

Some Issues around the Double Language of Philosophers' Courage in the face of Experience

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*In memory of Jacques Moutaux
Inspector in Philosophy*

The philosopher's stances

We have never come face to face with 'Philosophy', that goddess who was courted, scorned, hated, and betrayed throughout history by those who claimed to represent her – we only come into contact with her officers: philosophers, that is, human beings who exist in an economic context, have religious ideas, support political opinions, find a way through their emotional history, are paid by institutions, fantasize about a vision of hope, have appetites, can fight, are mad keen to be noticed and recognized and above all frequently make certain types of statements that have claims to validity. So philosophers are not only creatures in history but also historical creatures who interrogate the meaning of the world and particularly their own work. However, one of the tricks of instrumental rationality – if we follow Marx's analysis – is to focus first on the product rather than the producer. This is the basic reason for the fact that a passion for the exegesis of philosophical texts often conceals philosophers' practices. And this is why – where African philosophers are concerned, and they are not the only ones – people focus first, with benign curiosity, on their books, the theories that they expound and that may provide matter for heated discussion, but questions are hardly ever asked about the stance of African philosophers, in other words, the *actual conditions in which their position is created*, the particular *abilities* of African philosophers to achieve their emergence as 'philosophers', and their *recognition* in the international arena. The rhetoric about the acceptance of multi-culturalism argued on the basis of the complexity of present-day societies often hides practices and processes of legitimation that are revealed by their relationship to those two phenomena, economics and the state. The love of little abstractions that philosophy resists in the name of its historical position, the haste with which African philosophers, among others, clamour for recognition from their peers in other cultures are partly intended secretly to conceal their true relationship to money. Not that 'disinterested' philosophers 'in love' with knowledge do not exist, but we need to recognize that they often fail to say, as Adorno does in *Dialectique négative*, that 'philosophy's freedom is simply the ability to allow its non-freedom to be expressed'.¹ The purpose of this article is less to question philosophers' capacity for knowledge than to urge them to have the courage to proclaim and challenge their non-freedom.

Of course courage is a concept that is not easy to define; we note the difficulty Plato had defining it in *Lachès*,² even though, in Book IV of the *Republic*, he makes it one of the city's four virtues, together with justice, temperance, and wisdom.³ However, we will adopt the definition given by Plato in the *Laws*,⁴ that is, what is needed is a courage that is accompanied by wisdom, justice, and temperance. How can African philosophers practise temperance and justice in their place of work (university, research centre, administrative post, etc.)? By directing our attention to the African *philosopher* and not simply African *philosophy* we have two objectives: a methodological one and a pragmatic one. As far as method is concerned, we follow in the footsteps of the Marx of *German Ideology*, that is, we need to link philosophical premises and ideals to their source and in particular the way individuals produce and reproduce their lives. This issue is so basic that it is relevant to every philosophy. So, beyond critiques of the post-colonial state, west-centred universalism, and an enhanced emphasis on intellectual practices as well as on the promotion of human rights, we must search for certain practices of denegation that conceal something simple that we tend to forget: philosophers are *employees* who, through their strategies, maintain a type of discourse that conceals their relationship with the economy. Ideas must therefore be linked to their conditions of possibility. On a pragmatic level a philosophical discourse must be produced that is uneasy and expresses its impossibilities and in particular its social constraints, which the relationship with the state and the economy frames.

Social constraints: the case of the African philosopher's position

Wherever it may take place, all philosophical practice is bound by social constraints, since discourse is always influenced by social institutions and actions that are responsible for predetermining beforehand and overdetermining afterwards. As far as Africa is concerned, the African philosopher is an individual who is historically situated. So what is the relationship between his position, practices (whether they be pedagogic, academic, or related to career), and his discourse options? Both before and during its formulation this discourse is subjected to three types of constraint.

First the constraint of recognition . . .

