho de la Northwestern University aux USA. Je la remercie pour la pertinence de ce commentaire qui a attiré mon attention sur certaines ambiguïtés de mes arguments.
5. Voir l'étude assez détaillée consacrée aux dispositifs mis en place par les Africains de la diaspora pour contribuer au développement de la science dans leurs pays d'origine par Mercy Brown, « Using Intellectual Diaspora to Reverse the Brain Drain », ECA/IDRC/IOM (éds.), Brain Drain and Capacity Building in Africa, ECA/IDRC/IOM, 2000, pp. 92-106.

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Book Reviews

Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War and the Roots of Terror*, New York: Pantheon Books; Dakar: CODESRIA, 2004, xii+304pp, US$24 (ISBN 0-375-42285-4).

Godwin R. Murunga*

At a recent dinner for White House correspondents, George W. Bush joked that many people criticised his record in handling the economy, but few seemed to notice what his administration had done for the book publishing industry. Bush was referring to the long and still growing list of bestsellers in the US that focus on his dubious war on terrorism and the imbroglio in Iraq.

The bestseller list in the US has been dominated by books on the war on terrorism, especially on the preventive (not pre-emptive) war in Iraq. Most of the books discuss Bush's reasons for attacking Iraq. Some contrast this with his rather lethargic interest in terrorism prior to the September 11 attacks, or the inside scoop of how the Iraq war was orchestrated and executed. Most are authored by Americans for American audiences and are critical of Bush's war.[1] But they all maintain a questionable baseline assumption of America as a 'relatively benign power' that intervenes in the rest of the world only for the better of world safety, peace and freedom.[2]

It is therefore refreshing to have Mahmood Mamdani's study of American foreign policy and the origins of terror. *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim* offers the perspective of a keen African observer and analyst of American foreign policy. The author locates the war on terror historically and demonstrates an awareness of the connection between American foreign policy and terrorism in ways that American authors loath rendering. The book is divided into five chapters with an introduction that conceptualises violence and explains the link between genocide and terrorism. Mamdani sets out to explain 'political events, above all September 11, in the light of political encounters—historically shaped—rather than as the outcome of stubborn

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cultural legacies' (11). He faults US political commentary of September 11, showing how it reflects 'a great power struck by amnesia', a country that acknowledged the epochal significance of the attack but was eager always to take 'it out of the historical and political context' (15).

Chapter one critiques Culture Talk. The second focuses on the Cold War. It shows how the financing of proxy wars that dominated the post-Vietnam era derived valuable lessons from the late-Cold War era of the 1970s. Chapter three uses Afghanistan to illustrate how the lessons that the US learned from Indochina, South Africa and Central America were operationalised by US-sponsored Islamic Jihad movements to fight the Soviet Union, the 'evil empire' as the Reagan Administration put it (13). Chapter four examines the change from covert and proxy operations to an open embrace of political terror as the US attacked Iraq in the Gulf War. Chapter five challenges the US to go beyond its belief in collective punishment, a tendency that it deploys with arrogance and impunity. Mamdani convincingly shows that it is from the oppressive acts of collective punishment and collateral damage that potential 'terrorists' are created.

Mamdani's narrative follows an important shift in US foreign policy whose central commitment in the Cold War era was to fight and defeat the 'evil empire' 'by all means necessary'. The first casualty of this policy was nationalism in the third world. The Reagan administration viewed with unjustified trepidation the ascendance of nationalist leaders in the third world and wrongly concluded that most of their movements were Soviet proxies. The US therefore embraced allies like the Unita in Angola, Renamo in Mozambique, the contras in Nicaragua and Mujahideen in Afghanistan to fight back. Mamdani poses the central problematic thus: 'What particular circumstances made it possible for terrorism to be transformed from an ideological tendency into a political force?' (14). The answer, he argues, was the Cold War; terrorism was 'crafted from local raw material' but its 'political tendencies crystallized as strategies to win the Cold War' (14). Movements like Unita are the foremost expressions of terrorism, only that this was our [US] terror.

