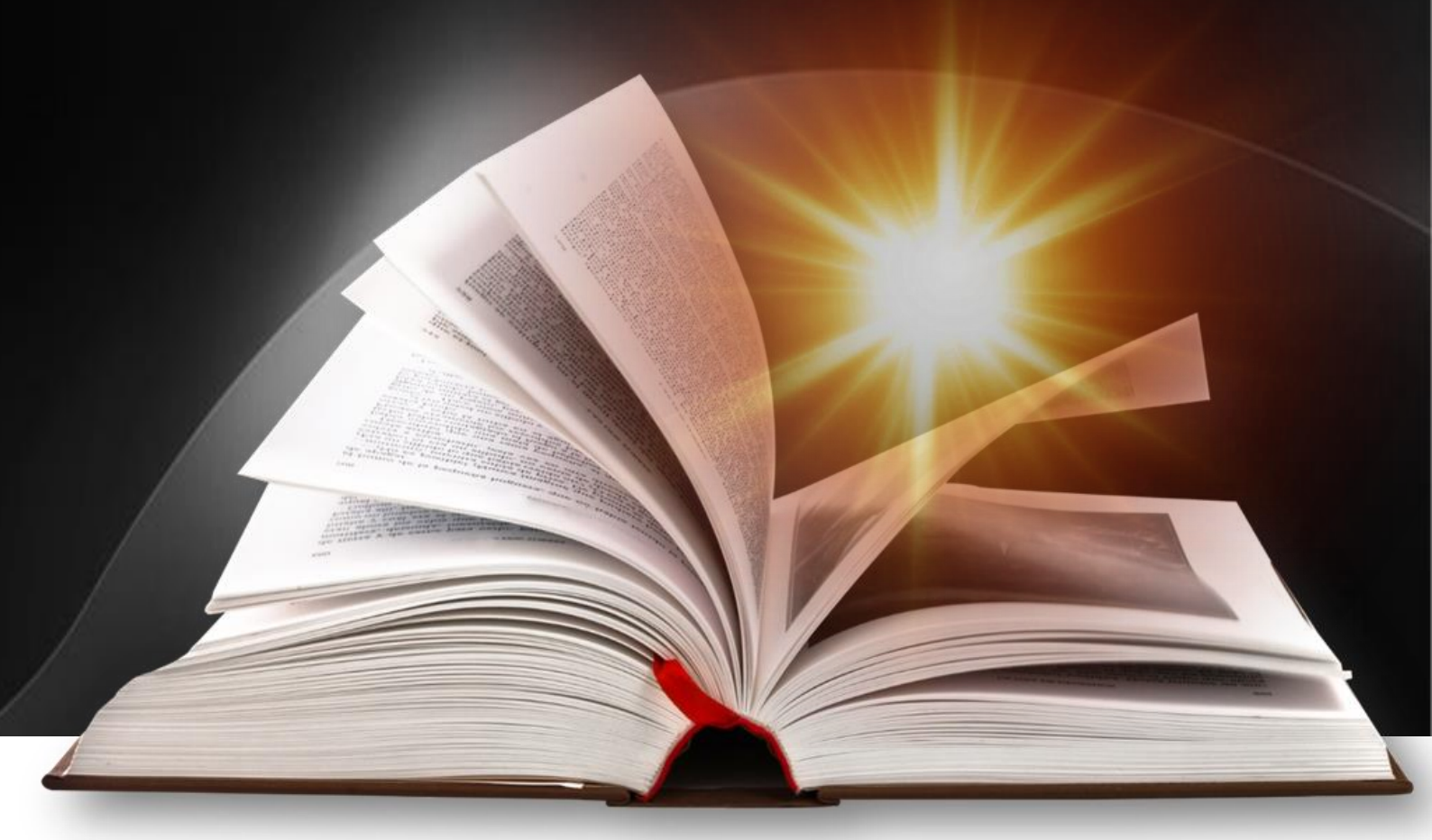
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Socio-ecological discourse as an African exorcising discourse: Re-membering Mudimbe's "Reprendre"[1]

[Discours socio-écologique comme un discours Africain exorcisant : Re-connecter « *Reprendre* » de Mudimbe]

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Editorial

Chères lectrices, chers lecteurs,

C'est avec une ferveur renouvelée et un sens aigu de notre responsabilité intellectuelle que nous vous convions à franchir les portes de cet espace unique, dédié à la célébration de l'intelligence et de la créativité africaines dans toute leur splendeur. La **Revue Panafricaine de la Jeunesse (RPJ)** se positionne ici comme un carrefour où se croisent réflexion académique et innovation pragmatique, dans une quête inlassable de réponses aux défis multiformes de notre époque.