When they practise philosophy in Europe, Africa, or the USA, African philosophers are forced to think about the recognition they must earn from their peers, for they have emerged from colonialism and slavery with the inferiority complex they have been taught, and cannot stop 'wanting to prove at all costs that they too are . . . that they also have . . .'. If they have had an academic training in philosophy and make use of its discursive registers when they speak, they will be suspected by other Africans of selling out to 'Europhilosophy'.⁵ Their dilemma will be this: should they speak the *lingua franca* of philosophy or, in order to be true to their origins, adopt a tribal style that would distance them still further from the world philosophical community? Seeking recognition in order to set themselves up as philosophers is a philosophical act *par excellence*, because the playing the game of recognition is the very moment through which are forged the creation of consciousness and its self-development in history, if what Hegel says in *The Phenomenology of*

Spirit is to be believed.⁶ It is *in* and *through* the other that my consciousness is awakened, mirrored, and created. Thus the purpose of recognition is the reciprocal construction of *alterity*. This problem of recognition still occupies African philosophers today, for, setting aside those who persist in advocating a sort of 'closed community',⁷ it is genuinely difficult for African philosophers to communicate with their peers. In this matter the classification of the Universal Encyclopedias of Philosophy in France is a good example: all through the four volumes – 'The Philosophical World' (I), 'Concepts' (II), 'Writings' (III), and 'Discourse' (IV) – the 'Universal' Encyclopedias published by Presses Universitaires de France display terminological contradictions. Sometimes there is a division, where Europe and America are concerned, between 'ancient philosophy, the Middle Ages, the modern era, and the contemporary era', but we get 'Conceptualization in traditional societies' or 'African thought' when Africa is discussed. Here there is an enormous semantic slippage between 'philosophy' for Europe and 'African thought' – implying that not all thought is philosophical.⁸ Another classification appears in the *Encyclopédie de la Totalité* (volume 3) by the philosopher Christian Godin, who looks at the concept of Totality in the history of philosophy. In this work Africa is relegated to the category 'primitive thought' where there are no philosophers and no philosophy, since in his view philosophical and mathematical thought are associated with writing. 'I think the *Encyclopédie philosophique universelle* errs in the opposite way to traditional prejudices in calling each people's thought *philosophy*. I am of the view that the distinctions between thought and philosophy, philosophy and mythology, philosophy and world view cannot be ignored. There is no philosophy and equally no mathematics without writing, but all human communities can count. I think that to talk of Malagasy philosophy is as inappropriate as to talk of Malagasy mathematics. On the other hand, in my opinion no one now can question the existence of Indian or Chinese philosophy.'⁹ We should note that Socrates did not write – at least that is what we have been taught – and he is not rejected by philosophy. Philosophy is associated with '*thinking*', with reflection, with that critical focus of consciousness on an aspect of experience, and the moment when it is *textualized* is simply a stage in the process, an important one no doubt, but one that can neither exhaust nor encapsulate the whole process. 'Philosophy' is also a method of approaching discourse, action, and history. It may be a way of living, a kind of wisdom, and through writing alone (even when it claims to be philosophical) philosophers are not necessarily created; often 'conceptual bureaucrats' are created, who are paid, according to society's division of labour, to produce a certain type of discourse about the in-oneself, the for-oneself, memory, totality, but have not evolved a way of living that can be a model with which the despair all around can identify, nor even a modest discourse that dares to say 'I don't know...'. Thus African philosophers have to take this philosophical climate into account – this being one of the branches of the human sciences where Eurocentrism is still firmly rooted – if they wish to 'progress'. Tactically they should watch what they say, adapt their discourse, and promote it using strategies that are not at all philosophical.