Thus, Mamdani draws a conceptual distinction between state terror and non-state terror and how political Islam has grown by being politicised by state-approved or sponsored forces. The author shows how from a particular brand of political Islam, the Reagan administration fomented terrorist groups to fight the so-called evil of Soviet Communism in Afghanistan. It is from the remnants of these groups that al-Qaeda was born in 1989 in the town of Khost in Afghanistan. Mamdani further observed that he knows of

no-one who follows Osama bin Laden as a religious or spiritual leader; most follow him as a politician. In this way, Mamdani dismisses as clearly misconceived analyses and analysts—many of whom are influential White House advisors and media commentators—of terrorism who associate its occurrence to some essence intrinsic in Arab culture or Islam.

This critique of essentialism forms the content of chapter one. Here Mamdani takes a critical look at Culture Talk; that brand of thinking prevalent in the West that interprets terrorism as a product of a people's culture. This thinking proceeds by deploying binaries of tradition and modernity and posing them as antithetical to each other. It views the big problem with non-Western societies to be their insidious entrapment in a statist past that determines their perception of and response to modernity brought about courtesy of westernisation. With respect to US foreign policy interests in the post-Cold War era, the most visible proponent of this view is Samuel Huntington, author of the notoriously embarrassing text entitled *The Clash of Civilization*.[3] In fact, in this text, Huntington was merely popularising an idea of clash of civilisations first articulated by Bernard Lewis in his article 'The Roots of Muslim Rage' first published in *The Atlantic* of September 1990.

In the piece, Lewis makes spurious connection between a certain essence in Muslim cultures and its modern rebellious attitudes. For him, the essence derives from Islam's ancient greatness and the rebellious attitude has something to do with the loss of this greatness. Most Muslims, he avers, blame this loss on the ascendancy and domination of the West in the Muslim house. He argues that western influence has created emancipated women and rebellious children, something that is 'too much' for the Muslim 'to endure'. For Lewis, 'the outbreak of rage against alien, infidel, and incomprehensible forces that had subverted his [Muslim] dominance, disrupted his society, and finally violated the sanctuary of his home' was inevitable.[4] But as Mamdani shows, this article is based on unsustainable generalisations about Islam and Muslim minds that the author repeated in a book whose page proofs were ready when September 11 happened.

The book entitled *What Went Wrong?* is a tome for the right-wing in the US. Of its limited accomplishments, the book has re-invented Lewis's political credentials, bringing him out of retirement and turning him into a key political advisor of the Bush/Cheney war on terror. Lewis is a leading exponent of the view that 'Islam has caused the many ills of Muslim societies'.[5] He is often quoted by Cheney to justify US actions in Iraq. This makes him an apt point of departure for Mamdani's critique of Culture Talk because this Talk is central to US thinking and execution of the war on terror.

For Mamdani, Culture Talk sees non-western cultures in two ways: there are those whose cultures are seen as lagging behind and unable to catch up with modernity (like Africans), and those categorised as resistant and unwilling to catch up (like the Arabs). Lewis's contribution resides in his acknowledgement of diverse trends in Islam, some fundamentalist and others not. He perceives the former as bad while the latter are good. Culture Talk sees good Muslims as 'modern, secular, and westernized' while bad Muslims 'are doctrinal, antimodern, and virulent' (24). Culture Talk concludes that 'good' Muslims need to be rescued from 'bad' Muslims. As Mamdani shows, this reading of Islam is America-centric, and Lewis leaves no doubt of this in his Western vantage point through which he perceives Islam.

Though Mamdani does an excellent job in critiquing Lewis, it is the late Edward Said who thoroughly demolished Lewis's explanation of *What Went Wrong?* and his pretensions to understanding Islam. In a damaging review published in *Harper's Magazine* in July 2002, Said questioned Lewis's credentials as an analyst of Islam beyond Turkey where he undertook his initial research. Harsh judgment? Perhaps. But, like Mamdani, Said showed that Lewis treated Islam as some monolith dominated by a specific fundamentalist tradition characterised by an absence of freedom and an aversion to secularism. Said is scornful of Lewis's recommendation that 'We' in the West can help the good Muslims win their own war against the bad Muslims.[6] But as Mamdani shows, this recommendation accounts for Lewis's attractiveness to the Bush/Cheney axis.

