AFRICA IN THE WORLD: A HISTORY OF EXTRAVERSION*

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AFRICA SOUTH OF THE SAHARA is often said to be the limbo of the international system, existing only at the outer limits of the planet which we inhabit. But, again according to a widespread opinion, it is unlikely that Africa is a limbo in the sense of Roman Catholic theology—that is to say, a place where souls are prepared for redemption. ‘Africa has remained cut off from all contacts with the rest of the world; it is the land of gold, for ever pressing in upon itself, and the land of childhood, removed from the light of self-conscious history and wrapped in the dark mantle of night’, wrote Hegel.¹ The vast literature produced by journalists and academics which refers ad nauseam to the marginalization of the sub-continent, or to its ‘disconnection’, even if it is only ‘by default’,² does no more than reproduce Hegel’s idea that this part of the globe is an ‘enclave’, existing in ‘isolation’ on account of its deserts, its forests and its alleged primitiveness. For those who subscribe to this school of thought, the spread of war as a mode of political regulation over the last decade or so is a sign that the day of salvation is yet far off. Evidence is offered by those terrible messengers, the handless amputees produced by war in Sierra Leone, the Danteesque inferno of the genocide of Rwandan Tutsis in 1994, or the spread of the AIDS pandemic, a sinister companion of conflict, which decimates those populations which war has spared.

Nevertheless, if we are to stay with the metaphor of limbo, it is above all in a limbo of the intellect that such a simplistic view of the relation of Africa with the rest of the world is conceived. For the sub-continent is neither more nor less than a part of the planet, and it is pointless to pretend that, to quote one French former colonial governor,³ it leads a ‘traditional existence shielded from the outside world, as though it were another planet’, which passively absorbs the shock of having been made dependent on other parts of the world.

*Translated from the French by Stephen Ellis.

Dependence as a mode of action

Considered in a view of history over the longue durée, Africa has never ceased to exchange both ideas and goods with Europe and Asia, and later with the Americas. The antiquity of Christianity in Ethiopia, the spread of Islam on the coasts, the establishment of Austronesian colonies in Madagascar, regular patterns of trade with China, India, the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean are all evidence of the degree to which eastern and southern Africa were for centuries integrated into the pre-modern economic systems of what scholars used to call the Orient. Even the Sahara has never been the ‘ocean of sand and desolation’ which J. S. Coleman alleged to be the reason for the ‘isolation’ of black Africa. On the contrary, the desert was until the end of the nineteenth century an important commercial and cultural axis, a highway for the transmission of gold, trade goods, slaves, Muslim learning and belief. From the fifteenth century onwards, the Atlantic coast was open to trade with Europe and the Americas. In the opinion of authors such as M. G. S. Hodgson, J. Lippman Abu-Lughod, K. N. Chaudhuri and Jack Goody, and especially Andre Gunder Frank, a world economic system existed before the capitalist commercial expansion of the West. If this hypothesis is correct, then Africa was certainly an element of such a system, notwithstanding that Frank seems rather reticent on this point in his recent work.

A classic view—if we are to believe the important work of E. R. Leach in anthropology, or R. H. Lowie, O. Hintze and M. Weber in historical sociology—is that relationships such as those which African societies maintained with their external environment were crucial to the constitution of their internal politics, even if the effects of this connection between the two spheres of the internal and the external varied from place to place and time to time. Moreover, the uneven and asymmetrical character of the relations between Africa on the one hand, and Asia and Europe on the other, which was accentuated from the 1870s onwards and culminated in the military occupation of the continent, does not exclude the possibility that Africa may have played an active role throughout this long process of reduction to a state of dependency. Some ten years ago, I hazarded the idea that ‘the leading actors in sub-Saharan societies have tended to compensate for their difficulties in the autonomization of their power and in intensifying the exploitation of their dependants by deliberate recourse to the strategies of extraversion, mobilizing resources derived from their (possibly unequal) relationship with the external environment’. The

external environment thus turned into ‘a major resource in the process of political centralization and economic accumulation’, and also in the conduct of the social struggles of subaltern actors from the moment that they attempted to take control, even in symbolic ways, of the ‘relations with the exterior on which those who dominate the society base their power’. In short, ‘Africans here have been active agents in the mise en dépendance of their societies, sometimes opposing it and at other times joining in it’, in such a way that it became an anachronism to reduce such home-grown strategies to formulas of ‘nationalism’ or indeed of ‘collaboration’.6

This approach, diametrically opposed to the dependency theory popularized by the works of Walter Rodney and Basil Davidson, has been judged in some quarters to be rather provocative and has generated both criticism and misunderstanding.7 Nevertheless, whatever the points of interest raised by such criticisms, to date they do not appear to have been of a nature which might disprove the hypothesis that, on the one hand, strategies of extraversion form a constant thread throughout the history of the world,8 nor that subjection can constitute a form of action.9 In other words, it is no part of the present argument to deny the existence of a relationship of dependence between Africa and the rest of the world: the point is to consider the fact of dependency while eschewing the meanderings of dependency theory. These are two entirely different matters. Whatever one may think of this proposition, debates between historians now permit us to appreciate better than before the diversity which has marked this aspect of international relations south of the Sahara, and sometimes to relativize the importance of the relationship to the external

9. Thus A. Giddens associates autonomy and dependence in writing of a ‘dialectic of control’, in Central Problems in Social Theory. Action, structure and contradiction in social analysis (Macmillan, London, 1979), p. 76 et seq., p. 93, and M. Foucault defines power as ‘an action upon actions’, or ‘a way of acting upon one or more subjects who are themselves actors, for as long as they are capable of action’, in Dits et Écrits, 1954–1988 (4 vols., Gallimard, Paris, 1994), IV, p. 237. ‘The way in which Foucault writes about ‘making people subject: I mean turning them into “subjects” in both senses of the term’ (La volonté de savoir, Gallimard, Paris, 1976, p. 81) is at the heart of the concept of ‘governmentality’ (gouvernmentalité) in terms of which we define la politique du ventre, inasmuch as the latter is a system of making subjects. See the above references and, for a theoretical approach, J.-F. Bayart, ‘Fait missionnaire et politique du ventre: une lecture foucauldienne’, Le Fait missionnaire (Lausanne), 6 (September 1998), pp. 9–38.
environment in the structuration of African societies. Thus, the classic view of A. G. Hopkins, according to whom the transition from the slave trade to the so-called ‘legitimate’ trade led to a ‘crisis of adaptation’ which affected most of West Africa from the early nineteenth century, does not appear to take adequate account of the diversity of economic trajectories operating among the societies of the region, and notably the differences between those of the coast and the hinterland. This theory would certainly benefit from a more rigorous use of chronology, but also from a more subtle appreciation of the nature of various political societies, various types of actor and activity and sorts of enterprise, and a deeper understanding of the inter-relations between the coast and the hinterland areas of West Africa.  

Above all, the fact that the world economy, considered over the longue durée, can be said to constitute a system, does not mean that only ‘structure matters’, as the dependency theorists, led by Immanuel Wallerstein and Andre Gunder Frank, would have us believe. Recent research demonstrates that, on the contrary, within the context of this world economic system, the social relations of production—not to mention the various cultural practices associated with them—are essentially related to local circumstances. This is the case, for example, if we consider the exact conditions in which traders, missionaries and foreign soldiers interacted with ‘natives’, or the situation with regard to health and sanitation, such as the influence of malaria, yellow fever, sleeping sickness and typhoid. Moreover, new research underlines, more clearly than previously, just how much Africans have participated in the processes which have led to the insertion of their societies as a dependent partner in the world economy and, in the last resort, in the process of colonization. ‘We must accept that African participation in the slave trade was voluntary and under the control of African decision makers. This was not just at the surface level of daily exchange but even at deeper levels. Europeans possessed no means, either economic or military, to compel African leaders to sell slaves’, John Thornton affirms, before going on to examine the contribution made by captives exported to America to the emergence of a transatlantic civilization. In similar vein, West African intermediaries in

11. This is still the position taken by A. G. Frank in his most recent work: ReOrient, p. xvi.
the palm oil trade imposed on their British trading partners their own commercial conventions at least during the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century. Such an autonomy of action on the part of African traders was facilitated by the fact that the terms of exchange were to the advantage of the sub-continent for some two centuries, from about 1680 to 1870, before turning against it at the end of the nineteenth century.

Moreover, colonization as a generic term subsumes a vast variety of historical situations, depending, for example, on whether military occupation was violent or was effected via local alliances; on whether or not it was followed by the rapid arrival (or, as in Angola, the much later arrival) of white settlers, who in turn were from a wide variety of social backgrounds and classes; or whether military occupation was followed by settlement by foreign diasporas, such as Indians and Lebanese; or whether colonization lasted more than a century, as in the Four Communes of Senegal and in the Western Cape, or was extraordinarily short-lived and transient, as in the Angolan hinterland. Other variable factors include whether colonization drew its administrative and political inspiration from British ideas of monarchy and government, or from French notions of the Republic and the Jacobin state, or from the Portuguese model of corporatism. Some colonies experienced two waves of the 'primary' phase of colonization, often thought to be the period of greatest coercion, as a result of the devolution of sovereignty from one European power to another, notably after the First World War, as was the case in Rwanda, Burundi, Cameroon and Togo, or they even became the sites of armed conflict between European rivals, as in Tanganyika, where the First World War was said to have led to a million civilian deaths. Other factors include whether a colony was marked by rivalries between various representatives of imperial domination such as between civil administrators and missionaries, or between agrarian and industrial interests such as in Kenya, or between different white communities such as in South Africa, where they went as far as to engage in a major military confrontation with one another. The examples and permutations are legion.

Whatever the particular case, the operation of a colonial regime was accompanied by a significant mobilization of the societies which it held in subjection, whether because government policy coincided with the strategies of various indigenous actors and was effectively co-opted by the latter,

14. Lynn, *Commerce and Economic Change*.
or whether it went against the interests of such local actors and gave rise to more or less direct resistance. For example, the BaKongo made use of the colonial system to maintain and extend their economic influence, whereas the Fang used it to turn a martial model of society, no longer viable in view of the new political order, into a particularly robust form of economic activity. The Songhai and Zerma used colonial rule to defend themselves against the Touareg and the Peul. The BaLuba and the BaPende, evading pressure from their Chokwe neighbours, achieved some prosperity in the new order. In Cameroon, the Bassa tried military means to oppose German penetration, since this threatened to undermine their position as commercial intermediaries between the coast and the hinterland. The response of African societies to the ‘big bang’ of the first imposition of colonization also differed from one social group to another and from one region to another according to the interests at stake and the way events unfolded: ‘there was . . . no single Rwandan “response” to the colonial invasion’, notes Catharine Newbury, for example, while underlining that the range of reactions cannot be reduced to a simple dichotomy between Hutu and Tutsi, and that both Hutu and Tutsi sometimes pursued strategies which pitted one faction, one province or one social category against another.17

This variety of reactions is such that the relation of radical antagonism between colonizer and colonized, which is supposed by intellectual critiques of imperialism and which is implicit in political struggle itself, inevitably tends to disappear from analytical view. The creation of a relationship of dependency, followed by the occupation of African societies, was a process which proceeded by small steps, by almost unnoticed passages, via unstable alliances—as Frederick Cooper has shown in the case of Zanzibar18—as much as by the meta-violence of conquest.

