

Articles

AN AFRICAN PRACTICE OF PHILOSOPHY¹

A Personal Testimony²

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Vestri capilli capitis omnes numerati sunt: nolite timere.
(‘All the hairs on your head have been counted: so have no fear’) – *Die 8 Nov. Ad Laudes.*

In the Tenth Anniversary Special Issue of the *Bulletin of the Society for African Philosophy in North America* released in 1997 (Vol. 10, 2), I introduced my reflection by stating a number of positions. They included a general suspicion concerning the concept of African Philosophy, the question of a supposed confusion of philosophy understood as *Weltanschauung* and, on the other hand, philosophy defined as a critical, auto-critical, explicit reflection bearing on language and human experience. Such a hesitation was signified in the privilege that the Society chose to give to the preposition ‘for’ as a way of naming its own tasks. In effect, to the implications of the genitive with its slippery issue of origin in the expression ‘Society of African Phi-

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² This paper was read on February 10, 2005 at the one-day conference organized by Bill Olsen, professor of African Studies at Brigham Young University. I am grateful to him as well as to Anthony Mangeon, whose monumental doctoral dissertation on *Lumières Noires* (three volumes, 897 pages + appendixes), presented on the 17th of December, 2004 at l’Université de Cergy-Pontoise, was an invitation to re-evaluate my own ‘philosophical’ itinerary. Indeed, my thanks are addressed also to my Duke Assistant, Lesley Curtis, for her advice, technical support, and competence.

losophy' in which the adjective 'African' might seem to represent an intrinsic and essential difference, in sum the singularity of a nature, we chose the detour expressed by the preposition 'for,' as indicative of a project, its objective, the practice of philosophy by students of African descent, or by individuals conceiving their identities, in any case their perceptual, or their real behavior, as marked by an African geography, be it mythical, in any case simply representational. Such an epistemological prudence was to allow us, among other things, an elegant and critical handling of two metaphors: on the one hand, Heidegger's affirmation that philosophy is Greek; on the other hand, the pertinence of a common sense saying, no one speaks from nowhere; and, in practical terms, this meant a postulate, that any *parole* is always, in its difference, qualified by a locus, a time, the consciousness and, indeed the unconsciousness of the speaker.

In such an orientation, we were expressing a right and a duty, and also, simultaneously, the fact of a *Bindung* and an *Entbindung*, bond and unbinding, linking the African speaking subject to a self and to a locality, at the same time positing the subject as inextricably mingling with an alterity, with someone else, an *alter*, thus very precisely as unstable, insofar as such a subject cannot negate its own expansion, its existence outside itself, in the *alter* in whom it can bind to itself. It followed that it was only reasonable for us, African students of philosophy, to be attentive to Martin Heidegger's challenge, his pronouncement on philosophy as being essentially Greek. How could one avoid the Greek initiative, and the already long history of philosophical practices, while acknowledging the obvious around us, testimonies of intellectual investments witnessing its African experiences?

Let me replace such a question in its context, thus accentuating the fantasmatic arrogance of a dream and what, in its desire for, and fidelity to an ascetic discipline, it was positing in actuality, the fundamental principle of a practice, its capacity for detaching itself from itself, as well as from its own ordinary temptation of transforming itself into a triumphal system of definitive truths. Indeed, I am reading a *cheminement*, implying myself in a history, a practice, and these are, at once, mine and not mine, as is the language I am using, which is mine and, at the same time, is not mine. Yet I know that I have been inhabiting this language and its culture, in the way I inhabit my body. Such a perplexing indistinction in its own always-shifting ground must witness also to something else, its own conditions of possibility, say a scho-

lastic education, a socio-cultural context, and indeed the spiritual and ethical (in-)securities of identification (*mimesis*) with, and resemblance (*homoiosis*) to models; in sum, an intellectual history, its detours, and the vertigo of its internal logic. Thinking of, or imagining myself as detached from something that might be called philosophy, a dreamlike representation of my relation to possibilities of desire, condenses a *Weltanschauung*, and subjectively qualifies my own insertion in it. This vision, in some way, at its genesis, confused itself with a locality, the Benedictine monastery of Gihindamuyaga in Rwanda, founded in the 1950s by Belgian monks of Maredsous in Belgium. At the same time, my detachment signified a journey in a different kind of detachment: a travel, a choice under a multi-secular paradigm, *ora et labora*, in which my *anima*, existence, and *persona* were to correspond, in a permanent austerity and perpetual recommencement, to the annihilation of desire, and of all of it, beginning with a systematic weakening of the desire of desires. The “born-again” concept of some contemporary Christian denominations was already at the foundation, and in the whole structure of the monastic life as conceived by Benedetto of Nursia in the VIth century, and is symbolized in a major deviation vis-à-vis oneself, signified in the erasure of one’s identity, one’s name, and any attempt at a reconstitution of one’s *anima* and *persona*, inner and outer.