Said, in contrast, poses Islam as a 'series of interpretations that are so divergent' with 'many histories, many peoples, many languages, traditions, schools of interpretation, proliferating developments, disputations, cultures, and countries'.[7] Mamdani pursues this line of argument in chapter one, delving into the history of the different tendencies within Islam. Wondering whether one can in fact speak of Judeo-Christian civilisation over two millennia as Lewis does for Islam, Mamdani proceeds to 'distinguish between fundamentalism as a religious identity and political identities that use a religious idiom, such as political Christianity and political Islam'. These two 'are political identities formed through direct engagement with modern forms of power' (36). It is politicised Islam, not Islam itself, that explains the origins of terror. Mamdani pursues this argument with focus and admirable clarity.

The movements that have instigated political terror are political rather than religious movements. Mamdani refers to them as political Islam, that is, political movements that speak the language of religion. Dismissing the whole notion of Islamic fundamentalism, Mamdani carefully distinguishes between

so-called fundamentalism as a religious identity and a political identity (37). Delving into the history of political Christianity and political Islam, he draws several distinctions between them, especially the fact that Islam was unable to develop a religious hierarchy that paralleled the hierarchy of the state. Thus, while Christian fundamentalism in the US grew in a struggle to capture or control state power, such a phenomenon did not take place in the Islamic world except in Iran (47). One can speak of Christian fundamentalism but for the case of Islam, Mamdani questions the unabashed equation of extremist religious tendencies with political terrorism. On the contrary, he suggests that political Islam grew out of healthy debates within Islam among intellectuals like Mohamed Iqbal, Mohamed Ali Jinnah, Abdul A'al Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb. For him, our scholarly energy should focus on how state-centred, as opposed to society-centred, political Islam leaped 'from the word to the deed, thereby moving from the intellectual fringe to the mainstream of politics in large parts of the Islamic world' (61). His answer is that 'terrorism is born of a political encounter', and in the case of contemporary terrorism, one must search for its origin in the Cold War encounters.

To demonstrate that terrorism is born of a political encounter, Mamdani locates its history in the late Cold War. Chapters two to four trace the origins of political terror in Cold War US machinations, showing the various lessons the US learned in its encounter in Vietnam and Laos and how these were tested in Congo (later Zaire and now the Democratic Republic of Congo), Angola, and Mozambique before being exported full-blown through Nicaragua to Afghanistan. US military blunders in Vietnam and the successful execution of covert war in Laos are two critical starting points. In Vietnam, the US learned that 'an active press and vigilant congressional oversight were significant obstacles to military effectiveness' (99). When the US misinterpreted the ascending nationalism in the Congo (Zaire), Angola and Mozambique as stooges of the Soviet Union in the 1960s and 1970s, it responded through covert support to anti-nationalist movements. In Congo, mercenaries were hired to eliminate Patrice Lumumba, defeat Congolese nationalism and install the brutal dictator Joseph Mobutu. In Angola, the US supported the Front for the National Liberation of Angola and the Union for the Total Independence of Angola, while in Mozambique, the CIA used apartheid South Africa to sponsor Renamo, Africa's first terrorist movement. The crescendo was the policy of 'constructive engagement' with the apartheid regime in South Africa which actively sponsored Renamo's terror that was brutally unleashed against civilians.

Under Ronald Reagan, US policy shifted from 'containment' of communism to 'rollback', but only after Renamo had tested several of the terror inducing strategies the CIA preferred. 'The hallmark of terror was that it

targeted civilian life: blowing up infrastructure ... destroying health and educational centers, mining paths and fields, kidnapping civilian—particularly children—to press-gang them into recruits' (91). Thus, what the US has come to term '"collateral damage" was not an unfortunate by-product of the war; it was the very point of terrorism' (91). In Central America, the CIA and Pentagon christened their forms of terrorism as Low Intensity Conflict (LIC) and applied it in support of the contras in Nicaragua. The idea of these terrorist actions shares alarmingly familiar goals with what has become the hallmark of modern conflicts. First, they involved 'embracing right-wing dictators while targeting left-wing regimes' (100). Such embrace of dictators reached absurd levels in May 1983 and 1985 when Reagan described the contras and mujahideen as 'freedom fighters' and elevated them to 'moral equivalents of our founding fathers' (102-3 and 119). Second, the point of LIC was to erode 'popular confidence in government' and 'to bleed [and discredit] the government' (117). In Nicaragua, US-backed terror turned the election 'into a referendum on terror'.