... then the pressures of dissemination

The problem of the promotion of philosophers is important when one wishes to link the development of philosophical theories to their history. Promotion has to do with the

dissemination, reception, and transformation of a philosophical theory. Aristotle was only disseminated in Western Europe through promotion, dissemination, and commentaries by Arab philosophers. So raising again this problem of the transmission and promotion of African philosophical discourse in the West means reaffirming that a philosophical theory is nothing without the manner in which institutional and historical mediations carry, transport, transfer, and support it.¹⁰

Indian philosophy, to quote just one example, was lucky enough to find supporters among Western philosophers. Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Herder, Schlegel, Cousin, and Heidegger,¹¹ to mention only well-known philosophers, were interested in Indian philosophy and eventually gave it a certain credibility world-wide. The same happened with China: interest on the part of European philosophers.¹² The disseminators in the West of Indian and Chinese thought were at first, as was the case for Africa, travellers' tales and ethnologists' and missionaries' treatises. But, unlike the African case, Western philosophers appropriated Indian philosophy and disseminate it today. Thus all the current debates around the notion of nothingness¹³ cannot do without Indian philosophy. As far as the different strands of African philosophical discourse are concerned, they have not yet been appropriated by philosophers from other cultures; consequently they depend on theologians and anthropologists to promote and disseminate them. And this will make the status of this discourse problematical, since to a certain extent it can only be approached through Africanist anthropologists' or theologians' positions.

Anthropologists – and European philosophers will remember the link in the recent past between their discipline and a type of colonial thinking – and their product 'African philosophy' therefore appear to philosophers to be questionable sources. To a certain extent Africanist anthropologists' and theologians' desire to set up 'African philosophy' maybe comes from the admiration philosophy attracted and the sway it held in Europe – after theology – as the 'queen of the sciences'. In the human sciences a certain credibility could only be guaranteed if one seasoned one's discourse with a philosophical flavour, but Africanist anthropologists and theologians – who were very often aware of the pitfalls of the Eurocentrism of philosophy as a cultural model – practised a different kind of discourse compared with the level of technical debate carried on by the philosophers in the culture they originated from. So they found a solution by taking over other people's 'philosophy' and presenting ethnological concepts as philosophemes. This was the criticism made of colonial Africanist anthropologists and theologians like Tempels, who invented tribal philosophies. What interests us is to relate this situation to practices and interests, in other words to reframe the question about the link between knowledge (*Erkenntnis*) and interest (*Interesse*) that concerned Habermas.¹⁴ This position gives theologians and anthropologists a double advantage: a) westerners, academics from their disciplines, cannot criticize them,¹⁵ since they are intellectually honest enough to admit they know more about foreign peoples than themselves; b) from Africans' viewpoint it cannot be challenged, since they would need to go through them to get their university degrees, get themselves mentioned in encyclopedias and academic texts, and get published. Thus there arises, between Africanist theologians and anthropologists on the one hand and African philosophers on the other, a situation of *reciprocal clientelism*. The former need the latter because they are specialists in 'African philosophy' and occupy the supposedly prestigious field of philosophy, and the latter need the former to achieve recognition, be quoted, get invited, in short to become part of the 'international machine'. It is this link that will also

give rise to a conventional discourse in African philosophy: reference is made to identity, school syllabuses, culture, multiculturalism, art, language, African relations, relations with the west, but never to the economy and everything that contributes to it on the level of the working of ethical values.

Africanist anthropology has developed and revised its paradigms; nowadays it is the main agent in promoting the understanding of new rites, health, the environment, politics, changes in the African mode of production, and because of this brings us back to an African philosophical discourse that is often booby-trapped by the headiness of abstract words, the necessarily historical roots of its premises. However, the question remains: how can we have on one hand a philosophical discourse historically rooted in Africa, using themes supplied by anthropologists (art, death, multiculturalism) and on the other hand a philosophical methodology?

... and finally the American situation: producing a discourse from and for one's community ...