Strategies of extraversion

Location (terroir) and action: these seem to be the two key concepts by means of which we may hope to apprehend the ambivalence, the differentiation and the dynamism of the relationship of Africa with the rest of the world. From this point of view, the paradigm of the strategy of extraversion, at the heart of which is the creation and the capture of a rent generated by dependency and which functions as a historical matrix of inequality, political centralization and social struggle, continues to be heuristic. Needless to say, not all historical trajectories are in

fact the same in this regard. The case of the kingdom of Madagascar and that of the Angolan coast, for example, both seem to be extreme.\textsuperscript{19}

In the first place, recent research on the history of colonization confirms the degree to which those who were colonized themselves participated in this process, and it confirms the effect of their actions on the colonial situation itself, on the colonizers, and even on the metropole. In their outstanding analysis of ‘the unhappy valley of colonial capitalism’ in Kenya, Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale thus demonstrate that the forces which constituted the colonial state and the colonial relations of production were not at all ‘exterior’ to the society which was being colonized.\textsuperscript{20} A similar conclusion is reached by Frederick Cooper when he identifies ‘a limited space of mutual intelligibility and interaction’ between colonial bureaucrats and native workers: ‘European policy is as much a response to African initiatives as African “resistance” or “adaptation” is a response to colonial interventions’.\textsuperscript{21} Moreover, it is now generally admitted that the social experience of colonization was shared by both white and black actors, and was suffused with a whole series of ‘refractions’ or ‘reverberations’ between Africa and Europe. In many respects the experience was a veritable ‘laboratory of modernity’ for industrial societies inasmuch as it was a means by which they came to formulate a moral denunciation of the corrupting influence of cities and their slums and to identify the dangers posed by the formation of a working class, and through which there emerged a Victorian ethos based on notions of domesticity and privacy. The symbolic legitimacy of the Crown, the development of new trends in the arts and sciences, the development of new pastoral techniques of Christian conversion or reconversion, the introduction of race as a factor in the definition of citizenship and of immigration, the development of an authoritarian and technocratic tradition of reform, for example in town planning,\textsuperscript{22} are all further examples of such an effect. It is significant that


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at the same time, research by specialists of Asia has tended to conclude, in a strikingly similar way, that there existed a relation between colonizer and colonized which amounts to a form of 'dialogic' relationship.23

Furthermore, the events of the last ten years have tended to corroborate the idea that external constraints were used as an instrument by native holders of power and by other political actors. This was a phenomenon which was already noticeable (as it was throughout the era of the slave trade and colonization itself) in nationalist mobilization, in the way in which independence was managed and in the diplomatic positions adopted by African states in international affairs during the Cold War or in reaction to the Israeli-Arab conflict.24 On the one hand, the last decade has done nothing to disprove the rather sombre diagnosis which was formulated at the end of the 1980s, to the effect that 'the mirages of revolution and democracy have disappeared'.25 The same decade has, on the other hand, witnessed an exacerbation and a radicalization of strategies of extraversion as the failure of the structural adjustment programmes which have been in vogue since 1980 has become increasingly evident, and as this failure has destroyed the perspective of primitive capital accumulation through the extreme exploitation of local productive forces, most notably through labour. Contrary to a widely held opinion, the wave of pro-democracy agitation of 1989–91 was caused less by the fall of the Berlin Wall or the speech of François Mitterrand at the Franco-African Summit at La Baule in June 1990 or by pressure from aid donors, than by the resurgence of old expectations and social movements of long standing, able to assert themselves once more as soon as international organizations had moderated their support for authoritarian regimes. Other important influences included the overthrow of President Bourguiba in Tunisia, the introduction of a multi-party system in Algeria after the riots of October 1988, the freeing of Nelson Mandela in South Africa, and the contagion effect caused by the organization of a Conférence Nationale in Benin. However, this venting of popular feeling was rapidly countered by the strategies taken by incumbent power-holders intent on restoring their authoritarian regimes with an artful combination of dexterity and brutality.

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Those power-holders who were able to restore their positions in the face of such popular demands had a number of key assets at their disposal. They controlled security forces which they could both use and abuse. They had financial resources accumulated during long years of plunder and management of the various rents and commissions generated by their economies; with these funds they could purchase the support of some key political opponents, finance the creation of a plethora of small parties calculated to divide the opposition, and implement veritable ‘strategies of tension’ by provoking various forms of agitation, most notably in the form of ethnic and agrarian clashes in rural areas. Last but not least, they were aided by the pusillanimity of the Western powers, the Bretton Woods institutions, and even of the Vatican, all of which blew the trumpet of democracy and even added a democratic component to the macroeconomic conditions attached to structural adjustment programmes, but which hesitated to draw the logical conclusions from their good intentions by suspending for a sufficiently lengthy period their provision of development aid when these democratic conditions were not respected.

The paths taken by Togo, Cameroon, Gabon, Zaire, Zimbabwe or Kenya from 1990 to 2000 are an adequate illustration of these various points. In such conditions, any ‘transition to democracy’ was largely derailed. In many cases it actually was reduced to no more than a technique of self-preservation by various anciens régimes, in the tradition of previous attempts to liberalize ruling parties, such as those which allowed Julius Nyerere, Jomo Kenyatta and (after 1980) Félix Houphouët-Boigny to weaken the barons of their own parties by obliging them to submit themselves to competitive elections, or reminiscent of the way that Léopold Senghor re-established a system of pluralism in 1978, paving the way for President Abdou Diouf to legalize a full multi-party system in 1981 and to offer to the opposition what was aptly called ‘just enough electoral rope to hang themselves’.26 In the last resort, there were no keener advocates of multi-party politics than Presidents Mobutu or Biya, since, in a space of only a few months, each was able to engineer the creation of several dozen new political entities led by front-men who were in fact in presidential service, in the purest tradition of colonial administration. In such a context, aided by the suicidal divisiveness of so many opposition groups, the transition to multi-partyism was no more than a fig leaf hiding from the prudish view of the West the enhanced exercise of the politique du ventre by authoritarian regimes. The few exceptions would include Mali, where President Alpha Konaré has proceeded to tackle head-on, with impressive

single-mindedness, economic reforms, reconciliation with Touareg dissident movements and the democratization of public institutions, and perhaps also Benin, where the return of the former dictator Matthieu Kérékou was effected via the ballot box in circumstances of exemplary legitimacy. The few other cases where a genuine change of government took place in the early 1990s soon ended with the return of old demons, such as in Zambia, in the Central African Republic, in Madagascar or, most tragically of all, in Congo-Brazzaville.

One might summarize by saying that democracy, or more precisely the discourse of democracy, is no more than yet another source of economic rents, comparable to earlier discourses such as the denunciation of communism or of imperialism in the time of the Cold War, but better adapted to the spirit of the age. It is, as it were, a form of pidgin language that various native princes use in their communication with Western sovereigns and financiers. Senegal, one of the main recipients of public development aid in sub-Saharan Africa, is a past master in this game of make-believe. It is no exaggeration to say that the export of its institutional image, in spite of the difficulties posed by the troubles in Casamance, has replaced the export of groundnuts. But the supreme accolade for duplicity has to be awarded to Marshal Mobutu who had the chutzpah, in 1991, to request from Western aid donors 207 four-wheel drive vehicles, 217 Motorola communication sets, 50 boats and 50 outboard motors, plus various other electoral requirements, fuel supplies and air transport, so as to enable him to organize legislative and presidential elections and thus pre-empt the outcome of the Conférence Nationale!

In cases such as these, the fairy-story called Democracy is a new case of what might be termed the ‘transformism’ so characteristic of both the colonial and post-colonial state. While serving as an instrument of internal legitimation and as an international norm, it has paradoxically become a cog in the ‘anti-politics machine’ which has been so well described by James Ferguson. By head-hunting many of the brightest African intellectuals with the high salaries awarded to international civil servants, by celebrating the virtues of ‘civil society’ and ‘good governance’ and distributing largesse in the service of this cause, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have in effect co-opted and confined those potential counter-elites within a ‘legitimate’ problematic of development, i.e. the so-called consensus of Washington. In doing so they have done their part to promote a multilateralization of the passive revolution whose principal institutional and political vector is the state. In one sense, this was the real significance of the Beninese model of transition.

27. Bayart, The State in Africa, chap. VII.
and of the electoral victory of Nicéphore Soglo in 1990–91: Soglo was a clone produced in the World Bank headquarters at 1818 H Street, Washington DC, a delegate of the akowé or educated elite of Benin, able to keep the fruits of democracy at a suitable distance from rural communities and the younger generation.29

Nevertheless, the strategy of extraversion through democracy has shown its limits. It is, indeed, unable to incorporate either economically or institutionally, in terms of either education or ideology, the groups we have just mentioned, namely young people and rural communities, in spite of the fact that these two excluded categories actually compose the majority of the population. Too often it is war which has instead become the vector of their mobilization, and the images of bloodthirsty young fighters in Chad, Somalia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda or Kivu have acquired a paradigmatic importance in this respect. But conflicts also reproduce themselves by means of extraversion, for example in the political and military extraversions which were already features of the wars in Chad and Angola in the 1970s. Financial extraversion can take the form of direct financial aid by friendly governments and multilateral institutions, such as the World Bank, the IMF and the European Development Fund which have all made contributions to the Ugandan war effort in Rwanda and Congo-Kinshasa since 1990, in the guise of structural adjustment aid. It can also take the form of humanitarian aid, such as food aid or medical assistance, with the consequence that international NGOs join the serried ranks of intermediaries between the African sub-continent and the rest of the world, often being obliged to pay local political-military entrepreneurs in order to gain access to those societies or population groups whom they wish to assist. Economic extraversion in time of war takes place when the costs of waging war are covered by the export, including in the crudest form, of the primary products of a country, in the form of oil, diamonds, minerals, hardwood, cash crops, cattle or other animals. Alternatively the costs of war may be met, as in Somalia, through emigration and the establishment of a new category of merchants based in the diaspora.30

Extraversion can also take a cultural form, since combatants adopt simultaneously the cosmologies and forms of symbolic representation of their local territories or home-areas—including in matters of religious


belief—and the imaginary figures of globalization, for example by taking as their hero Rambo and by appropriating through plunder the consumer goods which they would otherwise be too poor to obtain.31

In a more muted way, perhaps, the quasi-guerrilla struggle in Nigeria’s Delta states, waged by various self-proclaimed ‘resistance committees’, or ‘communities’, formed on the basis of individual villages or ethnic groups, which demand protection money from foreign companies in guise of compensation or redistribution, is a form of the same process. This particular struggle is led by youth, in the African sense of the word: people who have educational qualifications but who are without work, who demand tributary payments from foreign oil companies by putting them under permanent pressure and subjecting them to commando raids by units of hardened combatants. Similar phenomena occur in Africa around mining enclaves and plantations, such as in Tanzania, where artisanal miners are at war with the Asian entrepreneurs who have been the main beneficiaries from the privatization of the gold and semi-precious gem mines.32 Such situations can become the occasion for plunder on a scale so wholesale as to constitute a genuine social movement. The tragic explosions which took place at the railway station in Yaoundé in August 1998 or at the Jesse oil pipeline near Warri in Nigeria in October of the same year were the most appalling demonstrations of the importance of such movements. In both cases accidents led to the deaths of several hundred people.

The two strategies of extraversion which have dominated the past decade—one in the form of democracy, the other in the form of war—correspond well to the preliminary model which we have suggested, whereby sovereignty in Africa is exercised through the creation and management of dependence. Observance of the Holy Trinity of Reform (structural adjustment, democracy and good governance) has been filtered through the objectives of power-holders and implemented in the reproduction of systems of inequality and domination, as is well illustrated by a study of the liberalization of foreign trade, of the privatization of state

enterprises and of the democratic transition process itself.\textsuperscript{33} Aid donors have shown themselves incapable of prevailing upon their African partners to follow the prescriptions intended for them. Rather, due to the legal impossibility of re-negotiating multilateral debt, or through fear of the unknown and an obsessive concern with ‘stability’, donors have resigned themselves to continued bankrolling of African regimes, occasionally saving face by the temporary suspension of credits or of bilateral aid. This game of musical chairs was pushed to its limit in the case of Marshal Mobutu in 1990–91, in the very particular context created by the Gulf War—at a time when Zaire was president of the UN Security Council and was able to sell its diplomatic services for an exceptionally high price. At the same time, the Holy See was terrified of any transition arrangement which would have brought to the presidency, even on an interim basis, Monsignor Monsengwo, the archbishop of Kisangani who presided over the Zairean Conférence Nationale. In Togo, Cameroon and Kenya, Western governments and the Bretton Woods institutions all demonstrated disapproval without jeopardizing their essential interests, namely the maintenance of the existing political regime, the myth of debt repayment, and some solid commercial and personal interests. More fundamentally, the problem-atic of aid conditionality has accelerated the process of creating dual structures of power, which was already one of the salient features of both colonial government and the post-colonial rhizome state, the systematic exercise of which has had the effect of making much of what happens in Africa invisible to outsiders.\textsuperscript{34}

Aid donors and Western chancelleries deal with institutions and nodes of power which are tantamount to a décor of trompe l’œil, and which long ago ceased to be channels for the flows of the most substantial economic and political resources. It is now the turn of aid donors to become victims of the deception exercised by Zairean or Tanzanian farmers when they set up fake villages—‘Potemkin villages’ they would be called in Russia—in obedience to orders to set up consolidated settlements, but which they abandoned as soon as these had been officially inspected. In a state such as Senegal, the administrative capital, Dakar, seems to have progressively become the astral body of Touba, the holy city of the Mouride brotherhood, and the capital of fraud and smuggling. African political societies are duplicated between, on the one hand, a pays légal, a legal structure

\textsuperscript{33} B. Hibou, L’Afrique est-elle protectionniste? Les chemins buissonniers de la libéralisation extérieure (Karthala, Paris, 1996) and idem (ed.), La privatisation des États (Karthala, Paris, 1999); Banéga, ‘La démocratie “à pas de caméléon”’.

which is the focus of attention for multilateral donors and Western states, and on the other hand, a *pays réel* where real power is wielded. In extreme cases this duplication can lead to the existence of a hidden structure which surrounds, or even controls, the official occupant of the presidential throne, rather like a board of directors which appoints an executive to carry out its decisions. In the last ten years, such unofficial bodies have played a key role in siphoning benefits from national economies and in designing and implementing strategies of authoritarian restoration, for example in Kenya, Cameroon and Chad or, most tragically of all, in Rwanda from 1990 to 1994. Aid donors are singularly powerless in the face of such developments. It is revealing that their institutional counterparts and partners, Ministers of the Economy and of Finance or of Foreign Affairs, have few real powers to compare with those wielded by heads of state and their entourages, and have little option other than to make gestures which pass for ‘reform’, ‘openness’ and neo-liberal respectability in general. It is precisely in an attempt to adapt to this reality that France has personalized its African policy in a most extreme fashion, with consequences which are now apparent for all to see. And it is by making use of such shadowy intermediaries that Asian entrepreneurs and operators are able to wage an economic offensive which benefits from liberalization and privatization, without the slightest concern for ‘transparency’.