> ... the idea was that if the right dose of terror could be delivered with effectiveness and combined with impunity, it would only be a matter of time before the population was convinced that the only way to end terror was to grant terrorists their political objective: power (117-18).

But how does this explain the transformation of political Islam from an intellectual movement on the fringe to the mainstream of politics? The stage for this transformation was Afghanistan where the US found 'an opportunity to hand the Soviet Union its own Vietnam'. Working through an alliance between the CIA and Pakistani's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), the US created a band of right-wing Islamists variously recruited from Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Indonesia, the US and Britain to fight the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. In what became the Afghan jihad, the US objective was to 'recruit the most radically anti-communist Islamists to counter Soviet forces' and supply mujahideen with maximum firepower (126). Using these forces, the US launched its version of jihad against the communists. Its most notable leader in the mid-1980s was Shiekh Abdullah Azzam, Osama bin Laden's teacher. Azzam professed a love for martyrdom and stated that the objective for the 'holy war' was 'Jihad and the rifle alone: no negotiators, no conferences, no dialogues'. Mamdani's argument is that the CIA created the Afghan jihad 'in service of a contemporary political objective'. Through Prince Turki al-Faisal, the head of Saudi intelligence, they recruited Osama bin Laden to lead the jihad. But when the objective of the jihad was over, the spirit of the movement, full with its terrorist outfit and training, did not die. Rather, in 1989, at a meeting in Khost in Afghanistan, bin Laden founded al-Qaeda (the

base) to 'wage a jihad beyond the borders of Afghanistan' (133), thus creating a group independent of the US jihad which soon acquired transnational spread.

If the training of Afghan jihadists was open to all radicals from around the world, the unifying ideology was to achieve extreme hatred of communists. This objective was couched in the broader language of inculcating a sense of potential Islamic revolution in Muslim majority countries. The targets for this training were the madrassas. The training was meant to create 'Islamic guerillas' sufficiently aware of their religious 'duty' and effectively trained to administer terror. It is estimated that 'thirty-five thousands Muslim radicals from forty-three Islamic countries fought for the mujahideen between 1982 and 1992' (137). Is it surprising that 'key leaders of every major terrorist attack ... inevitably turned out to have been veterans of the Afghan war'? (139). What is notable is that though several mujahideen groups waged this US-sponsored private war, effective organisational homogeneity was never attained throughout the Afghan jihad. The CIA pandered to the fissures within Afghan society to achieve its narrow objectives and these fissures continue to haunt Afghanistan to date.

Without official congressional approval and sponsorship of the war, the Afghan jihad was financed through the sale of drugs. The CIA encouraged the growth, production and sale of opium and heroin. The people Reagan had described as the moral equivalent of US founding fathers did the drug dealing as the CIA looked the other way. Most of the drug lords were also leaders of the 'jihad' and were easily chosen because they were opposed to Soviet-imposed leadership in Afghanistan prior to the jihad. The CIA was willing to overlook their record in relation to drugs for the sake of the 'jihad'. Littered with several disparate and often competing groups and with a war fed by an illicit drug trade, Mamdani shows that the withdrawal of the Soviets heralded a new era in Afghanistan, one in which minds had been poisoned and where conditions for civil war were rife. There were those foreign fighters who were not only rootless in Afghanistan but also lacked any future meaningful prospects outside. These rootless people fed an international network of fighters that formed a good recruitment ground for al-Qaeda. As Afghanistan degenerated into civil war which the Taliban won, it metamorphosed into a 'harshly patriarchal rule' targeting women and children. A major consequence of the CIA-backed Afghan jihad was that it created a long lasting war in Afghanistan and created a network of groups that shared 'terror tactics', believed in the 'holy war as a political ideology', and engaged in 'transnational recruitment of fighters' (163). September 11 witnessed the effects of the jihad.