The United States is a 'tribal' country as regards its constitution and history. Each community has a duty to affirm its identity and raise itself up as high as possible on the social scale, and this is why people are encouraged to speak of their community of origin using a discourse that, whatever the real situation, values that community. The distribution of academic posts with a system of quotas for each minority, directs, focuses, and overdetermines the theoretical choices of African philosophers.¹⁶ It would be very difficult for an African philosopher working on Kant's categories of understanding to find a post in an American philosophy department. First he would be asked to justify his reasons for choosing Kant, who made racist comments about Africans – in both *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Viewpoint* and *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime* – as if Kant had not also created a moral system one of whose principles is to consider humanity never as a *means* but always as an *end*! Then he would be directed into 'African studies' as if an African philosopher was only capable of producing community, tribal discourse. Finally, if he really wanted to work on Kant, he would be pointed towards the relationship between Kant and black people. In this way the American environment, with its policy of 'positive discrimination', creates conceptual ghettos where subjects cannot free themselves from their origins to produce a discourse that is neither 'white', nor 'black', nor 'sexist', nor 'homophobic' ... but simply *human*. So it is a repressive environment for African philosophers, who are not free to choose who or what they want to work on. The situation is similar to the one that existed in the old 'communist' countries, where every philosopher had to be labelled either bourgeois or anti-bourgeois, except that in the US it is the category *racist* that predominates rather than *bourgeois*. This situation has a double advantage. First of all for African philosophers, producing discourse on their culture automatically makes them 'specialists', or at least that is what people think! They can utter any untruth they like without being contradicted: since they are Africans, they are automatically specialists and would not submit to contradiction, that elementary philosophical exercise. Thus African philosophers can speak *ex cathedra* without any contradiction interrupting their monologue. Yves Mudimbe – a Congolese writer teaching at Stanford and Duke – has written a book, *The Invention of Africa*,¹⁷ in which he describes how in its discourse the West has invented this radical alterity, Africa, through a racist, Eurocentric

discourse. What Mudimbe has neglected to mention and deconstruct in addition is the 'invention of Africa' by Africans who are paid to keep up a certain discourse of victimhood in relation to Africa. Nowadays the *invention of Africa* is that *academic discourse* (from Africans in the US) that fabricates an Africa which neither the Africans of the past nor those living in Africa now would recognize: a fantasy Africa, an Africa that is a reflection of the structural frustrations of these intellectual migrants' material situation in a hostile North America. It might be interesting to trace the intellectual history of these Africans who write from North America in order to deconstruct their invention of Africa too. The second advantage is the one Afro-American academics benefit from. If they are philosophers, Africans are the guarantee and example for verifying their own 'Africanness'.¹⁸ For this reason they will encourage African philosophers and appear thunderstruck by their discourse, they will not contradict them, they will compare themselves to them as if they were the standard measure of their 'Africanness'. And so they exist in a conventional atmosphere where criticism is directed against 'the community enemy' (as it was against the class enemy among communists!) and never against the whole *preconstruct* that has previously determined the form of their discourse. Another essential characteristic of a philosophy is the self-reflexive dimension that is capable of self-criticism.

It is in this climate that African philosophers suffer a final constraint, having to choose between universalists and communitarians. This is a typically American debate, where on the one hand statements and their claims to validity are judged according to so-called universalist norms and procedures, and on the other hand these statements are judged in relation to each narrative community that gives them meaning and substance. In the end *a statement* is always the product of a narrative community and for this reason is *limited*, but the process of stating that produces and promotes it is inseparable from a certain universalization, since every statement opens out on to an infinite number of possibles. The relationship between the statement and the possible is a guarantee of universalization. In the US the statements articulated in African philosophy will always be referred to as either the communitarians or the universalists. This dualistic logic is unable to conceive all statements as contradictory structures that articulate both opening and closing, folding inwards and unfolding outwards. A statement is a moment in the experience of the world and as such embraces both rootedness and reaching out for an elsewhere and beyond that give it its dynamism.