For its part, war has made it possible for states to recover a part of the sovereignty which they lost when they became subject to donor conditionality. The genocidal strategy of authoritarian restoration, followed by the defeat of hutu Power in Rwanda and the fall of Marshal Mobutu in Zaire, has cruelly highlighted the limits of the influence wielded by France, the only European country which aspires to have a true continental policy towards Africa. But if the period from 1994 to 1997 has constituted a symbolic consummation of the failure of France’s traditional approach, one may wonder whether the events of 1998 did not constitute a similar defeat for American patronage in the region. It is now evident that the ‘new leaders’ on whom US Africa policy was posited had, in reality, their own agendas. The State Department and the Pentagon have shown themselves incapable of keeping control of the anti-Sudan coalition which they assembled, financed, armed and advised, and unable to prevent their supposed clients from attacking each other. Eritrea and Ethiopia have made war on each other, as have Uganda and Rwanda after first turning on the man they had installed in Congo-Kinshasa, Laurent-Désiré Kabila (assuming, that is, that it was not Kabila who first betrayed his allies by failing to respect his obligations towards his patrons). A comprehensive after-shock from the Somalia fiasco of 1993, the spread of war throughout the Horn and central Africa, constitutes a triumph of politics over economic and financial conditionality, over naive attempts to
reinforce Africa’s peacekeeping capacity and over direct intervention by the great powers.

The historicity of extraversion

An insistence on the central role played by strategies of extraversion in the way the relationship between sub-Saharan Africa and the rest of the world is articulated offers three advantages, notwithstanding the inevitable limits imposed by this model and the nuances which are appropriate whenever attention turns to an individual historical situation.

In the first place, we are better equipped to understand the specific quality, over a long period of time, of Africa’s own historical trajectories compared to those we may observe in Asia, from Japan and China to the Ottoman Empire. The extraversion hypothesis allows us to identify in the post-colonial state south of the Sahara a new form of a particular civilization—using this last word in the sense given to it by the historian Fernand Braudel, which is no doubt debatable. Braudel considered a civilization to be an entity ‘of long and inexhaustible duration’. Characteristic of the civilization of sub-Saharan Africa, in this sense of the word ‘civilization’, are oral culture, a rather weak development of productive forces, extensive agriculture and pastoral activity without use of private-title land tenure, a rather limited degree of cultural and social polarization, and a limited degree of economic accumulation and political centralization, both of which have been based largely on the control of the economic benefits flowing from dependence on the exterior environment rather than based on the intensive exploitation of those living under a particular system of political domination.35 Today, as in the past, Africa has a tendency to export its factors of production in raw form, whether in terms of the working capacity which it exports as emigration, or the agricultural or mineral resources which it exports in either formal or informal systems, or the capital which it expatriates in the form of flight capital and, more rarely perhaps, as debt repayment. The people who manage this unequal relationship with the international economic system are able to derive from it the resources necessary for their domestic overlordship. The dance which Laurent-Désiré Kabila performed with various mining interests during his campaign in 1996–7 was almost a caricature of this tendency. Foreign businesses, which dependency theorists would consider to be part of a network of imperialist interests, were in fact most often the dupes of the Prince with whom they negotiated. Nevertheless, this particular Prince hardly made the most profitable use of the resources which he had acquired. With regard to diamonds, for

35. Bayart, The State in Africa, pp. 36–7. Such a theoretical model needs to be nuanced, particularly in the light of the historiography of peasant behaviour. Cf. Cooper et al., Confronting Historical Paradigms, p. 231 et seq.
example, there is no doubt that it would have been more beneficial for Kabila to work directly with De Beers rather than with allegedly independent traders who, in the last resort, all end up selling their stones to De Beers and are really little more than intermediaries.

We find all the characteristics of a strategy of extraversion, pathetic when it is not frankly tragic, in the case of Angola, conducted via the modes of debt and war. It is through war that the MPLA, the heir to the slave-trading elites of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the sociological descendant of those who collaborated most closely with the Portuguese colonial regime in the twentieth century, keeps control of the rents to be derived from the oil trade. Angola’s ruling party went to the lengths of securing Cuban protection for US oil concessions in one of the most baroque episodes of the Cold War. It is through debt that the MPLA finances its political fuite en avant, not without obliging its creditors, including the IMF and, for good measure, the United Nations, to pay heavily for the privilege, when they were faced with a resumption of military hostilities in December 1998.\footnote{Cf. O. Vallée, ‘La dette publique est-elle privée? Traités, traitement, traité: modes de la dette africaine’, Politique africaine, 73 (March 1999), pp. 50–67, and various works by C. Messiant, who gives a far more detailed version of the political economy and history of the Angolan government than can be given here: cf. especially ‘La Fondation Eduardo dos Santos (FESA). A propos de l’“investissement” de la société civile par le pouvoir angolais’, Politique africaine, 73 (March 1999), pp. 82–101; ‘Angola, les voies de l’ethnicisation et de la décomposition’, Lusotopie, 1994 et 1995; ‘Angola, entre guerre et paix’ in Marchal and Messiant, Les chemins de la guerre, chap. 4, and C. Messiant (ed.), ‘L’Angola dans la guerre’, Politique africaine, 57 (March 1995).} The similarities between this political economy and that of the Angolan end of the Atlantic Middle Passage of the eighteenth century, studied by J. C. Miller, are troubling indeed.\footnote{Miller, Way of Death.}

It goes without saying that observation of continuities of this type should not obscure the real changes which took place during a century of colonization, decolonization and globalization. Domination and capital accumulation have undergone a change both of scale and of type. One index of this is the change in the nature of war itself, which has become an enterprise which is partly urban in character and which exhibits a considerable degree of technological sophistication. For present purposes, this is not the essential point: more significant is that the perpetuation of a regime of external rents and internal under-exploitation, under the guise of modern political institutions, forms a contrast with the ideal-type which may be derived from the historical trajectory of Asia, which, as we have noted, was at the epicentre of a true world-economy long before the arrival of the Portuguese. From the seventh century, the period of the rise of the T’ang dynasty in China and the birth of Islam, until the eighteenth century, when the British East India Company took control of Bengal, the richest province of the Moghul empire, it is possible to discern a coherent cycle
whose contours include the expansion of Islam, the spread of an Indian political and religious model throughout south-east Asia, the unification of China, Turkish and Mongol migrations and invasions, and the commercial mediation of powerful diasporas and nomadic societies.38 From the fifteenth century onwards, the commercial inroads made by Europe, which used its American silver to buy ‘a seat, and then even a whole railway car, on the Asian train’, in Andre Gunder Frank’s words, were for a long time no more than a marginal phenomenon which does not appear to have turned the structure of dependence to European advantage before the beginning of the nineteenth century.39 This Asian cycle of thirteen centuries was based on the application of a fiscal pressure, obtained where necessary with a determined exercise of coercion, which had no equivalent south of the Sahara during the same period. These prevailing circumstances in Asia permitted a degree of market integration, the growth of cities, and political centralization on an imposing scale. The Asian trajectory is symbolized by the splendours of three major empires, those of the Ming, the Ottomans and the Moghuls, and is reflected in the long-term pre-eminence of vast metropoles, true world cities before their time, such as Constantinople, Damascus, Baghdad, Delhi or Beijing. In contrast, ‘the most distinctively African contribution to human history could be said to have been precisely the civilized art of living fairly peaceably together not in states’.40

It is important that this comparison not be misinterpreted. It is emphatically not our intention to postulate a naive theory of historical evolution whose aim is to establish a hierarchy of societies according to whether they are more or less ‘developed’, nor even to compare two radically different trajectories point by point. The economies of the lands south of the Sahara were sufficiently diverse for it to be possible to identify among them features characteristic of the Asian model; by the same token, Asian countries were not ignorant of the unhealthy attractions offered by strategies of extraversion, nor of the ‘administration by delegation’ on the part of states concerned to govern on the cheap. Similarly, the crisis which descended on the Asian dragon- and tiger-states in 1997 should warn us about the risks of drawing over-hasty conclusions on the link between their spectacular growth in recent decades and their history over a long period.41 This is especially so if it transpires that the recent Asian financial crisis is not simply conjunctural, but a structural one which lays

40. Lonsdale, ‘States and social processes’, p. 139.
41. A temptation which the present author has not always managed to resist: see ‘L’historicité de l’Etat importé’ in Bayart (ed.), *La Greffe de l’Etat*, p. 20 et seq., while A. G. Frank is still succumbing (in *ReOrient*).
bare the contradictions of Asia’s very strategy of accumulation. A further corollary is that it cannot be excluded that sub-Saharan Africa may move into a different orbit, for example through an intensification of the social relations of production as a result of demographic pressure. In regard to this last suggestion, however, it must be said that the two economies which have the greatest potential for such a Copernican revolution—Nigeria and South Africa—show no signs of taking this path and are seeing a worrying flight of capital, in the one case in the guise of a ferocious practice of predation, in the other under the pretext of the globalization of its financial markets.

Whatever the future holds in store, the paradigm of extraversion appears to capture the dynamics of a dependence which is, without doubt, the reality of sub-Saharan Africa. This dependence is a historical process, a matrix of action, rather than a structure—as dependency theory, using a metaphor implying immobility, generally conceives it to be.

Another advantage of the paradigm suggested in these pages is that it by-passes a sterile distinction between the internal dimension of African societies and their insertion in the international system. (Such a distinction is in fact implied by the subject and the title of the present essay.) The interaction between Africa and the rest of the world cannot be considered as a relationship, since Africa is in no sense extraneous to the world. Rather, the quality is an organic one; it is consubstantial with Africa's historical trajectory. Furthermore, considering the matter in terms of a relationship goes against the grain of one of the fundamental aspects of globalization, a process which is situated at the interface between international or trans-national relations and the internal processes of political societies. It is at the same time quite conceivable that this organic linkage between the ‘internal’ and ‘external’ dimensions of societies may have changed in nature as a consequence of the way in which global exchanges have become more intense, have gained in speed and size, and have adopted the characteristics of a genuine system, as theoreticians of globalization think. In any event, this organic substance is at the heart of the political and cultural production of societies and of the way in which global economic systems have been constructed for centuries or even millennia. If we follow the line taken by Leach, we may accept that this is true of segmentary societies as well as of the great multi-cultural empires of the past.

43. This is why my book The State in Africa (p. xx) avoided devoting a chapter to Africa’s place in international relations, as is done in virtually every comparable work. On the need to supersede the distinction between internal and external, cf. B. Badie and M.-C. Smouts, Le retournement du monde. Sociologie de la scène internationale (Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, Paris, 1992) and J. N. Rosenau, Along the Domestic-Foreign Frontier: Exploring governance in a turbulent world (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997).
To be sure, it is not possible to dissociate the history of sub-Saharan Africa over the past century from the effects of the globalization which has been busily weaving its social fabric since the European commercial expansion of the fifteenth century and, more specifically, since the nineteenth century, clearly a crucial period. We may accept that these events were far more complex than has long been supposed: nevertheless, the passage from the slave trade to a regime of so-called ‘legitimate’ trade, Christian conversion, the forces of attraction and destruction exercised by the slave-raiding economies of the Indian Ocean and the Nile Valley, the processes of inventing modernity both through the ‘invention of tradition’ and via the appropriation of foreign cultural practices, and finally the formation of ethnic identities in interaction with the colonial state, constitute the bedrock on which Africa’s social landscape is formed at the end of the millennium.

The trajectories of extraversion have produced a serious problem of political representation and legitimacy in contemporary states, or at least in some of them. Angola is once again an extreme example. The ruling party, the MPLA, is a party dominated by mixed race and assimilado elites which were formed in the crucible of trans-Atlantic commerce and whose outlook was strongly influenced by the very early multilateralization of dependence. The MPLA’s great and overwhelming trouble is that it has to govern a whole people, when it would much prefer to concentrate simply on the plunder of oil and diamonds. In the eyes of the MPLA, one of the comparative advantages of war (as long as it does not finish on the losing side of the contest) is that it postpones indefinitely the disagreeable prospect of actually establishing a democracy, as aid donors are calling for. Stating the matter in this way will no doubt appear to many readers as a cynical exaggeration. But what concrete facts can be advanced to counter such an analysis? Did not the MPLA sabotage the peace process begun in Lusaka in November 1994 with a zeal equalled only by that of UNITA? Does this explanation not account for the shameless exploitation of the country’s resources by military means and the consumption of the fruits of their sale in some of the more pleasant suburbs of Johannesburg, Cape Town or Lisbon? Has the MPLA implemented any measure of social or economic policy which has in the slightest measure alleviated the lot of the general population, subjected to a life of misery, at permanent risk of being maimed or being press-ganged into military service?