Throughout its Cold War engagements, the US has trampled on almost every nationalist aspiration of most third world countries perceived not to toe the line as regards US preferences. Mamdani interprets the US transition from proxy war to open aggression in this context in chapter four. In this chapter, Mamdani, as Donald Rumsfeld suggested, connects the valuable dots. First, the shift to open aggression involved the deployment of a multilateral proxy in the form of the UN during the Gulf War. Here, the US used the UN to destroy the very fabric of Iraqi society and launch 'a silent war against Iraq's children', many of whom suffered the brunt of UN-imposed economic sanctions and persistent bombing after the end of the Gulf War. Second, there was a shift in US perceptions of Iraqi and Saddam Hussein from a regime it used to fight Iran to one it loved to bomb and demolish, from a country that was used to gas the Iraq Kurds in 1987 to one it condemned for gassing the same Kurds in 1988, from a country whose forces it trained to use chemical and biological agents in the 1960s to one it inspected to control the use of the same agents (179-181). For Mamdani, the UN was an effective American proxy for LIC, one through which the US deployed 'economic sanctions as a weapon of mass destruction' (190).

In the final chapter, Mamdani makes several important suggestions. First, he calls for a better conceptualisation of terror through the avoidance of the religious metaphors used to describe terrorism. The religious metaphors have a testament of finality to them; they do neither admit negotiation and nor do they encourage dialogue. They differentiate right from wrong and proceed on the mission of the good destroying the evil. Second, Mamdani makes a persuasive call against the idea of collective punishment which seems to be a US imitation of Israel's response to Palestinian nationalist struggle. He argues that collective punishment is in fact the crucible through which future acts of 'terror' are forged. While the US and Israel may see acts of violence through suicide bombing as terrorist acts, others view them as acts of nationalist heroes.

There is no doubt that Mamdani makes a powerful case that so-called terrorism is more of a political than a religious project. He also makes a powerful case that terrorism has more to do with US foreign policy than with local resentment of freedom, peace and progress. Indeed, Mamdani's point is that the US-backed war on terror has virtually missed the core of the problem. This is a book worth reading and re-reading. It is written in plain language and easily accessible prose. Its scope of data and knowledge surely raises Mamdani into one of the keenest observers of US foreign policy and as one of the major political analysts of our times.

Notes

1. See for instance, Richard A. Clarke, *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror*, New York: Free Press, 2004, and Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004, on the inside scoop. For a damaging look at how America is losing the war on terror, see Michael Scheuer, *Imperial Hubris: Why the West is Losing the War on Terror*, Potomac Books, 2004.
2. See for example Michael Hirsh, 'Bush and the World', in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 81, no. 5, September/October 2002, pp. 39-40, who argues that 'US allies must accept that some US unilateralism is inevitable, even desirable. This mainly involves accepting the reality of America's supreme might — and, truthfully, appreciating how historically lucky they are to be protected by such a relatively benign power'. Suffice it to note that all imperial powers in history have used such explanations.
3. Samuel P. Huntington's alarmist analysis knows no bounds. In his recent study, he now argues that the persistent inflow of Hispanic immigrants threatens to divide the United States into two peoples, two cultures, and two languages. This is because the Mexicans and other Latinos, unlike other immigrants, have refused to be assimilated into mainstream US culture. Instead they have formed their own political and linguistic enclaves and are rejecting the Anglo-Protestant values built by the American dream. Vintage Huntington then warns that the US can only ignore this challenge at its peril. See his *Who Are We: The Challenges to America's National Identity*, Simon & Schuster, 2004.
4. Bernard Lewis, 'The Roots of Muslim Rage', in *The Atlantic Online* at http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/90sep/rage.htm browsed on May 29, 2004.
5. See Mustafa Malik, 'Review Essay: Bernard Lewis and the Decline of Muslim Civilization', *Middle East Policy*, Vol. IX, no. 2, June 2002, p. 161.
6. Edward W. Said, 'Impossible Histories: Why the Many Islams Cannot be Simplified', in *Harper's Magazine*, July 2002.
7. This theme is extensively and meticulously covering in Edward W. Said, *Covering Islam*, London: Vintage Books, 1997.


