

EDITORIAL

This 1999 double issue of QUEST has a special focus on the language question in Africa, and on the idea of an African, 'Negro-African', or Black-African culture. The language question continues to mark sharp differences between African philosophers. We have here, in a sense, a continuation of the discussion between Godfrey Tangwa from Cameroon and Chris Uroh from Nigeria in the December 1994 and June 1995 issues of QUEST. The idea of culture, so much in use today in the most diverse discourses, receives profound and critical treatment under the provocative title 'Cultures do not exist' by Wim van Binsbergen. Pierre Nzinsi from Gabon and Lazare Poame from Ivory Coast further discuss the idea of a specific Negro-African culture and the challenges posed to African cultures by technology and democracy.

This issue appears with considerable delay but marks at the same time very hopeful developments related to QUEST. It appears in the year 2002 parallel to the 2000 and 2001 double issues and will be followed by a reorganisation of QUEST. The journal will find a new and more solid institutional underpinning in the context of the well-established co-operation between the Department of Philosophy of the Erasmus University in Rotterdam and the Africa Studies Centre in Leiden. It is obvious that the continuity of the journal is best guaranteed at this point in time by a solid institutional backing. Efforts to transfer the journal to a department of Philosophy at an African university have failed over the past years. However, the aim of making this transfer in due course is certainly not sacrificed.

The new co-ordinator, Wim van Binsbergen, is professor of the Foundations of Intercultural Philosophy at the Erasmus University as well as one of the leading researchers at the Africa Studies Centre, Leiden. He will take over as from the 2002 volume of QUEST. He will begin his term of office holding extensive consultations with the entire editorial team, in an attempt to facilitate the continuous and direct interaction between QUEST and the primarily participants in the venture, namely the philosophers at various faculties at African universities. The scholarly and thought-provoking contribution of Wim van Binsbergen to this issue may serve as further introduction to the QUEST community, after his 1996 QUEST article on a variety of Afrocentricity.

The plans for the future of QUEST involve transformation into an Internet journal in PDF format (i.e. freely accessible for reading and printing, but not downloadable) with a limited printed version of each issue for libraries, contributors, and for those colleagues who are not connected to the net. Of course originality, quality, and relevance to philosophical debates in Africa will continue to constitute the hallmarks of the QUEST editorial policy. We are confident that, with a changed team and a new production format, QUEST will make a major leap forward towards realising its goal of serving as an effective forum for philosophers in Africa and beyond.