Similarly, in Guinea-Bissau, the historical sequence of colonization, nationalist mobilization and, from 1986, economic liberalization followed by its political twin, has served in the first instance the interests of the mixed-race and comprador elites which often had family origins in Cape Verde, and of their Pepel allies. This has been at the expense of the
peasantry of the country’s hinterland, in spite of the fact that it was this latter population group which provided the PAIGC with the greater part of its combatants during the country’s war of liberation. The mutiny led by General Mane in June 1998 was an expression of the frustration felt by many of those liberation-war veterans whose support he claimed, but also by many Balante people more generally. Contradictions of this type between coastal elites and groups from the hinterland may be observed in most of those African states which have an Atlantic coastline. In Senegal, this fault-line was bridged in a political sense in the 1950s thanks to the electoral success and the political skill of Léopold Sédar Senghor and the mediation of the Muslim brotherhoods. In other places—Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana and Cameroon are all examples—the coast-hinterland cleavage has become less acute as a result of demographic factors, or because of the influence of truly national hegemonic political alliances, or because international trade in the past tended to by-pass this part of the coast and did not create such a well-defined merchant class. The distinction between the coast and the hinterland, however, remains an important factor in the struggle for the control of resources in countries such as Gabon, Benin, Togo, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, even if, in the case of the three last-named, the antagonism between Mandingo economic networks and other groups is of more significance and if the Creole elites sometimes finished by engaging in a process of mutual assimilation with elites from the hinterland areas, as Stephen Ellis shows in regard to Americo-Liberians.44 The irruption of military elites into political life shortly after independence, the political economy of democratization and the strategies of authoritarian restoration which have accompanied it, as well as the outbreak of civil war, often take place against historical backgrounds which show striking similarities. It is tempting to interpret the civil war in Congo-Brazzaville along at least partly similar lines, inasmuch as one of the protagonists there—the BaKongo of the Pool region and their allies—has a long historical involvement in trans-Atlantic trade and interaction in the widest sense.

Does this mean that only the societies of the Atlantic coastline, with long experience of Atlantic trade, are confronted with certain problems of representation and legitimacy as a result of their history of extraversion? In fact, the same point remains relevant when applied to Africa’s east coast, for example in the form of relations between Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam or on the Kenyan coast, and, more dramatically still, in central Africa. The recurrent political crises which have embroiled Chad and the Central African Republic for decades turn on social relations whose form emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century in the broader context of

44. Ellis, The Mask of Anarchy.
the Nile valley slave-trading economy. One of the points at issue in the Zairean/Congolese conflict since 1996 is the return of this huge area to the economic orbit of the Indian Ocean, via the predatory activities of the Ugandan and Rwandan armies, a process which has now been called into question by the divorce between Laurent-Désiré Kabila and his initial sponsors, by the growth of a form of racist Congolese nationalism which is virulently anti-Tutsi, and by the insurrection of the Mai-Mai militias in Kivu.

These factors demonstrate the extent to which the assertion made by scholars of the dependency school and by advocates of a particular strain of historical sociology—to the effect that the lack of legitimacy of the state in Africa is due to the absence of a suitable social and cultural base, to the imported origin of its institutions and to the alleged failure of their adaptation—can thus be shown to be based on incorrect postulates. Current conflicts do not stem from a fundamental fault of construction which has distorted the relationship between state and society ever since, but rather from a long osmosis between these two spheres. Africa’s contemporary political struggles and wars are not the consequences of a radical rupture—colonization—but are symptomatic of a historical line of continuity, namely, a practice of extraversion. They are not an expression of the marginalization of Africa within the world economy but of older dynamics (or occasionally of very new ones) generated by the manner of its insertion into this world economy.

The faulty evidence of the Hegelian stereotype

These points are important because the hypotheses most in vogue today in academic, political and journalistic circles take two assertions of doubtful validity as established facts. These are, first, that Africa south of the Sahara is being marginalized economically and, second, that the sub-continent is therefore subject to a political decay which is undermining the foundations of the state, already weakened by the corrosive effects of globalization.45

There is, of course, no lack of statistics to demonstrate that Africa is losing or has lost much of its share of its traditional markets, with the notable exception of oil; that its meagre industrial production has collapsed; that it attracts little direct investment from overseas; that its maritime and aviation infrastructure is in a dire state of disrepair; that its networks of telecommunications and banking are in a similar state. Nevertheless, these data, as well as being relative and often excluding the considerable volumes of business conducted in informal or even criminal economic circuits, are not in themselves sufficient evidence to conclude that the sub-continent is becoming divorced from the international system. Africa remains a part of the world system through a whole gamut of forms of intercourse or exchange—in particular through the private and public development aid which it receives, even if this is diminishing at present, through its still significant exports of primary products, through the import of consumer goods and durables, through its external and internal debt (the latter often being owed to foreign firms), by its receipt of portfolio investments in the case of South Africa or of direct investment elsewhere, and through emigration and remittances. Africa can even be said to have diversified its external economic relations, through the development of trade with the Persian Gulf and Asia as a consequence of its ongoing economic crisis and of the devaluation of the CFA franc in 1994, which has reduced the competitiveness of European products on African markets. In more political vein, Africa has seen the rents it can acquire from diplomatic positioning devalued by the fall of the Soviet empire and the peace process in the Middle East, but on the other hand it continues to be in permanent negotiation with the donor governments of the Group of Seven industrialized nations and the Bretton Woods institutions. Since 1980, programmes of structural adjustment and the problematiques of reform and conditionality have in many respects enhanced the depth of Africa’s insertion into the world system.

It is thus appropriate to speak not of a marginalization of the sub-continent, but rather of an aggravation of its dependence, or in any case of a transformation of the manner in which it is integrated into the international system. This does not preclude experiences of deindustrialization or economic regression, perceived in terms of decline and ‘disconnection’. From this point of view, the crucial factor is the growing privatization of the relations which Africa maintains with the rest of the globe. Those non-African states which used to play an active diplomatic or military role south of the Sahara have either retired from the

46. Cf., for example, the analysis of Africa’s external trade in Hibou, L’Afrique est-elle protectionniste?, and, on foreign direct investment, F. Bost, L’Afrique subsaharienne, oubliée par les investisseurs’, Afrique contemporaine, 189 (1st quarter, 1999), pp. 41–61.
fray because the interests which they sought to defend or advance are no longer salient or are now beyond their means (as with Russia and Cuba), or they have lost their taste for direct intervention in economic crises or conflicts which are deeper or bloodier than they were in the past. Most prefer to use regional intermediaries, like France and the US which have established programmes designed to strengthen African peacekeeping capacities as a consequence of the Somali fiasco of 1993 and the Rwandan tragedy of 1994. Even so, we should not be misled by this apparent disengagement. Western chancelleries have not renounced their self-proclaimed right to influence the course of events. Simply, they now prefer to act through private operators, including both commercial companies and non-governmental organizations, especially in the fields of diplomacy, technical assistance, humanitarian aid, customs inspection and even defence. Evidence of this includes the role of MPRI in Angola on behalf of the US government or of Sandline in Sierra Leone acting for the British government; the mediation of the Roman Catholic community of Sant’Egidio in combination with the Italian government in the 1992 peace negotiations in Mozambique or, more recently, in the conflicts in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Congo-Brazzaville and Casamance; the delegation of emergency aid operations to the major NGOs; and the use of firms like SGS and Veritas in place of state customs services in the main ports of the Gulf of Guinea.48

Moreover, a growing number of private foreign actors have gained a foothold in Africa for purposes of commercial gain alone, and have become essential partners in the strategies of extraversion implemented by local power-holders, while yet remaining outside the public sector or even outside the sphere of legality. The shadowy world of security companies, pilots and mercenaries from the republics of the former Soviet Union, Cuban soldiers who have returned to Congo-Brazzaville and Angola in private capacities, mafias from eastern Europe, southern Asia, Latin America or Morocco who do booming business in southern Africa, Indian and Pakistani, Chinese or Malaysian entrepreneurs who have been able to capture a share of Africa’s trade with Europe, all of these are living indications that the sub-continent is no more turned in on itself now than

it was in the past, as neo-Hegelians would have us believe. To cite one example, Africa has made its mark over the last fifteen years in one of the most profitable and risky sectors of world trade, namely in narcotics. It has become the leading world producer of cannabis largely thanks to South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland, and controls a major part of the supply of heroin to the North American market through Igbo networks headquartered in Nigeria.

Africa is thus, in its way, a player in the process of globalization. Some of the events which are often said to be evidence of its alleged de-linking from the world in fact serve most eloquently to demonstrate the opposite. Thus, some of Africa’s bloodiest conflicts, often predictably interpreted as manifestations of its supposed primitiveness, cannot be separated from the ebbs and flows of the global economy and also from global cultural practices, some of which we have already mentioned. The young diamond diggers of Balundu, on the border between Congo-Kinshasa and Angola, conceive of monetary gain as though it were a hunting expedition, an idea congruent with a ‘dollarization’ of the imagination.49 In 1992, the mooryaan of Mogadishu considered themselves to be acting in solidarity with their ‘brothers’ who were at that moment rioting in the streets of Los Angeles.50 The Ninja turtles, in spite of their innocuous beginnings as cartoon characters, have become the sinister heroes of various wars by giving their name to militias or special forces. Ninjas en marcha con Obiang! is one of the marching songs of the official youth movement in Equatorial Guinea. The epidemics which periodically strike Africa and which are often seen as symbols of its descent into some hellish nether-region of the international system are actually tragic expressions of its globalization, as was the Black Death in medieval Europe. The Spanish influenza brought back on ships by soldiers repatriated at the end of the First World War killed some 1·5 to 2 million people in 1918–19, while in the 1970s, air transport brought cholera across deserts and oceans to the Sahel and the Gulf of Guinea, previously spared this particular sickness. Africa is the continent most severely affected by the most ‘modern’ illness of all, namely AIDS.

It is even reasonable to speculate whether there is not some sort of connection between the ‘reinvention of difference’ which, according to James Clifford, is one of the features of globalization, and the logics of appropriation and instrumentalization which are characteristic of strategies of extraversion. Both attest to the fact that Africans are actors in their own history, always ready to turn external constraints into some new

creation. In short, then, we should take care not to confuse two distinct facts. The first of these is the limited extent of primary accumulation in African societies, and thus the limited degree of their entry into the capitalist world economy, which has been demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt by historians. A second fact is the marginalization or disconnection of Africa in relation to this same world economy or international system, which remains unproven insofar as strategies of extraversion are in fact the means of Africa’s integration into the main currents of world history through the medium of dependence.

The notion that some sort of political decay is corroding the subcontinent hardly stands up any better to scrutiny. The most striking factor of the last century has been the discovery of the state by societies which were characterized, as we have mentioned already, by ‘the civilized art of living fairly peaceably together not in states’. To a certain degree, Africa’s globalization and the process of the formation of the state have become intertwined, a process in evidence since the moment when European powers, led by Great Britain, passed from an earlier phase of ‘an imperialism of intent’ to an ‘imperialism of result’, in which such a form of control was actually implemented, in the second half of the nineteenth century. At that time, European governments believed they had identified one of the main obstacles to investment in Africa in its lack of major, centralized political entities, and it was in the light of this perception that they came to occupy militarily regions which they had not hitherto managed to penetrate economically, or at least not as fully as they wished. It would be wrong, however, to overestimate the importance of this early colonial phase in the long process of constructing bureaucratic institutions and centralized government in Africa. In some places, a feature of government in the early colonial period was actually the habit of delegating political sovereignty to concessionary companies, sometimes over a period of decades. Everywhere, colonial rule was based largely on the practice of what Max Weber called ‘discharge’, and on indirect rule, including in French colonial territories. Moreover, some vast territories were left virtually to their own devices throughout the colonial period, such as in parts of Sudan, Chad, the Central African Republic, Congo and Angola. And right up to the end of the colonial period, European rule was faced with episodes of serious dissidence or resistance, often enough for us

52. Lonsdale, ‘States and social processes’, p. 139.
to apply considerable nuance to the commonly held idea that there existed a *paix coloniale* or a *pax britannica*. Colonial rule lasted for an extraordinarily brief time when measured by the standards of the historical *longue durée*. This does not, however, make it legitimate to regard colonialism as a mere historical ‘blip’, since European occupation radically transformed the resources, the modes and the goals in all social struggles, notably by introducing money into every area of social life, through the institution of private property rights, and in making firearms a central and indispensable element of military technology and of various systems of coercion.

In spite of the limits inherent in the colonial system of domination, the process by which the state has been formed nevertheless remains one of the most striking tendencies in Africa’s twentieth-century history. Little by little, deliberately or otherwise, the state evolved as the space in regard to which the other major actors of colonization—missionaries, traders and investors—defined themselves; it was the jewel in the crown inherited at independence by nationalist movements. Furthermore, it is striking to what extent the process of state formation has been accompanied by the tendency towards globalization, far more often than it has been impeded or contradicted by globalization. To take an example, the designation of colonial boundaries, and perhaps even the very principle of exact demarcation of territory and the fixing of populations in Africa, was closely connected with the holding of a multilateral conference in Berlin. In similar vein, the establishment of state bureaucracies and of mechanisms of state action in colonial times in succession to the old concessionary companies (or, in the Belgian Congo, in succession to a private sovereignty) led to direct investment by European metropoles as soon as the colonial authorities realized that most colonies could never be financially self-sufficient and that a second, and more intensive, phase of colonial occupation would need to take place. African societies were obliged by their new colonial masters to participate in two world wars, and in many wars of decolonization as well. Notwithstanding the individual flavours of the colonial pact which bound a particular African territory to one European metropole, in every case African societies were required to open themselves to a greater degree than ever before to the commercial and financial flows of the globe and thus to transnational cultural phenomena. Among these were those two eminently multinational movements, Islam and Christianity.