Dans un monde en constante mutation, cette revue se veut une boussole, orientant les esprits curieux vers des territoires inexplorés de la pensée critique. Chaque article, chaque réflexion, chaque témoignage publié dans ces pages transcende les barrières géographiques et culturelles, tissant une toile intellectuelle où l'Afrique dialogue avec le reste du monde. Loin des visions simplistes et uniformisantes, cette revue offre une lecture plurielle et nuancée, où la diversité des perspectives est érigée en moteur de compréhension et de transformation.

Ce numéro particulier s'inscrit dans une dynamique audacieuse : celle de faire rayonner non seulement l'ingéniosité scientifique, mais également la richesse des expériences humaines qui en sont le socle. À travers des contributions d'une rigueur exemplaire, nos auteurs dévoilent des idées qui jaillissent des contextes de résilience et d'espoir, et qui trouvent leur force dans l'intersection de disciplines, de cultures et de visions. Ces pages témoignent d'une Afrique en mouvement, une Afrique créative et porteuse de solutions pour un avenir plus inclusif et durable.

Loin d'être un simple réceptacle de savoirs, cette revue est un espace vivant, animé par une communauté d'auteurs, de chercheurs et de penseurs qui s'engagent à poser des jalons pour le développement scientifique et social. Ensemble, ils bâtissent des ponts entre l'universel et le particulier, entre le local et le global, démontrant que l'innovation africaine est non seulement pertinente, mais essentielle à l'évolution des sociétés contemporaines.

Notre comité éditorial, appuyé par une équipe scientifique d'excellence, veille à garantir une qualité irréprochable à chaque publication. Ce travail collaboratif, empreint de rigueur et d'éthique, reflète notre ambition de faire de la RPJ un vecteur de transformation sociale et une tribune où les voix africaines s'expriment avec force et conviction. Chaque numéro est une invitation à repenser les paradigmes dominants, à déconstruire les stéréotypes, et à envisager de nouvelles façons de concevoir le rôle de l'Afrique dans le monde.

Alors que vous parcourez ces pages, nous espérons que vous serez saisi(e)s par l'ampleur des idées, la profondeur des analyses et la portée des visions qui y sont présentées. Plus qu'une lecture, cette revue est une expérience, une immersion dans un univers où la science et la pensée critique façonnent les contours d'un avenir prometteur.

Plongez dans cette aventure intellectuelle, où l'Afrique se réinvente et inspire le monde. Ensemble, poursuivons le rêve d'un continent qui, par sa richesse intellectuelle et sa créativité, se hisse au rang des acteurs incontournables de la réflexion mondiale.

Bonne lecture et bienvenue dans cet univers d'idées, d'innovations et de découvertes !

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Socio-ecological discourse as an African exorcising discourse: Re-membering Mudimbe's "Reprendre"[1]

[Discours socio-écologique comme un discours Africain exorcisant : Re-connecter « Reprendre » de Mudimbe]

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Abstract

When reading Mudimbe's *The Idea of Africa*, I was overwhelmed in the complex web of knowledge. I immediately realized how Mudimbe's multifaceted idea of Africa is profound and inspiring. Although it was conceived through conflicting systems of knowledge, it was addressed from an African standpoint. I finally wondered what specifically I was about to '**reprendre**' through socio-ecological discourse analysis of Mudimbe's "**reprendre**". I posited that with Mudimbe's first meaning of "reprendre," socio-ecological discourse may stand for an African exorcising discourse entailing socio-ecological justice, which needs to "**reprendre**" **(take up)** the interrupted African traditions that are inherently socio-environmental sensitive. The discourse at the crossroads of Mudimbe's Africanism and Asante's Afrocentricity is up to excavate all African strategies, means, tools likely to promote the "**fair-dialogue-meeting**" of all beings, humans and nonhumans to bring them on the road map for a potential socio-ecological balance that Africa and the world need. Thus, to enhance Africa's steadiness, Africans have to '**reprendre' (ponder on)** knowledge produced traditionally and scientifically by Africans in different fields of Africanism to decide their possible implementation for Africa's benefit first.

Keywords: Mudimbe, reprendre, African ecocriticism, fair-dialogue-meeting, exorcising discourse, socio-ecological discourse.