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Kofi Agawu, *Representing African Music: Postcolonial Notes, Queries*, Positions, New York: Routledge, 2003, vii + 266pp, US$ 25.95 (ISBN: 0415943906).

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The term post-colonialism has continued to evoke numerous responses in African scholarship. On the one hand, there has been debate and discontent about the manner in which the term has entered the lexicon of colonial and post-colonial discourse. On the other hand, the vibrancy and elegance of the term in world academic discourse seem to be asserting its legitimacy. Viewed within these two contending positions, it is clear that post-colonialism remains a fiercely contested and debated paradigm. As a theory, the validity of post-colonialism has been subject to critique and challenge. Its disciplinary and political implications have been labelled 'fictitious' by Zeleza.[1] Yet, despite the sustained critique, appeals to view the developments in post-colonial theory positively have equally been sustained. As signifying a break from the dominant and hegemonic tradition of western theory, post-colonial theory has been presented as seeking to unmask the enabling constructs of various knowledge systems. With a specific reference to Africa, the theory is understood as a constellation of critical practices drawn from philosophy, history, social theory and literary criticism. The book under review is one attempt to appropriate post-colonial theory in exploring the post-colonial predicament which music practice and study in Africa has continued to endure and experience.

In chapter one the author highlights some of the salient aspects of the impact of colonialism on African music. Tracing a long trajectory of Euro-American influence, beginning from around the 1400s with the coming of the Portuguese, the author argues that although the political, economic and social influences on Africa have been fairly well documented by historians, the place of music has been overly ignored. This it is argued arises from the fact that music leaves different, more complex and elusive traces on the historical record. In order to understand the various colonial influences and put them in perspective, information on the pre-colonial setting and the place of music needs to be highlighted. Although scanty, both written and

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oral sources on pre-colonial Africa have yielded varied information not only on African musical instruments but also on contexts of music making that have been important in understanding the transformative nature of colonial influences. Perhaps, the most obvious sign of colonial influence, as the author emphasises, can be located in the material presence of foreign instruments, harmony, church music and in popular music. Through these sites European music colonised a significant portion of the African musical landscape and transformed music practices. This in turn produced a complex music society in Africa which was cultivated and nurtured at various pioneer African educational institutions including the ones in the nineteenth century Lagos and Achimota School in Ghana. It is worth noting that due to the colonial impact on African music we have in post-colonial Africa a constellation of musical practices. The practices are a consequence of the long history in which foreign modes of expression were sometimes retained, transformed or merely co-existed with indigenous modes of musical expression.

Building on the foregoing, chapter two provides a critical introduction to the archive of knowledge about African music. By archive, the author means a vast body of existing knowledge, both written and oral, about African music. The author argues that although Euro-American students are more familiar with scores of academic writings on African music, access to some of these sources by African students has been problematic. Africa-based scholars have little idea of the cumulative resources available for the study of their music and which are mainly located in Euro-American libraries and archives. The chapter describes a body of texts including the *New Grove Dictionaries of Music*, John Gray's bibliography of African music among others that have over the years sustained scholarly practice on African music. These are examined in detail touching on issues such as language, orality, fieldwork, autobiography and transcription. Although the author admits that most of the recognised texts in the archive are written, rather than oral, in itself a reflection of the European bias in the institutional ordering of knowledge, the historical nature of this bias is hardly contextualised. Although original African philosophies and archival resources exist on music that ought to constitute the core knowledge on the discipline, they have not been seriously appreciated by the western world. Thus the research, analytical and theoretical perspectives have always been extraneous to African thought systems. One therefore wonders whether the glaring misrepresentation of Africa from such western oriented archival knowledge cannot be reversed and whether Africans can ever develop pride in their music on the basis of knowledge produced for them by others. As Zeleza[2] has aptly argued, there is hardly ever a discourse on Africa for Africa's sake, and the West has often

used Africa as a pretext for its own subjectivities, its self-imagination and its perversions.