'Experimentum mundi': the courage to look experience in the face

In 1975 the philosopher Ernest Bloch gave the final volume of his complete works the title *Experimentum Mundi*. By that he meant that philosophy is to *experience of the world* (it can only be a discourse and is not worldly, yet emerges from the world) what the world is to *experience of philosophy* (a certain critical, ironical view of the world, not an administrative view!). This requires all philosophers to open all the books on experience of the world according to the time and the object of analysis. All the books published, all the histories past are part of humanity's heritage. This is why African philosophers – if they are accepted as human beings – should read about European, Christian, Jewish, Indian experience . . . without any inhibitions?¹⁹ Why not read what Lévinas, Adorno, Primo Levi, Derrida had to say about the holocaust; why should that not affect Africans? Why

should an Austrian philosopher like Christian Neugebauer not be a specialist in African philosophy without Africans accusing him of secret colonialist intentions? Why should an Argentinian philosopher not study Freud's concept of the 'narcissistic wound' (for instance) if it helps him interpret his experience of the world? Why should an American or an African not study the Japanese philosopher from Kyoto Nishida Kitâro's notion of place (*Basho*) if it gives him the inspiration he needs to put his thinking to the test in the world and the world to the test of his thinking? In this experiment, account must be taken of what Bloch calls 'framing categories' (which are related to the space and time of the articulation of philosophical thought), 'transmission categories' (how I as an African philosopher should construct my *relationship to . . .*), 'manifestation categories' (how processes become so by unfolding), and 'sector categories'. In fact, how does my experience of framing, transmission, and manifestation interpenetrate those vast fields of experience, humanity, history, memory, nature, art, and religion?

The truth as to the pressures that surround African philosophers' exercise of their profession is money. If they are made to employ a culturalist discourse in America, one in which they are supposed to value the community they come from, if 'positive discrimination' smoothes their path in the academic world, this is simply to make sure that they will never question the capitalist mode of production with the instrumental rationality they possess. They (African philosophers in the US) are also asked to play a part in an appropriate position in this capitalist mode of production.²⁰ The concept of injustice is understood in terms of exclusion from this capitalist mode of production, which means there is no room for a critique of the mode of production itself. Righting the injustice in this case means reintegrating blacks in their proper place in the hierarchy of employed people with a *good job*. Thus claiming 'dignity for black people' and respect for the memory of slavery are part of African philosophers' double game and double language.

Double language and double game: philosophers and the state

It would take a very long time if we were to start describing the stormy relations and but occasional agreements between politicians and philosophers. It is perfectly right that there should be a healthy mistrust, but what seems crucial now is not to create a split that would make philosophers 'able' in theory but 'rubbish' in politics. If we were to go along with these arguments, we would be forced to conclude that philosophers can lead a double life, play a double game, and use a double language. How does this double language work nowadays in philosophers' relations with the state? Several positions are possible.

Double game and nationalism: Bergson in the 1918 war

The example of Bergson is suggested by both his correspondence and the article by Philippe Soulez.²¹ Close examination of Bergson's correspondence²² has shown that he was entrusted by the government with a secret propaganda mission to US President Wilson in order to ensure that France would come out of the war well. According to the correspondence, the historian Lavissee informed Bergson that Aristide Briand (the then