Résumé

En lisant *L'idée de l'Afrique* de Mudimbe's, je fus submergé dans un complexe réseau de connaissances. Immédiatement, j'avais réalisé comment l'idée multifacette de l'Afrique de Mudimbe était si profonde et inspirante. Même s'elle était conçue à partir des systèmes de connaissances conflictuelles, l'idée fut positionnée d'un point de vue africain. Je m'étais finalement demandé ce que j'allais spécifiquement "reprendre" à travers l'analyse du discours socio-écologique de « **Reprendre** » de Mudimbe. J'ai posé qu'avec le premier entendement

[1] This text was about Hommage to V.Y. Mudimbe's colloquium organized by the University of Lubumbashi in 2019. Yet, it was not retained to be published in the act of the colloquium for unknown reasons of its organizers. Seeing its relevance and reflective insights into the work of Mudimbe and the update it brings to the pursuit of Mudimbe's Africanism, I decided better to share it with the worldwide as a way of "reprendre" Mudimbe's "Reprendre". Certainly, it will empower some people, especially those Africans committed to the "reprise" of the African continent progress and welfare.

[2] Associate Professor at English Letters & Civilization Department

de Mudimbe du terme « Reprendre », le discours socio-écologique peut se positionner comme un discours africain exorcisant qui prône une justice socio-écologique et qui requiert de "**reprendre**" les traditions africaines, interrompues, qui sont en soi socio-environnementalement sensibles. Ce discours, à la croisée des chemins d'africanisme de Mudimbe et d'afrocentricité d'Asante serait apte d'exhumer tous les stratégies, les moyens et les outils possibles de promouvoir une " **rencontre-dialogue-équitable**" de tous les êtres : humains et non-humains en vue de les mobiliser pour une potentielle balance socio-écologique que l'Afrique et le monde ont besoin. Ainsi, pour renforcer la stabilité de l'Afrique, les Africains doivent '**reprendre' (réfléchir à)** les connaissances produites traditionnellement ou scientifiquement par les africains dans différents domaines d'africanisme pour en décider de la possibilité de leur implémentation au bénéfice de l'Afrique d'abord.

Mots-clés : *Mudimbe, reprendre, écocritique africaine, recontre-dialogue-équitable, discours exorcisant, discours socio-écologique.*

0. Introduction

After reading V.Y. Mudimbe's *The Idea of Africa*, I realized how the history of Africa has been expressively and extensively created or invented by Westerners in their permanent foxy need to foster the idea of their supremacy over black people. This created discourse has since then been present in many Westerners' speeches, including in many Africans who have been formatted to accept "naively or clandestinely" the margin place of the African continent, an Africa with neither history nor culture, with no present nor future outside of the Western scheme of thoughts.

Mudimbe humbly recognizes that "the idea is a product of the West and was conceived and conveyed through conflicting systems of knowledge" (Mudimbe, 1994, p. Xi). Nonetheless, Mudimbe was one of the African leading figures beside Cheik Anta Diop, Achille Mbembe, Homi Bhabha, Wole Soyinka, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Wangari Mathai, Raja Bin Saidi, Theophile Obenga, Chinua Achebe, Kinyongo Jeki, etc. who have worked hard to reverse the tendency, attesting differently the richness of African traditions and the great contributions of the African continent to the rest of the world.

Paradoxically enough, it is about a contribution that has been underhandedly less considered despite so many eloquent proofs since the last century.The profound reason is that to sincerely recognize the actual contributions of the African continent does not miss significant consequences in both the African continent and the Western ones. One of the scared potential aftermath is that the West is, above all, afraid to let fall apart all the wrongly constructed anthropocentric myths it underhandedly created to justify its supremacy over the African people, its "civilizing right" to conquer the African continent. It is about a set of myths that have torn the mind and the soul of the African who appears today as a vein pilgrim, searching for unknown destiny, seemingly existing elsewhere than in Africa or in the African's soul (Raja, 2015a; Soyinka, 1964/1973, 1976).

Another plausible reason to not recognize frankly past and the present contributions of the African continent to the world history seems the fear to see Africans re-energizing from their glorious distant past (Mbembe, 2023; Kaputu, 2022) and present Afrocentric achievements from which the future of Africa indeed depends. Last but not

least, the recognition of African contributions in its diverse domains (cultural, artistic, anthropological, philosophical, archeological, medical, technological, historical, linguistic, literary, etc) would be an obvious confession of the Westerns' world with regard to different abuses done on the African continent. Therefore, it would sound automatically as the acknowledgement of Africa as the source of human culture, even the humanity's birthplace (Raja, 2015b, Ki-Zerbo, 2024).