Thus the following paradox: it is in the language of phenomenologists that I can account, more or less correctly, for the possibility of a wish-fulfillment of the young monk I was before being exposed to phenomenology, namely that where, in my quest, I was supposed, really, to expect to find myself truly and at best, was only where I could reach that which was not myself. But in this process, then probably better than today, I knew that the subject of the wish, myself, was appealing to both a fundamental distinctness and its transparency, at the intersection of a number of polarities, more exactly, in difficult conjunctions of meditation and liturgy, inside and outside, solitude and community, free will and obedience, difference and structure, spontaneity and rule. In such a process of spatializing oneself, that is, in the blending of opposites and their effects, strictly speaking, what is expected is not the excruciating lucidity of a consciousness thinking of itself as a liberty of being in the world, but instead an intellect freely submitting to a vision of life and the world *sub specie aeternitatis*, and facing what has no name, perhaps a *Deus absconditus*, the mysteriousness of a presence, an

enigma, possibly a void, as a sign of a divine “apartness.”

And if the something hidden were elsewhere, somewhere in what I was expecting to be erased, a will to truth as will to knowledge? The question imposed itself on my life when, in 1960, I was introduced to Alexis Kagame, a doctor of philosophy, who was then a professor at the Groupe Scolaire in Astrida, now Butare, a few kilometers from Gihindamuyaga.

From the philosophy of *Anthropos*, in Vienna, to Placide Tempels, a Franciscan missionary in Katanga, and his contemporaries, Europeans such as Theodore Theuws and Raoul Van Caeneghem, and on the other hand, his African exegetes and disciples, including Alexis Kagame, André Makarakiza, François-Marie Lufuluabo, and Vincent Mulago, a common imagination was then expressing itself in practices, as well as in discourses caught between pre-reflexive and reflexive African indigenous cosmologies, ethics and systems of self-knowledges. These are discourses on local ways of existing; mundanely put, local conceptions on everyday life, their internal organization, rationale, and explanations of their genesis. As discursive practices engaged in seeking grids of, and as a matter of fact, for ordering particular, well individualized historicities, they perfectly witness the three qualifications used by Claude Lévi-Strauss in his introduction to *Structural Anthropology* in order to spell out the similarities existing between anthropological and historical approaches. Namely, these practices were and are,

1. firstly, objective constructs;
2. secondly, they are manifestly structures and expositions of an alterity external to the subject; and,
3. whatever might be their shortcomings, they are organized testimonies of a human reality and, as such, in their own ways, more or less good mirrors of the singularity of a community-bond, a *Massenbindung*, in Freudian idiom.

As it is easy to emphasize the similarities existing between anthropological and historical perspectives, it is important, after Claude Lévi-Strauss, to record the fact of a fundamental deviation between historical and anthropological methods, the former proceeding from consciously created data and materials in order to capture the unconscious of a cultural configuration, whereas the latter, the anthropological, moves from an immersion in a cul-

tural unconscious to its conscious renderings. Without discounting what the deviation between the two approaches might signify, we cannot fail to note what, in conjunction, the two imaginations do allow as expressions of cultural differences, but also their transcendence thanks to the paradoxes of concepts such as a ‘human nature,’ the idea of an authoritarian order in the sense of an Hegelian history, and the regimes of Judeo-Christian paradigms. Congruencies come to light, they include or evade mimetic and anti-mimetic testimonies and, as a consequence, empower possibilities of decoding, reading, and understanding, in their own right, original African practices in the field of intercultural and comparative philosophical literature. They are, in effect, injunctions for, and keys to exploring original domains as witnessed by the work of Alexis Kagame, offering a Bantu-Rwandese philosophy of being through Aristotelian categories, François-Marie Lufuluabo constructing a Luba theodicy by using Scholastics’ grids; or Vincent Mulago establishing overviews on African religions and visions of the world that relied on the “Colonial library” and an ethnographic questionnaire.