Prime Minister of France) wished to send him to the United States. Weighed down by debt, France foresaw that her position at the war's end would be an uncomfortable one. So it would be Bergson's job to go and sort out the financial situation with the Americans; in order to do this he would need to speak to President Wilson in person. Before he set off Bergson is supposed to have seen Philippe Berthelot, a high-ranking official at the Quai d'Orsay (Foreign Office), Cambon, Homberg.²³ From February to May 1917 he went back and forth between New York and Washington. He arrived in the US incognito and rang his colleagues at Columbia University,²⁴ concealing from them the true reasons for his visit. Then he carried out the 'information-gathering' mission that Soulez discovered in the archive documents of the then French Ambassador, Jusserand. 'On 14 February Bergson contacted adviser House, who mentioned maritime and industrial support, and also a contribution in terms of personnel. Bergson telegraphed the French government at once: America "would provide a huge pool of labour".²⁵ Other missions followed. The question that arises is: why was Bergson chosen? 'I think it is . . . because he is a philosopher. Only a "philosopher" can give weight through his word to the agreement in principle of the allied governments of the "League of Nations" that Wilson talked about all through the war . . .²⁶ What determined the choice was 'the effective history of the image of the "philosopher" . . . Philosophy is not solely involved in the concepts it develops but also the images it conjures up.'²⁷ The question Bergson's experience raises is related to the political management of the image of the 'philosopher', regardless of whether or not Bergson was exploited through his loyalty as a citizen. How do philosophers manage their image as philosophers in a world where every image partakes of effectiveness? A society cannot operate without fictions, creations, and images that act as a catalyst for that *je ne sais quoi* that binds people together; so how, within this legal concoction that we call the state, does love of titles and honours produce double lives and double language? How does the philosopher, who nowadays is primarily a public servant and citizen, continue to hold, at one and the same time, to the need for a dedicated discourse of devotion to the truth and also a citizen's involvement in communal life? How does an 'ecclesiastical ideology of *service* to the Cause of initial capital'²⁸ still impinge upon the philosopher's world? In Africa the civil authorities are in awe of and sometimes fearful of the philosopher's image, which explains why most only get posts in the offices of heads of state and the senior ranks of the civil service by virtue of the 'philosopher's' image (as someone who is able to produce a discourse justifying the state's actions). What is at issue in this new relationship between philosophers and state is the breakdown of what Adorno calls 'self-reflexive thinking', which 'implies . . . that, to be authentic, at least nowadays, this thinking must also be thinking against oneself'.²⁹ Philosophy should not be background music for an industrial, political, or technocratic system, but a practice that requires, rather than beautifully turned sentences in handsomely bound books, a self-discipline that does not go along with the game of appearances. 'The pressure to conform that affects all creative individuals (of whom the philosopher is one!) reduces the level of the demands they make upon themselves. The very core of intellectual self-discipline as we know it is in the process of meltdown.'³⁰

The truth about this instrumentalization of the philosopher's image may perhaps be found in their relation to money. In *Philosophie de l'argent*³¹ Georg Simmel examined two varieties of docility as regards money: absolute docility and conditional docility.³² So we should concentrate on assessing the type of docility we are dealing with in the

instrumentalization of the 'philosopher's' image. In this context where money is the *universal mediator*, where everything is judged by the standard of productivity, 'distancing oneself from the workings of the system is a luxury that is possible only as a product of the system itself'.³³ What should one do? Maybe prioritize critique of the political economy. The great attack made by analytical philosophy and liberalism American-style preclude such a critique on the philosophical level. In political economy we can see how we produce and reproduce what is absolutely basic to a society: life.

Double language: the essence of philosophical language?

It is as if double language and double-dealing were part of philosophy's very nature. Philosophy is practised in institutions and so must take up the challenge of being – as the New Testament says – *in the world* (its draws on society for its subject matter), but its context by contrast is not *of the world* (philosophy requires a kind of transcendental utopia). In this regard the figure of Socrates is symbolic: he can only combat institutions (which are unjust because they cause him to be condemned) by abiding by their procedures (he refuses to flee out of respect for the unjust justice that has condemned him). Philosophers speak a language that takes from both sides of the fence 'the same transmutation, the same migration of a meaning that is fragmented in experience'.³⁴ Philosophy, which was personified by Christians in France, was taken over by the state from the nineteenth century and displays that dual nature, between institutional subjection and institutional instrumentalization and a will to express freedom, that is indicated in the report by Gérando, presented to the Emperor on 20 February 1808: 'the spectacle of the abuses committed in the name of philosophy in the form of morality, religion, and political institutions has motivated me . . . to undertake this work. I conceived the intention . . . Thus it is this philosophy that appeals to reason not in order to forbid ideas but in order to justify them and that is Christianity's ally.'³⁵ In this text can be read the double language that aims both to maintain peace of mind through reflection and to accommodate religious institutions. Philosophical writing and philosophers' activity, whether or not they intend it, develop an *initiating logic* that moves boundaries and blurs the frontiers of the sayable and thinkable only within the beaten track and *territory of the institutional*. How are the instituting and the instituted articulated within a philosophical discourse at a time when uniformity of thought and the cult of the instantaneous are tending to encroach upon the field of human thought?