It has been well established as legitimate in the literature to see nationalist parties as, among other things, players in a longer process of state formation. Nationalism often brought to power social groups which had previously benefited from the frequently tense and conflictual history of collaboration with the colonial power and from the economic
opportunities generated by ‘the second colonial occupation’—that is, the renewed vigour of colonialism from the 1930s on. Even where nationalist politicians did not have such a background, nationalist parties nevertheless used for their own purposes the political institutions which had been established by the colonial state, and they made every effort to enhance and extend the influence of those institutions over the societies which they governed. The fashion for economic nationalism and state intervention which was so marked in the first two decades of independence (sometimes in grotesque form, such as with the 1973 Zairianization campaign) was itself a mark of continuity with the colonial state, even in cases where there was a show of breaking with the colonial order and conflicts such as the expulsion of Asians in Uganda or, more insidiously, in Tanzania. The succeeding phase, that of economic liberalization introduced by the Bretton Woods institutions, does not amount to a complete reversal of the tendency towards continuity in the formation of the state in Africa since, as we have seen, structural adjustment programmes have often in fact been manipulated or diverted in such ways as not to threaten the system of political economy on which even a minimal state is based. Dominant groups continue to use government policy as a political instrument to advance their own interests. In this respect, the privatization of public enterprises is often instructive: on the rather rare occasions when a privatization actually occurs, it generally benefits those who are in power and who have previously used the self-same concern as a source of enrichment in previous years. They can now sell the choicest plums of state enterprise to their relatives or other front-men. Considered as parts of a process by which structures of social inequality are formed, economic nationalism or statism, and policies of economic liberalization, are no more than two aspects of a single reality. This reality is that the vision of a state which has an ambition to intervene (Policystaat), which served as a model in the immediate post-independence period, and the ‘slimmed-down state’ which is dear to those who support the Washington consensus, both serve the interests of the same groups, broadly defined.

The main problem in considering this matter is the very notion that there exists a clear frontier between private and public spheres at all. Historians have long insisted on the interpenetration of these two categories which, they tell us, was at the very heart of the genesis, first, of the absolutist state, and later of its representative successor, whether it be the France of Colbert or the England of the Whig supremacy. A comparable ambivalence is a key element in the politique du ventre as it has emerged in sub-Saharan Africa over the last century. The process which has been labelled ‘the

privatization of the state’, which is taking place under pressure from transnational relationships of various sorts, from identity politics, from financial globalization and the triumph of market forces, is less accurately described as the ‘retreat’ or the ‘collapse’ of the state than as its recomposition, via a re-ordering of the various modes of government. In this sense, globalization is simply an element in the ongoing formation of the state. This was the case in previous decades, under the influence of ideologies of socialism or Third World solidarity or the neo-Keynesianism which was World Bank policy until the late 1970s. It remains the case today, paradoxically enough, in the form of neo-liberalism. Structural adjustment programmes are negotiated bilaterally between aid donors and African states, with little consideration being paid to the fact that neighbouring countries might be conducting similar (or contradictory) bilateral negotiations themselves. We have mentioned already the fact that such programmes in reality serve the hegemonic aspirations of dominant groups by depoliticizing the eminently political question of social inequality and making it subject to bureaucratic procedures, and by provoking the multilateralization of the passive revolution which is the true force forming the state in Africa today.

Some readers may concede that this argument contains a certain logic but may wonder about the effects of war. For sub-Saharan Africa’s wars have become instruments of political and economic regulation which increasingly mediate the relationship of the continent with the world, and whose recurrence seems to compromise the very existence of African states. It is the last of these propositions which is the most contestable, since Africa’s wars are leading to the emergence of regional state systems, comparable to the effect in Europe of the wars of the first half of the twentieth century. A relatively well-structured system of alliances and of hostilities between states is arising in the Horn and in central and West Africa which is highly suggestive from this point of view. There is no reason to suppose that it is inevitable that war in Africa will turn out to be the matrix of the state over a long period, as it was in Europe’s history, where the necessities of war favoured the creation of absolutist states with bureaucracies operating on rational principles, the development of systems of fiscal pressure and extraction and, in the last resort, mass democracies. The comparison, while useful, cannot be pushed too far, as a range of other cultural and economic factors were relevant in the European case. But by the same token, there is also no reason to suppose that similar developments will not take place, since conflicts are a fertile source of social transformations, such as through migration, confinement in refugee camps, the development of new modes of taxation by those in power, and through

the mobilization of women, young people and ethnic diasporas, the effects of which are impossible to predict. Furthermore, Africa’s major wars—with the exception of those in Katanga and Biafra—are more accurately understood as competitions for control of the state than as a threat to its unity. Even if the current war in the Democratic Republic of Congo, for example, were to end with some sort of annexation of territory, this would still not invalidate the principle of statehood, since it would serve to strengthen the logic of political territorialization which has underpinned the process of state formation over the last century. Such an outcome would also reinforce the process of national mobilization, perhaps in some sort of ethnic or racial form, which is central to the conflicts in the region of Africa’s Great Lakes.

A final observation on this point is to recall our previous remark that one of the consequences of the spread of war has been the recovery, by African power-holders, of a substantial part of the political sovereignty which the conditions attached to structural adjustment programmes and the process of regional integration had previously threatened to remove from their grasp.

Hence, if it appears plausible to suggest that there is a connection between war and the formation of the state, and that this is proceeding hand-in-hand with Africa’s globalization, it challenges us to explore more fully, perhaps not the consubstantiality of the disorder produced by conflict and an apparently contradictory movement of political institutionalization, but at least the precise relationship between these two tendencies. To re-state the problem in more general terms, one inference is that we need to explore the very personal and factional nature of strategies of extraversion (including in their militarized forms) in the context of what we have labelled the ‘rhizome state’, and the relationship of this with the process of bureaucratic or political centralization. The two dimensions can be inter-related, as is demonstrated by recent research on the microstoria of local politics in Italy, or by the work of German historians on the Thirty

57. The examples of Eritrea and Somaliland do not refute this remark, because their independence (or quasi-independence, in the second case) is on the basis of a return to the colonial frontiers. On the other hand, rebellions such as those in Casamance (in Senegal) or the Caprivi Strip (in Namibia) are aimed more squarely at the territorial integrity of the state, without providing any really serious threat. In Casamance, the MFDC refuses the term ‘separation’ and aspires instead to ‘independence’, basing its claim on the fact that Ziguinchor was occupied by Portugal from 1641 to 1886! The position taken by the Cabindan ‘liberation’ fronts in Angola is rather similar.

58. ‘Crisis in Central Africa’, Africa Today, 45, 1 (1998), especially the article by C. Newbury, ‘Ethnicity and the politics of history in Rwanda’, pp. 7–24; L. H. Malkki, Purity and Exile: Violence, memory and national cosmology among Hutu refugees in Tanzania (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1995). The outstanding report compiled by Africa Watch and the Fédération internationale des droits de l’homme demonstrates that the genocide of Rwandan Tutsis in 1994 may have seemed legitimate to many Hutus, and thus to have obtained their participation, because it was organized by the state, and known to be so: see Human Rights Watch, None Must Live to Tell the Tale (New York, 1999).
Years War. If this is so, then analysis needs to focus on contingencies and on workaday experiences, in a way which does not preclude the fact that there exist certain patterns of action whose salience becomes apparent only by considering history in longer periods. It is these two directions which we will explore next, with a view to developing a more informed opinion on the historicity of relations between Africa and the rest of the world.

The social institutions of globalization

Regarding the first of the two points evoked in the previous paragraph, it is useful to recall that the formation of the state south of the Sahara, both within local societies and in their dealings with the international environment, has been an utterly haphazard and even confused process. The social struggles which are the vector of the formation of the state have mostly taken place within quite localized territories, the extreme fragmentation of which makes life difficult for a researcher who is trying to circumnavigate the meta-narratives of colonization, independence and, indeed, dependence. Frederick Cooper has rightly remarked that ‘to divide into periods the history of a continent this large and complex is to assume that the outside world is not only important, but determinant’. The orthodox division of Africa’s chronology erodes, as it were, the most prominent features of Africa’s historicity. On the other hand, for any researcher who aspires to reconstruct the concrete historical conditions of Africa’s insertion in the international system and the social struggles to which this has given rise, while at the same time avoiding the minutiae of local history, a realistic approach consists in studying the leading ‘social institutions’ (as Weber calls them) which have mediated relations between Africa and the rest of the world. These social institutions include colonial government, of course, but also and perhaps even more importantly the trading-post, the business-place, the plantation, the mine, the school, the hospital, and the Christian mission-station.

Even more than the colonial state and its bureaucracy, whose real impact on African societies was often rather late in the day and of limited scope, those organizations and practices which we have called ‘social institutions’ were prime transmitters of ‘subjectivation’ in the sense in which Michel

60. These references are, respectively, to the works of Alf Lüdtke—especially his edited volume Histoire du quotidien (Ed. de la Maison des sciences de l’homme, Paris, 1994), and Michel de Certeau, L’invention du quotidien (U.G.E., Paris, 1980).
Foucault defines this concept: that is, they contributed to ‘the production of modes of existence or life styles’, and thus to ‘the subjection of individuals’, that is to say, ‘their constitution as “subjects” in both senses of the word’. It is for this reason that these ‘social institutions’ can be considered as matrices of the politique du ventre and of its strategies of extraversion, provided that one is willing to consider that the politique du ventre is a form of ‘governmentality’, itself defined as ‘the point at which the techniques of domination of others encounter techniques of the self’. Such social institutions have helped form the discourses, the procedures, rules and prescriptions, in short the ‘technologies of power’, which have as one of their foremost targets the human body. This is so, for example, when human bodies are imprisoned, beaten, obliged to perform forced labour, deported or executed, and also, by the same token, when they are groomed, educated, clothed and remodelled. It is in this sense that social institutions have been central to the development of veritable ‘cultures of the self’ which have made possible the ‘constitution of the self as a “moral subject”’. In this way too, they contributed to the notion that the colonial state in fact owned the people whom it governed. The work ethic, which religious converts and salaried employees were constantly exhorted or bullied, in homilies and under threat of beatings, into assimilating into their inner selves, was posited as the opposite of a laziness which colonialists held to be an inherent quality of natives. This was a major element in the process of constituting the self of millions of Africans.

We should nevertheless be on our guard against interpreting the social institutions of colonization in a too mechanical sense, and to see in them only the mechanisms of what Foucault would have called a ‘society of discipline’, of a more or less totalitarian nature. For the ‘micro-physics of power’ which these social institutions employed, with a large dose of coercion, placed on offer a whole range of modes of subjectivation. Becoming subject to power in this way also exercised a positive force of attraction which has been widely under-estimated, no doubt for reasons of political correctness.

In investigating the workings of this relationship to power, it should be said at once that colonization provided an experience of subjectivation for Europeans themselves. Soldiers, administrators, traders and missionaries came to adopt certain positions in consequence of their own ideas about metropolitan society, which they often saw as threatened by decay from the

64. Foucault, La volonté de savoir, p. 81.
65. Foucault, Dits et Ecrits, IV, p. 785. For further exploration of this subject, see Bayart, ‘Fait missionnaire et politique du ventre’.
forces of industrialization, materialism and communism, and also in consequence of what they perceived to be the primitiveness of the Africans to whom they had come to deliver a message of emancipation through civilization. The latter they thought would come about through the hard lesson of conquest. The perception of many colonialists that they were charged with a mission to civilize, we might add, often enough sat oddly with the less than favourable idea which many colonialists themselves had of the Europe they had left behind. Based on this bundle of contradictions, they constituted themselves into ‘moral subjects’, espousing particular styles such as the republicanism of many French colonial administrators, the stoical ‘Catoism’ typical of British officials, or the way of redemption as it was perceived by missionaries.67 Among the further consequences there were effects of reverberation or refraction between colonies and metropoles, as we have briefly considered, and a whole field of moral and political ambivalence between colonizers and colonized. The colonial experience offered to people from the metropole new models of subjectivation, such as those of the missionary spiritual adventure or the ideals of scouting for boys.68 The political implications of such transfers were far from negligible, for example in the evolution of Christianity, the mobilization of the political right especially in campaigning against decolonization, and in a reconfiguring of nationalism more generally. The equivocal position adopted by colonizers towards those of their compatriots who had stayed behind in Europe as well as vis-à-vis their native subjects—a very particular cocktail which included the defence of imperial interests, contempt for a metropole which often seemed both degenerate and very small when viewed from the distance of Africa, spiced with a condescension laced with naive romantic enthusiasm for the supposed primitiveness of Africans—all this produced a fertile environment for all manner of negotiations in matters of ethics, culture and representations of identity. In the last resort, such interplays were political in nature. They engaged those whites who were living in Africa every bit as much as the black or mixed-race subjects of Empire.