Listening to Alexis Kagame and Vincent Mulago, in the 1960s, the young adult I was then could seize upon their accounts of African cultures, as arguments unveiling an order, something like the nature of a basic, almost unchangeable, yet a dynamic something, a sort of immanent spirit, that their discourses were claiming to reflect; and, on the other hand, despite the rigidity of intellectual grids, their exposition of arguments were balanced and provided convincing statements on, and explanations of ways of existing in a cultural difference; in sum, manners in which, between others’ imaginations and reason, I could, happily, relate to myself as a divided-self dispersing itself in metaphors, their memories, and their knowledges. Was it only an illusion, a narcissistic fiction presupposed by an overvaluation of my cultural identity well translated and expressed by my African intellectual and spiritual parental figures? At any rate, I came to admire and like these accounts and their ambition for promoting comprehensive arguments in an exacting game of propositions based on strict rules; and, in its space, any element could comfortably be related to its own *ad intram* principles. In effect, there was an object-orientation from the outset of their essays, an explicitly idealized model of identification, an inaccessible prescription, Christianity and the Catholic Church, in which a difference, an alterity, was attempting to construct itself and to be fitted as part of a universal *communitas*. A desire in

the greatest degree of culture-integration, using *instrumentaria* from the model, would deduce abstract and concrete similarities and analogies, emulations and homologies, and possible fecundations. The describable and the described are theoretical constructs, frameworks for *distincta* and *indistincta*, their values, comparable systems, translation and interpretation; in other words, they are topologies concerned with issues about proximities and invariants, coherence and differentiation, unity and diversity.

Forty years later, the student of history of ideas I have become would wonder sometimes about the conditions of possibility of these accounts arrogantly aimed at creating regional ontologies, and the concrete contexts that gave rise to them, and sanctioned them as meaningful in the multicultural field I have been inhabiting. There were, and since the 1960s, already worked out well-informed demonstrations pointing to junctures, resources, mediations between, on the one hand, these African initiatives, their intellectual constitution, and, on the other hand, the obviousness, almost the fatality of determinations from the French language, and its epistemological constraints; and moreover, these conscious reflective activities had to be linked to other external demands, including academic requirements, and thus the influence of Pontifical Roman Institutions of Higher Education, attended by most, almost all these Central African thinkers.

Recently, putting together notes that go back to the 1970s, and which concerned this question of an African philosophy, I was struck by a neglect, a determining influence, and it brought to mind a metaphor used by Claude Digeon, the German crisis of French thought, in order to qualify cultural connections between France and Germany at the end of the XIXth century and the beginning of the XXth. I think I have come across something like what is meant by the metaphor; and, in this case, around the debate on African philosophy, a Germanic authority and influx. This inflow is extremely tidy and so visible that I wonder how it has not been more asserted, and clearly presented in the works of contemporary history of African thought. In referring to this more or less coherent, at any rate underexposed influence, I would use the image of a galaxy, as a figure of speech, and understanding it as a play of intellectual constellations around few focal points.

The first galaxy, dominated by Cyril Van Overbergh at the beginning of the XXth century, was somehow initiated by an International Congress that took place in Mons in 1905. Out of the meeting, came an immense question-

naire to be completed by Africa scholars and colonials of the time period. In this questionnaire, under the subdivision of a group of questions on the practical organization of African spaces and cultures, mention is made about the question of the existence of an African philosophy. The same Van Overbergh found himself, just after the Congress of 1905, President of the International Office of Ethnography which, by 1913, had already published ten major texts on the African question. The Flemish scholar, Alfons J. Smet, in his work *Histoire de la Philosophie africaine contemporaine*, establishes a connection between the spirit of this intellectual project and the colonial enterprise. The practical objectives were organized around three main entries, formation of colonial agents, expansion of schools for Africans; finally, the creation and implementation of a Tuskegee model adapted to Central Africa.

Smet indicates moreover something that I had missed up until now: this programmatic intent, presented to Leopold II in 1905, was related to the fact that Van Overbergh had visited the United States, paid careful attention to the American initiative at Tuskegee Institute, and from his conversations with Americans, including Booker T. Washington, had been led to a reformulation of colonial policies and directions as explicit and formally built procedures of acculturation.