Chapter three and four are concerned with rhythm which the author argues remains a sensationalised parameter of African music. Though the fact that distinctive quality of African music lies in its rhythmic structure and although rhythm perhaps remains the most imaginatively elaborated in African music, its persistent thematisation in Euro-American discourses raises problematic issues. On the one hand, the author sees the persistence in presenting African rhythm as part of the broader set of imaginings and constructions of Africa. The presentation of polymeter, additive rhythm and cross rhythm in most of the Euro-American literature has hardly addressed key problematics, but rather emphasises power-based constructions of knowledge motivated in part by a search for self through imagined differences. Powered mainly by the author's prior extensive research on African rhythm,[3] these chapters present a unique contribution to the vexed issues relating to the politics of knowledge production on Africa. Veiled behind a persistence regarding the resilience of African rhythm is a plot to deny that Africans can and do control the procedures within other dimensions such as harmony, melody and form with comparative skill.

In chapter five, the author extends the analysis of the relationship between music and language using the metaphor of a text as a point of entry. It is stressed that as complex messages based on specific cultural codes, the varieties of African music known to us today may be designated as text. Designating African music as text, as the author insists, has the advantage of liberating it from the yoke of ostensibly contextual explanations advocated by ethnographers and ethnomusicologists. To the latter analysts, African music can merely be listened to yet the reality is that categorising it into functional and contemplative entities offers interesting sites of engaging various forms of contextual knowledge on African music. Emphasising the importance of language as an aspect that dominates our conceptual apparatus, the author insists that there is nothing surprising in invoking language as a point of reference in talking about music. The latter could be manifested when one examines the usefulness of performance errors as sites of emergence of an indigenous discourse, tonemic transgression in meta-language, singing in the throat and modes of significance in drum music.

Chapter six focuses on popular music. Taking a swipe at earlier works by Nketia (1974) and Bebey (1969) for not paying adequate recognition to popular African music forms such as juju, fuji, afro beat, afro rock, highlife, makossa, taarab and several dozens of others, the author engages the readers in what he calls a defence of popular music. Certainly, there is no gain-

saying the fact that the study of traditional African music seems to have overshadowed that of popular music studies and research in Africa. Yet popular music is the most widely listened to on the continent. According to the author, the reasons for the neglect of popular music could be located in the very circumstances in which knowledge is produced in Africa, in the models of scholarship inherited from European musicology, in the relative lack of participation by emancipated African actors, and in the absence of methodologies suited to music that apparently falls between stools (p.118). Although a number of individual researchers such as David Coplan, Christopher Waterman and John Collins among many others seem to have brought popular music research to the fore, more efforts need to be enhanced. Although unacknowledged by the author, there seem to exist elaborate organisations including the International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM) which are also increasingly pushing for the study of popular music in the West and in Africa. Numerous publications emanating from such associations seem to receive scanty attention from traditional African musicologists. One wonders whether the silence of the author on the existence of myriad resources especially from IASPM on the study of popular music does not run counter to his avowed 'defence of popular music'.

Beginning with the very definition of popular music, African musicologists ought to engage more comprehensively in the study of our popular music. It is true as the author notes that the definition of popular music has elicited countless taxonomies. What however needs to be emphasised is that the uniting component in these definitions is its focus upon the means of its production, distribution and consumption. What seems to appeal to the author's thesis is that popular music that has an overt western influence. It is a known fact that although African popular music has continued to be influenced by the West, there are forms that have also continued to influence Western music in and outside the continent. Their resistance, as characterised by the Benga in East Africa and their continued incorporation with external genres, offers an interesting potential in the study of popular music. Indeed in the context of West Africa, the author has elaborated this unique interplay between traditional and popular music as is characterised in highlife especially through a reading of the music by E. T. Mensah.

Chapter seven interrogates the notion of difference as it has come to inform ethnomusicological writing about Africa. Its aims are fourfold: to observe the foundational status of difference in ethnomusicology; to recall a handful of thematisations of difference in ethnomusicology that represent a particular representational bias; to inquire as to whether the difference is 'real'; and finally to take an explicitly political stance in urging a resistance to