In point of fact, there were many Africans who adhered with the greatest sincerity to the life-styles which colonialism both offered to and imposed on them. To deny the attractive aspect of these new life-styles would be tantamount to renouncing any possibility of understanding how European occupation was able to last as long as it did, with, in most instances, such pathetically small military and administrative resources. To deny that many Africans adopted new styles of life quite willingly would also imply

that the collaboration of large swathes of African local elites was due to the purest self-interest or complete alienation. It would, furthermore, imply that those Africans who converted to Christianity were actually insincere in their faith, or that the devotion to public service of a whole cohort of young functionaries was in fact false.

Hence, the *politique du ventre* and its accompanying strategies of extraversion do not relate solely to a regime of economic accumulation and social inequality, but also to what one might term a ‘moral economy’, in the sense implied by the work of E. P. Thompson on the English working class and that of Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale on the ethical foundations of colonial society in Kenya. Such institutions as the public administration, the school, the hospital, the trading-post, the business-place and the mission-station were nurseries in which a ‘moral subject’ was planted and tended, and whose ethical and physical practices were to become constituents of the new public culture, including in the bureaucratic regulation of the state, economic activity, religious expression, cultural innovation and political mobilization. This emerging culture was expressed in terms of ‘collaboration’ with the colonizer as much as it was in terms of nationalist resistance or negotiation. More to the point, such practices gave rise to new social strata who were to become the bearers (*Träger*), to use Weber’s term, of such ‘lifestyles’, or who would constitute the ‘class’ which would make of these modes of ‘subjectivation’ or styles of being, an ‘affirmation of self’, for those who prefer Michel Foucault’s way of conceptualizing such things. Catechists, schoolteachers, doctors, nurses, administrative personnel, clerks of colonial companies, were all the real worker-bees of the colonial hive, as later they were to be of the nationalist movement. As salary-earners, they were instrumental in creating the foundations of the class which is currently dominant in Africa and in setting in motion the process of primitive accumulation from which that class was to benefit.

In other words, the formation of the state in sub-Saharan Africa, considered as an element in the process of globalization, appears inseparable from the ascension of a human type (*Menschentum*) created by a conjunction of elements of both a religious and an economic nature, a type of person who functions simultaneously by defining a relationship with God, a political relationship with the rest of society, a strategy of economic

prosperity and also a relationship with the world outside, composed of
tendencies towards both assimilation and rejection. 74

The adoption by Africans of the new ‘ways of life’ on offer, no matter
how ambivalent, always resulted in a reinterpretation or reinvention of
these modes of experiencing the world. As has been briefly sketched
above, this was a process which combined hybridization with genuine
creativity. Subjection to the colonial state and to the politique du ventre to
which it gave rise, and subjection to the economic and cultural practices of
extraversion, were thus heterogeneous by nature. This was especially so
because of the numerous organizational, religious, philosophical, political,
social and material contradictions which divided both the colonizers and
those who were to succeed them as holders of power, still recognizably
operating within the same system. There were thus distinct limits to the
process of subjection, a fact which so many works inspired by Foucault
tend to forget in their single-minded concentration on ‘discipline’ in
colonial and post-colonial situations. Religious dissidence or prolifera-
tion, for example in the form of a multiplicity of independent churches,
prophetic movements and sects; conflicts within mainstream churches such
as among women frustrated in their aspirations towards social ascension;
youth; church officials defending their privileges: all of these combined with
contradictions in the redistributive patterns of families and villages and the
growth of a bureaucratic ethos, conflict between practices associated with
the politique du ventre and anti-corruption movements, or between the logic
of sovereignty and that of extraversion, plus contradictions between ethnic
and universalist conceptions of citizenship. These are clear illustrations of
the limits to the rigours of colonial discipline. Among the consequences
of these types of clashes of vision and interest were some major convul-
sions, such as the confrontation between the liberal vision of the ANC in
South Africa, in a tradition going back to the work of nineteenth-century
non-conformist missionaries from the London Missionary Society or the
Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, and the ethnic conception of
Inkatha and of various political leaders in South Africa’s bantustans, itself
a legacy of the cultural imperialism which was also transmitted by those
self-same missionaries. 75 The paradoxes inherent in any ‘invention of
modernity’ were also very numerous. 76 For example, the diffusion of

74. Two recent monographs are particularly illuminating on these points and contribute to
an emerging school of historiography which is concerned with processes of subjectivation,
rather than the social relations of class or mass social and political movements: T. Ranger, Are
We Not Also Men? The Samkange family and African politics in Zimbabwe, 1920–1964 (Baobab,
Harare, David Philip, Cape Town, Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH, and James Currey, London, 1995),
La réinvention du capitalisme (Karthala, Paris, 1994), chap. 1 and L’Illusion identitaire, p. 231 et seq.
bureaucratic practices as an instrument of subjection and as a way of managing the benefits generated by dependence was in part ensured by the intermediary of political, social or cultural movements of protest against the colonial order, such as the Beni dancers of East Africa, nationalist political parties, or those independent churches which resulted from schisms in the Western-originated mission churches. The process of ‘civilizing’ the natives of Africa quite often consisted in traditionalizing them, by assigning to them ethnic identities or codes of customary law which were largely invented.77

The end result of this very great complexity is that the ideological and cultural relationship which sub-Saharan Africa has with the rest of the world is profoundly baroque. It proceeds by re-using existing practices, or by juxtaposing them; by processes of sedimentation, transfers of meaning and the manufacture of identities which are subsequently deemed authentic.

The effects of hybridization are all the more ambivalent in that they take place directly in the realm of the imagination. In this respect, the relationship of Africa and overseas remains rooted in simple fantasy. It is frequently incarnated in myths, such as the Governor of the Beni dancers and the possession cult of the hawka among the Songhai and Zarma of Niger, or indeed the cults of Félix Eboué and General de Gaulle in the former French Equatorial Africa. White missionaries and doctors were generally perceived in relation to the powers of the invisible world, while the spectre of witchcraft has never ceased to haunt the social experiences through which Africa has been inserted in the international system, through slavery, colonialism, Christian conversion, the penetration of capitalist economics and the political confrontations generated by decolonization. So it was that, by stating his view that the International Monetary Fund was a ‘sorcerer’ and not a ‘healer’, the wily Julius Nyerere could be sure that his argument against the structural adjustment programme which the aid donors were then trying to impose on Tanzania, would appeal to public opinion.78

Oppression and Liberation in the Imagination, the title of the classic work of Gérard Althabe on eastern Madagascar, would hence be eminently applicable to any number of colonial or post-colonial situations.79 We hasten to add that the imagination (imaginaire) is not to be understood as that

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which is ‘unreal’, but rather as ‘the domain in which the real and the unreal become indistinguishable from one another’.\textsuperscript{80} Thus, the baroque relationship between Africa and the rest of the world has also been mediated by material culture, at the heart of strategies of extraversion and processes of constituting the ‘moral subject’ in both the colony and the post-colony. Practices of consumption, far from amounting to a process of Westernization or alienation, have enabled local actors to appropriate a modernity which was originally imported, and hence to effect a ‘re-invention of difference’ which is inherent in the process of globalization.\textsuperscript{81} The crystallization of a certain political imagery, the emergence of a ‘moral economy’ which legitimates the production of social inequality, the management of the rent of dependency, in a word the historicity of sub-Saharan Africa, cannot be viewed in isolation from the material practices which mediate an individual’s self-reflexivity and also his or her relationship with others, and in the first place with political authorities foreign or home-grown. Prominent among such material practices is clothing. The genesis of the politique du ventre was often associated with conflicts surrounding the wearing of cloth wraps, trousers or shorts—which is not to imply that such conflicts were anything less than deeply serious in their general economic, political and moral implications. In the last resort, the social revolution brought about by colonization and its post-colonial derivatives has been sartorial as much as political or economic. The homines novi who benefitted most from the second wind of colonial occupation from the 1930s onwards, who led nationalist movements in the 1940s and 1950s, and who finally took power at independence, made this astonishing journey wearing trousers, or later their own neo-African costumes. Examples of the latter include the African suits of Kwame Nkrumah, the sango favoured by Félix Houphouët-Boigny, the ‘political suits’ of the elite in Congo-Brazzaville after the 1963 Revolution, and also the abacost sported by Marshal Mobutu. Sometimes these were replaced by European suits and ties, assorted with splendid military uniforms. All of these outfits were adaptations of the tropical outfits of European colonial officials and of their various assistants or catechists.\textsuperscript{82}

The social institutions which were the vectors of the politique du ventre became key sites in conflicts associated with subjectivation, at the same time that they acted as centres for the diffusion of Western consumer goods. Thus, one important strand of the great missionary tradition was the supposition that there existed a connection between the development of trade and the propagation of Christianity. Mission-stations in the first

\textsuperscript{80} Deleuze, \textit{Pourparlers}, p. 93.
\textsuperscript{82} Bayart, \textit{L’Illusion identitaire}, p. 207 et seq.
wave of evangelization were much preoccupied with distributing objects which amounted to contracts of implantation. Needless to say, not all missionaries were favourable to a link between spreading the Gospel and the commercialization of the societies they aimed to convert. Nevertheless, mission-stations did indeed resemble a ‘bazaar’, as Chatelain described them in Angola at the beginning of the twentieth century: the Christian imagination was also in part an imagination of consumption. The ‘epiphany of daily life’ to which preachers dedicated themselves was in many ways nothing less than a conquest by consumption, whose prime objective was the body of the native: ‘it was on the body that the commodity came into physical contact with, and enclosed, the self. To a nineteenth-century religious sensibility . . . the treatment of the domesticated physique was an everyday sacrament. In cleaning it, housing it, curing it, and clothing it lay the very essence of civility.’ Inasmuch as it was a material culture located at a particular point in time, the missionary enterprise was a process of forming economic values as much as moral ones. This was so because it was a vector of the market and the money economy and because the religious conversion for which it strove was accompanied by other effects of conversion in different spheres of the societies concerned, in the realms of both the invisible and the material.

An analysis along these lines could be conducted with equal profit into those secular social institutions which were associated with colonization, since they were sources of both economic betterment and of the ideals which accompanied the aspiration towards economic upliftment. In general, the imported state, considered as the most important form of political organization associated with Africa’s globalization, frequently took root in African society through practices, or even through veritable rituals, of consumption. Such were the elaborate displays made by King Denis on Gabon’s Mpongwe coast, or the costumed balls held in Merina high society in nineteenth-century Madagascar, or the Sunday promenades of the citizens of Brazzaville so well described by a visitor in the early twentieth century, and which were the forerunners of the sapeurs of the 1980s. Further examples include the meetings of the May Gul Association in Léopoldville which, in the 1960s, became the Saturday rendezvous of citizens who liked to drink beer, their shirts hanging outside their trousers in a display of affectation, without ties, shoes or socks, or the dance

movements which mimicked the uniforms and drills of the colonial army or the colonial administration, or, less exotic but no less significant, the celebration of religious rituals which provided (and still provide) a weekly opportunity to see and be seen.87

In light of these recurring themes in Africa’s social history, it becomes easier to understand, first, the central role which imported goods came to occupy in its political economy and second, the codes of behaviour which facilitate the unregulated acquisition of consumer goods even by relatively poor groups of the population. Examples include the spectacular looting so often carried out by victorious armies or militias (or by defeated ones, for that matter), the numerous civil wars or, in times of political crisis, the pillaging carried out by vast crowds of civilians such as in Kinshasa in September 1991, Nairobi in August 1982, Banjul in 1981, Dakar in 1988, Monrovia in 1996 and Freetown in 1997. It becomes easier to understand the almost frenetic orgies of consumption by diamond miners, when they have some money from a find, in their camps or in the shanty-towns which grow up around the bureaux where they sell their stones. It also becomes easier to comprehend the single-mindedness with which some armed movements have forbidden their fighters or the civilians under their control to have access to European goods, such as in Congo-Léopoldville during the rebellions of 1964-5, in Rhodesia during the chimurenga war, or in northern Uganda since 1986. In this context too we may view the particularly ambiguous place assigned to consumer goods in various representations of witchcraft and in many contemporary religious movements, such as pentecostalism.89

These practices of appropriation or rejection of Western material culture and its associated moral economy appear to be patterns of action which can be traced over the longue durée. It is, therefore, this grammar of extraversion and dependence which we will consider in the light of Africa’s experience of the twentieth century.

The grammar of extraversion and dependence

Without making any claim to being exhaustive, it is possible to identify six major formalities of action which have constantly recurred in Africa’s


relations with the rest of the world throughout the twentieth century. These are: coercion; trickery; flight; mediation; appropriation and its opposite, rejection. Each of these six formalities has given rise to the emergence of social types, which are implanted in the daily round of living and which may assume any one of a number of common identities at any one time. Thus, a soldier may also be a smuggler and a refugee may be a looter, while both are also consumers. A smuggler may also be a devout religious believer, and prophets quite often turn out to be false. But before examining in more detail the profile of such social types and the ‘grammar’ of their action, it is useful once more to repeat that their actions take place in at least two dimensions: those of the visible and the invisible, the world of the day and the domain of the night. This is not always apparent to outsiders who have close dealings with African societies, who are not always aware of the way in which every phenomenon or event is permanently shadowed by its double in another sphere. Many observers have tended to regard the domain of the invisible as something unimportant or even frivolous, a subject for folklore but nothing more. It should also be said that identifying a formality or pattern of action does not imply prejudging the ethical orientation of that action, nor its tenor. In Congo, for example, an alcoholic on the streets of Kinshasa and a devotee of the Watchtower movement in Equateur province can both be said to be engaging in forms of escapism, but one of them is doing so in the drink-shops of a great city and the other in the austerity of the rain forest and of the Christian temperance movement.