Logica equina: strategies and tactics

In his book *La Persécution et l'art d'écrire* Léo Strauss points out that in every writing practice there is a stretching and a drawing out that mean philosophers always have some room for manoeuvre in order to distance themselves from the bureaucrats. It is this oblique option and method – the famous *logica equina* – that typify philosophical writing and the philosopher's path. When philosophy cannot say openly what it has to say, it always invents, for instance during a time of persecution, 'a particular technique of writing and thus a particular type of literature in which the truth on all the vital questions

is offered solely between the lines'.³⁶ The administrative and economic systems within which philosophers exist as employees produce *capture strategies*, but they lead philosophers to develop *tactics for breaking free*.³⁷ It is at the intersection of capture and rupture that the *work of philosophy* positions itself, courage is challenged and double language tested.

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Notes

1. T.W. Adorno (1978), *Dialectique négative* (Paris: Payot), p. 12.
2. Plato, *Lachès, or On Courage*, 198a–1993.
3. *Ibid.*, *Republic*, Book IV, 427e–434d.
4. *Ibid.*, *Laws*, 436a–432d.
5. Pathé F. Diagne (1981), *L'europhilosophie face à la pensée du négro-africain* (Dakar: Sankoré).
6. The creation of self-consciousness occurs only through successive recognitions and negations. Here Jean Hyppolite's commentaries on Hegel are required reading.
7. On this point see Molefi Kete Asante (1989), *Afrocentricity* (Trenton: Africa World Press), p. 39. This 'Afrocentric' thinker believes that Africans should use only those cultures and symbols that will contribute significantly to their victory. And that Africans in Africa and those who belong to the diaspora ought not to criticize creative black people: 'We have failed to be critical of the Alvin Aileys in dance, for example, because we felt that we should not criticize blacks who are creative', p. 39. In any event Molefi divides history into two: the history of blacks and the history of the 'others': 'our facts are in our history, use them. Their facts are in their history . . .', p. 42.
8. Godin is right to condemn the claim to create an 'oral', anonymous philosophy and to call philosophical what is nothing but a world view. But this problem has been resolved in African philosophical debates by the critique of what has been called ethnophilosophy. On this subject see Paulin Hountondji (1978), *Sur la philosophie africaine* (Paris: Maspéro). It is very strange that Godin repeats the criticism made by Africans themselves since the 1960s of 'so-called oral philosophy'. Why did he not look at the concept of totality in the works of African academic philosophers, who write books that are sadly unknown to the French audience for philosophy but are promoted – for suspect reasons – in the USA? Godin's classification (Africa in primitive thought!) fits in with the general view of African philosophy in academic circles in the Latin countries of Europe. They see it as an ethnological discourse, unlike their German-language colleagues, who write theses and give lectures about present-day African philosophers rather than oral or 'primitive thought'. See Christian Neugebauer – lecturer in philosophy in Vienna – (1989), *Einführung in die Afrikanische Philosophie* (Munich: Afrikanische Hochschulschriften).
9. Christian Godin (2000), *La Totalité*, vol. 3, *Philosophie* (Editions Champ Vallon), p. 103.
10. We should remember all the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century 'clandestine philosophers' in Europe whose manuscripts, with their quite unorthodox tone, were suppressed for lack of institutional promotion. Detailed research on the classification of these manuscripts is being carried out by Olivier Bloch, Anthony McKenna, and Miguel Benítez, among others. See M. Benítez (1996), *La face cachée des Lumières. Recherche sur les manuscrits philosophiques clandestins* (Paris: Universitatis/Oxford: Voltaire Foundation).
11. See Roger Pol-Droit (1989), *L'oubli de l'Inde, une amnésie philosophique* (Paris: PUF).
12. On this point see C. Wolff (1985), *Le philosophe-roi et le roi-philosophe* (Paris: Vrin).
13. See Roger Pol-Droit (1997), *Le culte du néant: le philosophe et le Bouddha* (Paris: Seuil).
14. See Habermas (1976), *Connaissance et intérêt* (Paris: Gallimard).
15. Philosophers such as Bachelard, Louis Lavelle, and Mounier have given an approving welcome to the French translation of 'Bantu philosophy' by Father Tempels.
16. On this point see Julie Thermes (1989), *Essor et déclin de l'affirmative action* (Paris: Editions du CNRS).
17. Y. Mudimbe (1988), *The Invention of Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press).