Because he is the best known, to the point of being considered as “an epistemic individual,” Placide Tempels (1906-1970) who established what would doubtless become the most significant marker of this galaxy, a Bantu vitalist conception of the world, should, perhaps, be seen mainly as a missionary, essentially preoccupied with issues concerning the most appropriate methods of evangelizing, and thematising pertinent procedures for Africans’ conversion. He arrived as a missionary in the Congo in 1933. In 1946, on leave in Belgium, he published the original Flemish version of his *Bantu Philosophy*. Its precepts and aims are those of his Church, his culture, and his period. God informed all human cultures. Thus, it should be possible to find in Pagan experiential authorities stepping stones expecting, at once, an occasion and the right opportunity, to open up to Christian truth, that is to their ascent to the true God as providentially manifested in Western civilization. In this sense, the structure of the work of a Christian conversion, as well as the parameters determining its authenticity, are isomorphic and identical with those supporting the architecture of what is then, in certain circles,

qualified as Christian civilization. In practice, the missionary in Tempels, beyond the conflictual nexus of intellect and senses, rationalism and animism, engrossing most trendy theories of progress during this period, wanted to restore and affirm another privilege, in his view existentially stressed by the native culture in which he had immersed himself, the centrality of life as a permanent and constant sign of a fundamental epiphany, act of faith, act of fecundity, and act of love.

During a symposium on my *The Invention of Africa* (1988), at Rice University, the American anthropologist Ivan Karp raised a question wondering if Henri Bergson (1859-1941), the French thinker of process philosophy, flow of time and existence, a stern critique of naïve cults of scientific reason, could have influenced Tempels. I have been doubting such an intellectual filiation, not seeing how, in the vividly dogmatic climate of his philosophy training for the priesthood in a 1920s Flemish Catholic seminary, he could have accessed the works of Bergson; but, instead, and very likely, textbooks and publications in Flemish and German concerning questions of theology, missiology and, indeed, the normative scholastic philosophy of his Church.

Parallel to the work of Tempels, there are other works at the crossing of ethnology and evangelization; and we might bring out, as representative, cultural ethnographies by Pierre Colle and, for its interests in Ethics, studies of P. De Clercq analyzing concrete attitudes (anger, shame, etc.) of the Luba. Little known, yet highly influential, was the book by another missionary, Raoul Van Caeneghem, on the notion of God among the BaLuba of Kasai. A memoir of the Royal Colonial Academy of Belgium (1952), this work went practically unknown outside of Flemish and German circles because it was issued in Flemish; and the French version, *La Notion de Dieu chez les BaLuba du Kasai*, was published by the Academy only four years later, in 1956, as volume 22, fascicule 2, of its series. This is the version which became known to Congolese intellectuals. Disciple and, very probably, in competition with Tempels, another Franciscan missionary, Theodore Theuws, an ethnologist by education, would become a major inscription in researches on Luba worldviews. His *Textes luba*, edited and published in 1954 as a special number of the *Bulletin Trimestriel du Centre d'Etude des Problèmes Sociaux Indigènes*, was the first anthology of local narratives attentive to such important life-passages as 'birth', 'existence', 'dying,' and their rites. Most of his other publications emerge after 1960, and can be

considered as the scholarly side of Tempels' sacerdotal search for the best ways of converting Africans to the essentials of Christianity.