difference (p. 152). At the core of these aims seems to be an emphasis on the fact that although ethnomusicology, both in concept and practice, is founded on difference, this difference is not real. According to the author, the difference is a construction rather than something given in nature and that notions of difference have been employed by scholars seeking to exercise a certain form of power over African subjects. Perhaps there is no better place to locate the history of this difference than in the unfair engagement of Africans and the West that have been characterised through the epochs of slavery, colonialism and neocolonialism. Although the author seems silent on who constructs difference, especially as it relates to Africa, it is true that through the foregoing epochs Africa and Africans have continued to be conceptualised as different from the rest of the human experience. Beginning with disciplines such as anthropology Africa as a different entity has been constructed and imagined into existence through the literature of various travellers, explorers and missionaries. The study of ethnomusicology cannot be divorced from this trap in as far as we note that the discipline was nurtured by colonialism. Colonialism was built around two related assumptions. The first was that Africa had no history. The second was that Africans were primitive. These assumptions did not only emphasise and serve colonial purposes but offered a relational link between 'us' representing the West and the Other. Perhaps a more nuanced question that Agawu poses in contesting difference through an embrace of sameness is whether the latter option would pose fresh critiques. However, a more validating point in relation to musicology and indeed other disciplines is the fresh critique that the author anticipates in Africa. For Africa, the urgent concern is that the continent and its people are not different from others. Their experience is a central part of the overall human experiences. The study of music in Africa thus ought to emphasise Africa as a point of departure in understanding the human experience and not to lodge Africa as a marginal and separate area that is different from the larger human panorama.

Chapter eight builds on the discussion on sameness by particularly focusing on music analysis. The author highlights the importance of analysis in African music and abhors the strictures that have been imposed by European musicologists on the analysis of African music. Noting that ethnomusicology and music theory are the two most relevant disciplines in the analysis of African music, the author, using personal experiences in publishing, challenges African scholars to engage themselves in the analysis of African composition. Such analysis ought to reject superfluous cautions from western ethnomusicologists whose aim is not to empower African scholars and musicians but to reinforce certain metropolitan privileges. Since music

analysis minimises certain forms of cultural knowledge and because it principally rewards the ability to take part and discover or invent modes of internal relating, it is as well a site at which African musicologists can begin to compete favourably with their metropolitan colleagues. The barriers that are placed on analysis hinder the initiatives that provide African scholars with an opportunity to observe at a close range the workings of African musical minds. Such flexibility and diversity in the analysis of African music is ably demonstrated by the author through his defence of analyses from different eras of African musicology, including Hornbostel, Jones, Blacking, Arom and Anku.

Chapter nine links the whole question of music practice and scholarship to ethical considerations. The author argues the case for the inculcation of ethical issues in musicology, music theory and ethnomusicology since they are pertinent to any scholarship that embraces more than one individual. Although a number of scholars seem to emphasise the difficulty of grounding a discussion of ethical issues, the primary question that needs to be thoroughly debated should relate to who sets the standards for ethical considerations. There seems to be emerging a worrying trend that is characterised by what the author calls 'an ethical absolutism' which is manifest in the metropolitan rejection of others' ethics. In the African research context specifically, it makes more sense to approach ethics not by looking for an abstract grounding principle but by focussing on specific, local situations in which we can better control the necessary constraints. Such an approach ought to be aware of the reality that African ethical thought is the product of various historical and socio-cultural circumstances. Presenting a series of personal anecdotes based on fieldwork experiences in Africa, the author confronts the questions as to whether the making of ethnography can ever be an ethical process. The epilogue at the end provides a series of contradictions and antinomies that undergird the analysis of the various themes in the text. While refusing to accept the stricture that the African research agenda and especially that of music should meet the normative requirements of metropolitan logic, the author strongly suggests that this may be advantageous if it highlights the contradictions in congruities, anachronisms and the antinomies that animate post-colonial life and thought. This is obviously a powerful prescription for African researchers and there is no doubt that Agawu seems to address the issues directly. Whether one agrees with the author's prescription is certainly not the point since the book opens up an interesting dimension on the debates on African music.

Notes

1. Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, 'Fictions of the Postcolonial: A Review Article', *CODESRIA Bulletin*, no. 2, 1997a.
2. Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, *Manufacturing African Studies and Crises*, Dakar: CODESRIA, 1997b.
3. See Kofi Agawu, 'The Invention of African Rhythm', *Journal of the American Musicological Society,* no. 48, 1995 and Kofi Agawu, *African Rhythm: A Northern Ewe Perspective*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.