18. On this point see Lucius Outlaw (1991), 'African Philosophy: Deconstructive and Reconstructive Challenges', in *Contemporary Philosophy, A Survey*, vol. 5, *African Philosophy* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff).
19. I have already emphasized this in my book (1995), *La philosophie négro-africaine* (Paris: PUF).
20. This preconstruct is the discourse of money. Community discourse is not designed to destroy the dollar mode of production, rather it attempts to become part of it. 'Affirmative action . . . is always a valuable tool to help people become part of the economic system', quoted by Thermes, op. cit., p. 333.
21. Philippe Soulez (1988), 'Les missions de Bergson ou les paradoxes du philosophe véridique et trompeur', in *Les philosophes et la guerre de 14* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes).
22. See Bergson (1972), 'Mes missions', in *Mélanges* (PUF), pp. 1584–1600.
23. Soulez, op. cit., p. 67. See also Bergson, op. cit., pp. 1242–1302.
24. Ibid., p. 70.
25. Ibid., p. 71.
26. Ibid., p. 68.
27. Ibid., p. 68.
28. P. Legendre, *Miroir d'une nation. L'école nationale d'administration* (Paris: Mille et une nuits), p. 63.
29. T.W. Adorno (1978), *Dialectique négative* (Paris: Payot), p. 286.
30. T.W. Adorno (1980), *Minima moralia* (Paris: Payot), p. 25.
31. G. Simmel (1999), *Philosophie de l'argent* (Paris: PUF).
32. Ibid., pp. 374 et seq.
33. T.W. Adorno, op. cit., p. 23.
34. To quote here what Merleau-Ponty (1969) says about indirect language, *La prose du monde* (Paris: Gallimard), p. 67.
35. De Gérando, 'Rapport historique sur les progrès de la philosophie depuis 1789 et son état actuel. Présenté à l'Empereur, en son Conseil d'Etat, le 20 février 1808', in S. Douailler, C. Mauve, G. Navet, J.C. Pompougnac, P. Vermeren (eds., 1988) *La philosophie saisie par l'Etat, petits écrits sur l'enseignement philosophique en France 1789–1900* (Paris: Aubier), p. 68. See also Bruno Poucet (1999), *Enseigner la philosophie, Histoire d'une discipline scolaire 1860–1990* (Paris: Editions du CNRS). He recounts how the philosophy textbook by Jacques Chevalier (1943), *Leçons de philosophie* (Paris, Arthaud) ??: 'The book starts from the principle that psychology and logic became autonomous sciences . . . However, the book turns into a self-justification of the policies of the government . . .' (p. 279), which was then Vichy. At the same time 'Paul Foulquié's book [*Traité élémentaire de philosophie*, Paris: Editions de l'Ecole, 1943] distances itself from justifying the policies of the French state' (p. 280). This shows how philosophy was on both sides of the fence at a troubled period in the history of France.
36. Léo Strauss (1989), *La persécution et l'art d'écrire* (Paris: Presses Pocket), p. 58.
37. For the difference between *tactics* (disruptive moves within the system) and *strategies* (the penetration characteristic of a system) see M. de Certeau (1990), *L'invention du quotidien, 1, Arts de faire* (Paris: Gallimard), pp. 57–62.