A significant fact, on which I stumbled only recently, by pure chance, is in Smet's *L'histoire de la philosophie africaine contemporaine*, and is related to the content of a 1936 article by Tempels on the Baluba-Shankadi vision of 'being in the world', published in the journal *Kongo-Overzee* (vol. 2, 1935-1936). It is about the 'foreign-ness' of the following concept, *honger der weetgierigheid*. Smet suggests as a translation of this expression, "need to know." In this context, I believe the expression corresponds exactly to what we understand today as "will to truth," or even the conceptually more dramatic, "desire for truth." The spiritual genealogy of the concept, Smet explains, goes back to the mystical Flemish language of the XIVth century of a Jean Van Ruysbroek. This seems to me extremely meaningful insofar as it intersects at the edges with the missionary idea of searching for native stepping stones of Christianity, and, perfectly overlapping its vocation, it expresses, moreover, a neat proximity with the concept of a *Deus obscurus*, the idea of a hidden God, the *Deus absconditus*, of negative theology. The concept of the Flemish mystic asserts the *itinerarium* of the soul toward the absolute unknowable, unnamable, the silence *par excellence* and, at the same time, affirms also such a mark as the faultless, unqualifiable, perfect completion of a spiritual search, indeed always unattainable. Cannot such a mystic process, be seen as a mirror for a somehow less cerebral procedure, the one conceived as its analogous by Placide Tempels, and expounded in his *Notre Rencontre* (1962), initiatic guidelines for conversion as a *cheminement* into, basically, what which is already there, unseen signs, concealed symbols, awaiting something, an unveiling and an uplifting, a recondition and a redemption. This precept, simultaneously idea and motion, is the cornerstone of what has been hailed by his followers as Tempels' *Mafundisho*, teaching and guidance. Its sociological representation was studied by Willy de Craemer, and its quintessence presented by the German anthropologist, Johannes Fabian, in the most comprehensive analysis of the *Jamaa* (family) movement initiated by Tempels after the completion of *Bantu Philosophy*. Philosophy, or theology of conversion, it is at once individual and shared, lived and, always, assessed as a communion of existing. To be, at least once, a Mu-Luba among the Ba-Luba, and feel it, live it, and evidence it. This was what Tempels admitted as his transcendence. Analyti-

cally, he expressed it in the symbolism of a translation, the transfiguration of a Pagan completion in Christianity.

1. Life, an intense life, a full life, a strong life, a total life, an intensity in being.
2. Fecundity, paternity and maternity, a strong fecundity, intense, total, and not only physical.
3. A vital union with other beings: isolation has killed us.

The accents of such '*a desire to be*' are mystical, and questions of philosophy find here their closure and, at the same time, their challenge: why should anyone bring them against such formulations?

A last galaxy, coextensive with Tempels' mystical dialectic of conversion and, more than probably, its source, is a highly structured space in which we should note as metacenter, Wilhelm Schmidt, the Vienna theorist of diffusionism, whose contribution to ethnology and religious studies is immense, as witnessed by his monumental work on cultural manifestations of God, published between 1933 and 1949. The research strived around the journal *Anthropos*, to which, spiritually or scientifically, are connected a number of Schmidt's fellow priests, and distinguished scholars; and among the most prominent, one heeds Frans Bontinck, Gustaav Hulstaert, and Paul Schebesta. The last, in the 1950s, was serving, in addition, as an expert in anthropology for the Vatican. Schmidt is, without a doubt, a rallying point. The field research that he animated and dominated with his followers was, *avant la lettre*, an interdisciplinary space that created a dialogue between anthropology, history, theology and religious policies of conversion. It cemented the basis of what, later on, in the 1950s and early 1960s, would become the locus for the fusion of a theology of salvation and a theology of stepping stones. Highly visible, Tempels is part of it, one of the thinkers of practical methodologies. He is remembered, mostly, as the charismatic leader of the *Jamaa* movement which, from the 1960s onwards, expanded throughout Central Africa like a sacred fire. Implementing his inspirations, his disciples refined them, sometimes adding to, generally sharpening his prophetic views and, between Christian and regional systems of beliefs, they contributed to the mapping of original contexts of mediation for depressed and repressed vitalistic pulsions and their spiritual credibility. In this capac-

ity, and in its own manner, Tempels' *Jamaa* was paving the way for a major event, the transmutations of the theology of stepping stones into that of "inculturation."

Within the interplay of cross-cultural networks in Central Africa, assuredly in the first fifty years of the XXth century, something simple, yet generally overlooked, imposed itself and massively, the enormous influence that some European intellectuals, bathed in a Germanic cultural atmosphere, had at the genesis, in the construction, and elaboration of debates on African philosophy, scientific projects, as well as programs for acculturation and conversion.