Of all these six formalities of action which we have listed, the most easily visible is coercion. On this point, the present essay, which attempts to chart the history of Africa’s dependence while eschewing the existing school of dependency theory, should not be misunderstood. Violence indeed occupies a central role in the historical trajectory of sub-Saharan Africa, even though the human cost involved is small compared with the hecatombs which mark the histories of Asia and Europe. This remains the case even if we take into account the demographic losses incurred in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean slave trades.

It has appeared to some observers that, in old Africa, it was actually easier to deprive someone of life than to put them to work.\textsuperscript{90} It was this insight which Yambo Ouologuem tried to suggest in a novel which caused a scandal in the 1960s, \textit{Le Devoir de Violence}.\textsuperscript{91} Be this as it may, Africa’s globalization has greatly magnified the place taken by coercion in the whole repertoire of political action, because the practice of coercion has become embroiled with the imposition of central control and with a precise marking of territorial boundaries on a scale previously unknown. At the same time,

\textsuperscript{90} Lonsdale, ‘States and social processes’; Cooper, ‘Africa and the world economy’.
it has been accompanied by a technological revolution in the means of coercion, without the new states ever managing to institutionalize a legitimate monopoly of the ensuing violence. The colonizers’ search for hegemony was a process based on the ostentatious use of force, both in the period of the slave trade and in the privatized coercion exercised by the concessionary companies as well as in the form of the public or semi-public violence of the colonial administration and of its native auxiliaries. The systematic practice of deportation or exile, forced labour, the use of firearms, corporal and capital punishment, imprisonment, and the highly authoritarian nature of most of the social institutions introduced by colonization including missions, schools, hospitals, mines and plantations, plus of course the concentration camps or consolidated villages used during the South African war and the Mau Mau emergency, all recall to us that colonial occupation was conducted by military means, even if it soon found other, supplementary, techniques of domination. It is for this reason that figures of command featured so prominently in the rituals of appropriation which we have already mentioned, such as the Beni dance and the hawka possession cult, or even in daily speech, which frequently makes use of titles such as ‘patron’ or ‘chef’, ‘master’ or ‘baas’ in a manner almost obsessive. Many of the figures of the imagery evoked in African politics are clearly coercive. Specialists on Zaire have particularly drawn attention to the widespread propensity of Zaireans to identify the contemporary state with the terrifying image of Bula Matari, created in the early years of Belgian penetration, and they have noted the popularity of the painting entitled La colonie belge, which shows a scene of forced labour and the flogging of natives considered to be lazy or poor workers, under the unblinking gaze of an administrator.92 Similarly, South Africa’s system of apartheid maintained its image of raw domination right until the end. The domain of the night is replete with symbolic flourishes which express the predatory relationship between the societies of old Africa and their foreign partners, like the shadow of the slave trade which haunts the type of sorcery known in Cameroon as ekong.

It is significant that the whip, the instrument of domination par excellence, is often taken as—to paraphrase Freud—a ‘brief translation’ of the historicity of sub-Saharan Africa in the consciousness of the people who live there. This is something more than a historical memory, for the relationship between the individual and the state often remains one mediated by physical domination. Beatings with a whip or cane of some sort are frequent in police stations and prisons, as they also are in the popular

quarters of African towns whenever the police are conducting some sort of operation. The same is true of the main social institutions. Thus, both primary and secondary school children are liable to be beaten by their teachers until quite an advanced age (in Togo, until leaving secondary school), which sometimes provokes veritable insurrections in schools, as has happened quite often in Kenya for example. The whip is also used on students who are considered to be in revolt against authority, as in President Moi's Kenya, in Côte d'Ivoire under Houphouët-Boigny and Liberia under Doe, and even against political opponents whom a ruler wishes to humiliate, as sometimes happens in Cameroon or in President Kabila's Congo. Sometimes, a minister or president administers beatings in person, like Léon Mba in Gabon or Jean-Bedel Bokassa in the Central African Republic, both of whom turned their hand to such activities on occasion. Some post-colonial regimes have even turned the colonial legacy in matters of coercion into official policy, such as in Mozambique, where a law of 31 March 1983 reintroduced public floggings which had earlier been banned in 1975. These were henceforth to be applied in cases of 'offences against state security' and armed robbery. The authorities maintained that 'the repugnant aspect of such punishments in the past stemmed not from the punishments themselves, but from the fact that they were an instrument of colonial oppression', according to the Minister of Justice. Beatings are both common and considered legitimate through their association with the notion of parental authority as it was constituted in colonial times and as it has been reproduced by authoritarian regimes since independence. A British administrator in service in Kenya in 1941 remarked, 'I always treat my natives the same as I treat children. I try to be kind to them and to advise and direct them, but when kindness has no effect you have to do the same as they do in the public schools, at home and throughout the empire—use the cane', a sentiment no doubt shared by that great presidential flogger, 'Papa' Bokassa. Far removed from the sphere of politics and bureaucracy, corporal punishment is commonly applied to children at home, to apprentices in workshops, or even to new recruits to street-gangs, who are liable to beatings from their gang-leaders. Even more remarkably, nationalist or armed revolutionary movements which have pitted themselves against colonial occupiers or their neo-colonial successors have themselves adopted the methods of their enemies. Leaders such as Sékou Touré, Sylvanus Olympio or Jomo Kenyatta used intimidation to mobilize the masses. In Zimbabwe, the fighters of ZANU-PF inflicted corporal punishments on villagers whom

they thought to have misbehaved and, in Chad, the combatants of various wings of Frolinat had no need of any moral excuse to brutalize the populations which were under their control. 96 Worst of all, the conflicts in Mozambique, Angola, Liberia and Sierra Leone have shown the extreme measures which guerrilla fighters may use to recruit young people and to enforce at least the passive support of villagers, to loot or simply to inflict terror for its own sake. 97

Coercion is a means of regulating the imported state and of laying hold on its resources. It is also at the heart of Africa’s diplomatic relationship with the rest of the world. In some cases foreign powers become accomplices in Africa’s state violence through military and police co-operation accords, while at other times they condemn such practices with all the ambiguity and complexity which is usual in such matters. When UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim publicly criticized Jean-Bedel Bokassa’s public floggings of thieves, the President and future Emperor (little realizing just how accurate his rejoinder was) replied ‘Pimp! Imperialist! You did worse than that.’ 98 The crises in the Great Lakes and in Congo-Kinshasa since the beginning of the 1990s have demonstrated perfectly that the dialectic of denunciation and compromise continues to be the dominant mode in which the West regards the use of political force in Africa, at the same time as Western countries continue to participate in the application of that same force.

From this point of view it is clear that sub-Saharan Africa has now entered on a new phase of its history. Simply, the use of force has taken on an intensity unparalleled in Africa’s earlier history, in the form of technically advanced, professional campaigns of repression and war which are the vectors of new political categories, such as race, and which can even take the form of genocide. The new style of coercion may also take the form of a deregulation (or possibly democratization?) of the use of violence, in the shape both of collective armed movements and of more individual delinquency, both facilitated by the wide availability and low cost of firearms. Initiation in the use of modern technology increasingly takes the form of learning the use of weapons rather than an apprenticeship in the use of machine-tools or some type of professional education. Beatings, torture, massacres, forced expulsions or the reorganization of whole populations, battles, attacks, rape, looting and the confiscation of goods have been turned into common procedures of political life, applied by


98. Quoted by Bigo, Pouvoir et obéissance, p. 169.
social figures well established in the guise of soldiers, guerrilla fighters, customs officers, policemen, thugs, hooligans, or simply whoever has an opportunity to loot.

Almost as a matter of course, the spread and the intensification of coercion as an integral part of Africa’s extraversion and dependence have contributed to the development of another pattern of action: the exercise of trickery, or more precisely what the ancient Greeks called métis, that quality which allows a person to ‘manipulate hostile forces which are too powerful to be confronted directly, but which can be turned to good account in spite of their hostile nature, in such a way as to be useful for one’s own purposes’.99 The frequent occurrence of the person of the trickster in African folklore, and the perception that the social landscape is divided into both visible and invisible dimensions, suggest just how old this form of action is. It was embodied in the figures of those half-historical, half-mythical conquerors who came from afar, outsiders and drunken kings who took power by all manner of subterfuge as much as by the use of force.100 In our own times, the truly hybrid character of so many presidents represents the most up-to-date version of such a type. But inasmuch as colonization was indeed a ‘total defeat’, as has been considered by the Cameroonian philosopher Fabien Eboussi,101 it becomes easy to see why this process inspired the widespread practice of deception and trickery of all descriptions, as foreign occupations always do, wherever they occur. In this respect, sub-Saharan Africa differs little from Egypt, Italy, the former Czechoslovakia or, indeed, the slave-holding society of the southern states of the USA.102 Attempts to mislead the foreign master, his representatives and indeed his successors, become a normal form of conduct. Evidence of this is to be found in the embedded practice of commercial frauds or the use of ‘Potemkin villages’ which, in various forms, Africans continue to build for the benefit of aid donors, as they did in the past for the satisfaction of district officers. The old colonial practice of building a demonstration village purely as something to show to officials has its modern-day, financial equivalent in the periodic and utterly illusory ‘review’ of structural adjustment programmes which take place. What must be avoided, however, is to suppose that trickery of this sort is simply a response by a dependent person against the fact of his dependence. In reality, such activities have their own positivity and a degree of autonomy, as may be witnessed by the dogged perseverance of those picaresque

100. Luc de Heusch, Le roi ivre, ou l’origine de l’État (Gallimard, Paris, 1972).
individuals who are the true pioneers of modern Africa. Smugglers, diamond-diggers, currency-changers, fraudsters and simple migrants all find ways of evading laws, frontiers and official exchange rates. The young fighters who consider the figure of Rambo in the film *First Blood* to be a modern-day trickster,103 or the many instances in which people pose as soldiers and policemen, or act as agents of order at one moment while causing mayhem at another, such as the notorious ‘sobels’ of Sierra Leone who were soldiers by day and rebels by night, all show a sense of adventure which is almost without limit, and which often carries within itself a degree of genuine social and economic dynamism.

To a considerable extent, it is through such social types and their practices that Africa inserts itself into the international system, such as in the forms of illegal migration, the drug trade or fraud. The financial fraud known as ‘419’, one of Nigeria’s principal sources of hard currency, the fabrication and circulation of forged Bahreini dinars to the value of more than one billion French francs, the international activities of a *feyman* such as Donatien, who recruited a senior official of the French foreign ministry to act as one of his accomplices, and the importance of issues like immigration and narcotics in Western societies, all suggest that this is more than a matter of petty crime. The pertinence of this observation is all the more striking inasmuch as Africa’s rulers often take a leading role in deliberately misleading the foreign partners with whom they negotiate or form alliances.

Moreover, the frequency with which trickery is employed as a form of action is an indication of one of the key characteristics of African societies, namely the negotiability, convertibility and malleability of their constitutive elements. We have noted that African societies have a historic experience of this in terms of their relationship to the invisible world, the invention of ethnicity and conversion to Christianity or Islam, on the one hand, and the implantation of the capitalist universe of property, money and goods, on the other.104

Closely allied to trickery is flight, a strategy which the weak are more or less obliged to take in the face of the strong. Historians (and colonial administrators for that matter) have identified this as a tactic frequently employed in the societies of old Africa. Movement of this sort turns the

103. Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*.
state into a political space which is both relative and highly contested, with whole regions or population groups escaping the control of the central authorities without subverting or even destabilizing the central power, as Karine Bennafila has shown in her analysis of cross-border trade. Nevertheless, escapade is taking on a more tragic character than before, as it is motivated by very violent conflicts and sometimes takes the form of migrations provoked by campaigns of ethnic cleansing, as has happened most obviously in the Great Lakes region, but also in Kenya, Ethiopia, Angola, Liberia or Sierra Leone. People who have had resort to flight—in this case as refugees—remain in direct contact with the international system via humanitarian organizations, churches and the press, and even through foreign military interventions, as was the case in Somalia in 1992–3, or in Rwanda during the French Operation Turquoise in 1994. In other words, flight is not tantamount to disconnecting oneself from the world, as it may seem at first sight, but is rather a mode of insertion or reinsertion into world affairs, and even of globalization. From this point of view the many individual forms of escapism, such as through alcohol or drugs, or initiation into a mystical sect, are not really exceptions to such a dynamic. Alcohol, drugs and mystical beliefs are often of foreign origin. The main difference is that these forms of escape are not subject to the notable degree of institutional and bureaucratic regulation which is characteristic of refugee flows and refugee camps.