With the publication of his "Le 'Décollage' conceptuel: condition d'une philosophie bantoue" (*Diogène*, 1965, 52), outcome of a lecture he had delivered on March 15, 1965 at the Kinshasa Goethe Institute, Franz Crahay, a Belgian professor of philosophy at Lovanium University, created an event, expounding on external and internal conditions for the existence of an African philosophy. His exposé, all of it animated by a metaphor from aeronautic vocabulary, taking-off, intended to uncover and propose an absolutely new duty for the practice of philosophy, and aimed at fostering a new demand of rigor at the heart of the discipline. The lecture first, and then its publication in the Paris based journal, *Diogène*, expanded the discussion on the idea of an African philosophy, internationalized it; and its effects thoroughly modified an intellectual climate that had been dominated by clergymen, and mainly by missionaries who were spiritually attuned to what I have qualified as Germanic culture. Crahay assumed, in his presentation, an excessively idealized understanding of philosophy, never and nowhere achieved and, at any rate, nowhere attainable; specifically, philosophy as an explicit discourse, analytical, radically critical and auto-critical, systematic at least in principle and, in any case, open, and concerned with human experience, its conditions, meanings and the values it witnesses to.

I was in the room, and I still remember the religious atmosphere of Crahay's performance, how it brought to my mind the singularity of what it was in actuality, a secular representation of a solemn High Mass, with all its well-prescribed out liturgical requisites. After the lecture, Crahay invited me to the party that the Goethe Institute was organizing in his honor at a local restaurant, *Le Colibri*; there, he asked me to write a report of the event for the press. I wrote a brief account the following day, submitted it to him, and

a few days later it was published in one of the dailies of Kinshasa, *Le Courrier d'Afrique*.

Did I think that, apart from emphasizing a method and its exigencies, Crahay had dismantled anything? His intervention had problematized a practice; and, in so doing, raised new problems, which was what, in any case, is expected from any philosophical practice. He had established the difference represented by Tempels, Kagame, or Mulago, in its own right, as *une science, une connaissance, une vérité autres*, that which is out there, preceding historically new questions as their external conditions of probability. In 1968, at the Goethe Institute, in the very room where three years before, Franz Crahay, my former professor, had made his intervention, I was lecturing on '*Héritage occidental et conscience nègre*,' considering the disjunction between being this or being that, as that which, from a different viewpoint, was exceeded and transcended in the conjunction made possible by three new inscriptions on the body of an African history; namely, an acceleration of History, an epistemological discontinuity, and an alphabetical revolution. A surprised child of multiple memories, at the intersection of at least two philosophical traditions, I was stating my consciousness as being caught by its own self-reflections in, at least, two historicities, two languages, two cultures, and a multiplicity of *tradita*, givens, handed-downs, inheritances.

Such an exercise in historical and psychological connections and disconnections, with its obsessions and anxieties about methods and faithfulness, was one of the best introductions to masterful programmatic principles like those suggested by Georges Canguilhem in his seminal treatise, *Le Normal et Le Pathologique* (1966). They led me to a profound respect for any observation, reading, interpretation, even the most unruly apparently. Canguilhem, whose views I have been sharing with my students for more than thirty years, and over three continents, taught me the obvious, so often ignored, sometimes ridiculed, yet which is the only way to a good apprehension and understanding of anything, namely that it is not just the difference, the exception which proves the rule as a rule, it is the infraction which provides it with the occasion to be rule by making rules. Such an attitude, that might seem to transliterate a neurosis, at least in principle, seems to me a healthy statement in any discipline, and indicates also, and again in principle, the condition of a real joy, say, in the practice of philosophy.

From my confession, is there an assessment that can be made about the practice of philosophy by an African? Witnessing its own idiosyncrasy in an eccentric effusion, it has, essentially, articulated its own self-subversion and taste, even when it tried to shed some light on the usually unaccented presence of a Germanic influence at the genesis of the philosophical debate in Africa. In this sense, my testimony might not have served well the field and its complexity. A multifaceted domain, as recently illustrated by the magnificent *Companion to African Philosophy* edited by Kwasi Wiredu and published by Blackwell Ltd., apart from treatises on its history and geography, its languages and contexts, for methodological purposes, as a way of determining tasks and classifying the contents of an already impressive library, one could divide works pertaining to Africa and philosophy into two main sections: on the one hand, those belonging to semiology, that is studies localizing, analyzing, and organizing coherently socio-cultural signs; on the other, those belonging to hermeneutics, that is studies interpreting the meanings of these signs. In their diversity and variety, and beyond the sterile debate on the 'existence' or the 'inexistence' of an African philosophy, what affirms itself amazingly remains, simply, the vocation of something called philosophy, about which, I, personally, have no convincing definition, and which, in Africa as elsewhere, actualizes itself as a perpetual recommencement.

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