The fourth of the six historical patterns of action which we have identified is still more evidently connected to a globalized world. Colonial occupation required the active intermediation of a whole range of social categories: this became a line of continuity between the colonial state and the pre-colonial style of commerce (both ‘legitimate’ and otherwise) and pre-colonial ‘broking states’ (to use Martin Lynn’s phrase). The apogee of this was the system of Indirect Rule which, in the hands of Lord Lugard, was turned into a veritable doctrine. But the imposing shadow of Indirect Rule covered a veritable forest of minor growths. For, beyond the aristocratic or pseudo-traditional aristocracies, courts and chiefdoms which colonizing powers co-opted, key roles were played by foreign or trans-national imperial elites such as Asians, Goans, Brazilians, Cape Verdians, Krios and Lebanese, and above all by an anonymous legion of African catechists, interpreters, school-teachers, nurses, clerks and traders who, in their daily round of activities, contributed mightily to the concrete form of clientelism taken by the colonial ‘rhizome state’ as well as to the consolidation of a rentier political economy, thus adding to the personal fortunes of whichever person or group was the gatekeeper of this system. (This was

so even in the French empire, despite the fact that traditional or quasi-traditional systems of power were short-circuited by a colonial system proud of its anti-feudal republican ideology, at least until the First World War.) At the risk of repetition, we may make the point once again that these phenomena continue to occur today and that the working misunderstandings which always accompany such intermediary roles, most particularly when they are assumed in a context of domination and dependence, lend themselves easily to the arts of deception and trickery. It is perhaps less often observed that one of the great social types of twentieth-century Africa, namely that of the prophet, is also a figure of intermediation. Prophets have greatly served to further what Catholics call the ‘inculturation’ of the imported Christian faith and of many of its rituals, and of literacy in general as well as of the holy scriptures themselves. Prophets have furthered the bureaucratic organization of churches or religious groups, and even, quite often, of nationalism, in the form of a political alchemy easily observed in Congo-Kinshasa, Congo-Brazzaville, Zambia, Côte d’Ivoire, the Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea or Kenya. In slightly different form, the same is true of the practice of prophets, sometimes in the guise of Mahdism, in the Muslim societies of the Sahel.

Now, the development of independent churches or religious movements is, together with war, one of the principal contemporary forms of social mobilization in Africa. It is also a leading means by which sub-Saharan Africa integrates itself into the international system, such as via the links between the evangelical preachers of Monrovia and those of the Religious Right in America’s Deep South, or between congregations of Christian charismatics among Ghanaian migrants living in the Netherlands and their country of origin. A figure such as Monsignor Milindo, the former Catholic archbishop of Lusaka, can be seen as a model in this respect, as he was able to effect a synthesis between three elements, namely, the political prophetism of Simon Kapwepwe, a leader of the nationalist struggle, secondly, the historical tradition common in Zambia of leadership being attributed to major healers, and thirdly, the worldwide Catholic charismatic movement.

All of which brings us to our fifth formality of action. This is appropriation, which is perhaps the most difficult to follow in all its complexity. The anonymous heroes of this form of action are the school child avid for knowledge, the religious believer of the Christian churches and Muslim mosques, consumers of imported goods, hospital patients, and


those intellectuals for whom the sordid politics of universities and publishing houses have become second nature. The musicians of the Salvation Army, highlife bands or Congolese dance-bands, the head clerk who insists on carrying out bureaucratic procedures correctly, or for that matter those senior government officials and finance ministers who are absorbed in the application of structural adjustment of their national economies which their head of state, a trickster of the first order, does everything to thwart, are further examples. ‘The essential point is the forms in which human acts have “appropriated” the universe in which they exist, and in so doing, have transformed it continually’, writes Alf Lüdtke, the founding father of Alltagsgeschichte, citing Marx’s early writings.108 The analysis of this form of action is clearly indispensable for any understanding of the phenomena which we are discussing in the present essay, and for any attempt to create a theory of Africa’s dependency and its insertion into the international system while eschewing the extant dependency theory. The phenomena to which we refer include the importation of a new type of state, the creation of a hybrid political system, the functioning of the rentier economy, and the strategy of extraversion itself, but also the logic by which local and cultural differences are reasserted within the context of globalization. African societies have shown a keen appetite, and sometimes a voracious one, for borrowing from abroad. Yet, the critical sociology of domination and alienation has never been able to account for this appetite. The formidable demand for education and religious practices, clothes, musical styles, food, and styles of caring for the body are all examples.

In the last resort, practices of appropriation, largely through everyday activities such as those listed above, have created a broad social base large enough for some of Africa’s major conflicts to take the form of civil wars which, in part, are concerned with competition for access to imported material culture and its associated moral economy, or the refusal of such access. In short, what is at stake in these wars is the subjectivation of the protagonists. The Kenyan historian B. O. Ogot has the merit of having shown this at a very early stage in his writings on the Mau Mau rising, in the face of the prevailing nationalist rhetoric. 109 In practice, it is often difficult to distinguish between practices of appropriation and their opposite, namely, practices of rejection or opposition. As with the activities of common looters, the violence of guerrilla fighters is often directed at acquiring consumer goods and at appropriating them in the Marxist sense of the word, as the ‘physical appropriation’, the ‘behaviour towards the object’ which is tantamount to ‘an appropriation of human reality’.

It could be that these, our fifth and sixth formalities of action, are in some way the most important, if only because they are almost inevitably linked to all the other formalities. Just as an armed man seeks to loot the goods of his victims while assimilating the symbolic forms or the military technology of the contemporary world, so too do the trickster, the broker and even the refugee operate in a comparable way. It is largely through such means that a sort of improvised and creative practice comes into being, and this is the principal mode by which Africa manages its dependent extraversion. It is largely for this reason that the structuralist analysis offered by the school of dependency theory has shown itself incapable of penetrating the historicity of dependency. For dependence is a historical experience in which people create themselves as subjects.

Conclusion

‘We want to study, and we beg you to help us in Africa to study so that we can be like you.’ On Monday 2 August 1999, this pathetic request formulated by ‘two Guinean children’, Yaguine Keita and Fodé Toukara, and addressed to those ‘Excellencies, members and leaders of Europe’ to whom they addressed their ‘warmest and most respectable greetings’ in conformity with those codes of protocol and efficacy which regulate the relationship of intermediation, offers a brutal summary of relations between Africa and the West.¹¹⁰ In the manifesto written by these two airborne equivalents of boat-people, who were found dead among the landing gear of a Sabena airliner, the aspiration to appropriate is clearly expressed in the form of their wish for a ‘good education’. We may also identify in their message an expression of some classic methods of extraversion to achieve this aim, namely, through emigration and an appeal to international aid (‘we appeal to your solidarity and your kindness to come to the help of Africa’). But it was the sheer riskiness of their enterprise and its fatal outcome which did the most to draw the attention of the public. These young picaresque heroes, Yaguine and Fodé, were both pioneers and tricksters at the same time. They died in their quest, as so many others had done before them, such as those who have drowned in the Strait of Gibraltar, or been thrown to the sharks in the Atlantic by European crews anxious to avoid having to pay for their repatriation, or been suffocated in the course of expulsion by police officers as brutal as they are maladroit.

Decidedly, the history of sub-Saharan Africa’s extraversion may be banal, but it is no less tragic for that. The passions and the engagement which it continues to excite, notably in matters of education, material acquisition and social ascension, make truly indecent the condescension of Sartre in his preface to Fanon’s The Wretched of the Earth: ‘The European

elite undertook to manufacture a native elite. They picked out promising adolescents; they branded them, as with a red-hot iron, with the principles of Western culture; they stuffed their mouths full with high-sounding phrases, grand glutinous words that stuck to the teeth. After a short stay in the mother country they were sent home, whitewashed. These walking lies had nothing left to say to their brothers.\textsuperscript{111} To be sure, the wars which have spread over the area south of the Sahara are a vector of types of political and social mobilization which serve to weaken the Western presence and Western influence in the region. In the intellectual field too, the current fashion tends towards nativism in the guise of the African Renaissance, with often adverse consequences for various forms of cultural and scientific co-operation. Nevertheless, such forms of rejection can also be modes of appropriation and reinvention, just as nationalist movements were in matters of state institutions and the imagery of the state in the years after the Second World War, and just as are the independent churches in regard to world Christianity. There is every reason to suppose that the thirst for the West remains a substantial one, and that there will be no lessening of the numbers of people who set off on the path of emigration.\textsuperscript{112} Europe and North America will need to accommodate this trend and to try to make the best of it, rather than to put up further barriers, turning themselves ever more into fortresses.

Elements of uncertainty and even unease arise from other factors. In current political and economic circumstances, can extraversion engender anything other than war, or the general regime of deception and illusion which is already present in a large number of countries, and which represents in some senses a contemporary replica of the many effects of mimesis characteristic of societies in the days of the slave trade? ‘IBB=419’ was a slogan used by Nigerian demonstrators in June 1993, in an effort to compare General Babangida’s military dictatorship and its false democratization with the advanced-fee frauds which have done so much to stain the image of Nigerian business.\textsuperscript{113} In effect, the element of what Michel de Certeau called ‘make-believe’ has become one of the central elements of social life in some of the more prosperous countries south of the Sahara.\textsuperscript{114} No more than in the past does extraversion today seem able to solve the problems of accumulation, representation and legitimacy.


which are current in Africa, and to make of it ‘the finest and most admirable friend of others’, a phrase used in the vision of Yaguine and Fodé.

From another point of view, a utopian naïveté is one sign among many others that Africans are not necessarily resigned to the cynical and brutal way of life in which historical circumstances often oblige them to live. The religious movements which they join in such numbers are vehicles of a quest for a better world. It seems most probable that neither pentecostalism in its ruthless fight against Satan, nor the various sects with their individualistic esotericism, amount to credible or viable responses to current difficulties. However, it would be wrong to exclude the possibility that such social phenomena may be a sign of the deeper formation of an idea of freedom and justice which could in the course of time assume political form, and constitute the basis for a new civic order. Seen from this angle, the reinvention of the democratic model imported from the West remains a possible mode of the on-going history of extraversion. The precedent offered by India demonstrates that such a process does not require that liberal cultural representations be prevalent within society; it is equally compatible with powerful sentiments of belonging to a particular community, which democracy can even encourage or create, replete with inequalities of status or caste, with a high degree of cultural heterogeneity and with a low degree of political centralization.115

Furthermore, the moral economy of democracy cannot be reduced to the famous civic culture so dear to Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba. It can also consist of ‘a culture of personal achievement through mediation, negotiation and flexibility’, as among the popolino of Naples.116 In other words, trickery and intermediation can become formalities of democratic action and of the appropriation of the democratic model. In the view of Christian Coulon, this is precisely the type of conversion which offers a challenge to Senegal, whose ‘democratic myth’, inspired by statism and jacobinism, now has to accommodate the rise in importance of other social figures such as the fonctioneer (functionary, in Wolof) or the ku jäng ekool (‘one who has studied at school’), and especially the gorgui (the average Senegalese, always on the look out for a protector) or the moodu-moodu (the informal trader), the marabout and the ‘communitarian entrepreneur’.117 However delicate it may be in a context of economic crisis, a worsening conflict in Casamance, the spread of civil wars in the region and the

growing political autonomy of the Senegalese army, it might not be impossible to negotiate this new bend in the road. After all, is not Senghor, in the national imagery, the prototype of the ‘astute politician, past master in the art of compromise, reconciliation and patronage’, the political version of the lèèk, the hare of Wolof folklore whose cunning is legendary?\textsuperscript{118} The criminalization of the state and the economy is also no insurmountable obstacle to the democratization of sub-Saharan Africa, if we are to judge by the examples of Italy, Japan and India.\textsuperscript{119}

The future of sub-Saharan Africa thus remains very largely open. Neither the dubious condescension of Afro-pessimism nor the inane fantasies of Afro-optimism offer a satisfactory interpretation. The only certainty about the future concerns Africa’s insertion in the international system. For better or for worse, this will continue, and globalization will not stop at the coasts of Africa, even if the ‘disjunctures’ inherent in this process are such as to limit certain of its effects south of the Sahara.\textsuperscript{120} In these circumstances, it is imperative to recognize that the chancelleries of member states of the Group of Seven certainly give insufficient attention to a part of the world whose difficulties concern them in the first instance. For the most predictable strategy on the part of African states will be that of the free rider, situated in the interstices of an international system whose actors are increasingly ‘interdependent’ and in which they remain the poor relations, obliged to live from hand to mouth.\textsuperscript{121} More than ever, the discourse on Africa’s marginality is a nonsense.

\textsuperscript{118} Coulon, ‘La tradition démocratique’, p. 75.
\textsuperscript{119} ‘Crime et politique en démocratie’, Critique internationale, 3 (Spring, 1999), pp. 122–74.
\textsuperscript{120} A. Appadurai, ‘Disjuncture and difference in the global cultural economy’, Public Culture, 2, 2 (1990), pp. 1–24.
\textsuperscript{121} B. Badie, Un monde sans souveraineté. Les etats entre ruse et responsabilité (Fayard, Paris, 1999).