Consequently, the Western world prefers cunningly to continue playing behind the curtain by sustaining those constructed myths of domination, pertaining the multifaceted dependence of the African continent upon its "permanent masters". By doing so, they scarcely never finance or otherwise support any true African project likely to bring back the African world on its true railway of progress tending to liberate the postcolonial African from its colonial and neo-colonial burdens. On the contrary, the Western world is ready to finance and support any project, scientific, cultural, economic, literary, etc. that above all its advertised goodness for Africa is intrinsically inscribed in promoting or sustaining the Western imperial agenda[1]. Habib (2005) is eloquent when he elucidates the concept of imperialism and its immediate and further implications. Mwepu (2019) openly affirms that most of Westerners' interventions in Africa appear with suit and good names and objectives as if the true beneficiaries were Africans, whereas in fact, the implied beneficiaries are the same Westerners.

However, despite of these ill-intentioned maneuvers, the Western world has been at the table of the reason to start living the fall of its power, consequently of its illusion to be the source of all cultures, the model and the leading sphere of the world on which African and other parts of the world ought to depend. Bedie (2016 & 2018) aptly argues from Eurocentric perspective that the North is no longer the center as it pretended to be. He sounds right to notice the weakness of the power and the power of the weakness when he alludes to the former pretended powerful nations that are falling apart and the former assumed weaker nations that are demonstrating their determination to forge their own ways for their shining present and future. Commenting upon Mattéi (2007), Banywesize (2024, p.110) acknowledges obviously that Europa has no longer either the hegemonic centrality or the monopole of the privileged view everywhere. It is no more the sole place of production of relevant categories, notions and concepts likely to be used in the objective interpretations of anthropo-sociological realities and constructions of universal knowledges.

Such Bedie's assumption seems to the eyes of the acute critic of the African history as a fulfillment of Césaire (1955/2000) who already at that time asserted that "A civilization that uses its principles for trickery and deceit is a dying civilization" (p. 31). It is no wonder that the Western civilization is dying today, for it "proves incapable of solving the problems" that it has created either through slavery, colonization and neo-colonization. The cases of wars in Africa, climate change issues and their corollaries, such as immigrations, heavy flood and drought, etc.

[1] This imperial agenda has been set forth for years since the first contact of the Western world with African in 15th century.

The question would be today as it has been for years, but with more emphasis and urgency, on the fate and the place of the African continent in retrieving or better saving the hope of the humanity. Can Africans continue following blindly the Western ways leading to death? A Kizeela wisdom stipulates that "*Obe Lonzi ukunkuzya bafwa, nobe ukazikilwa kumo*" [A fly that accompanies a corpse is likely to be buried together with it.]. I think seriously that time has come for Africans to stop and think three to four times before taking up the road. Is it the same road on which they came before meeting with others, or will it be the same road on which they have made a way with others though differently? Or simply the 'reprise' of their way needs to be on another road lived and looked at differently? Time has come finally as a "present-past" civilization to stop looking off the most crucial problems that our continent and its people face today in fear to be treated tomorrow by our own children and great children as traitors (Soyinka, 1964/1973, p. 143). Otherwise, our "present-past" civilization will be "a stricken civilization" (Césaire, 1955/2000, p. 31).

Facing this reality in front of me in daily life, my thoughts went straight to Mudimbe's "reprendre" even though by the end I wondered what I should really "reprendre" from him who did not want his progenitor, departing from his Americanized sons Daniel and Claude, to treat him as a traitor (Mudimbe, 1994, p.xi). He decided better to "reprendre" an idea of Africa no longer Westernized but Africanized through Westerner's system. In doing so, Mudimbe produced at once the first, the second and third levels of discourse as inspired from Paul Ricoeur (1974). That is the mystery of Mudimbe's idea about Africa.

It is from this perspective that I wonder what socio-ecological discourse takes up in the light of Mudimbe's reprendre. In addition, considering traditions as "the presence of the past" in the present Vishwanath (2005), I would like to inquiry if African ecocriticism may be located in the long past tradition of Mudimbe's Africanism. Finally, I speculate what would be the next step to move forward African full liberation. In other words, what Africans need to enhance (boost) African steadiness after so long and productive meditation. Such are questions around which the following sub-points will turn.

1. Re-membering Mudimbe's «Reprendre»

In his demarche to explain the fate of the African continent to his two Americanized children, Mudimbe acknowledges the need to "reprendre" seemingly an idea of Africa which goes back to a distant African past. Kaputu (2023, p.199) acknowledges in many of Mudimbe's writings the invitation "to search in the distant past to past the African wealth…" In this perspective, to "reprendre", according to Mudimbe (1994), does not only mean to take back. He proposes three acceptations of the term from which my inquiry would depart before distancing or better surpassing him.

Mudimbe, who despite his sound mastery of the English language, finds it difficult to translate effectively the French verb "reprendre". Consequently, he prefers to use it as such in fear to lose its French fabric meanings that he has attributed to it as an "image of the contemporary activity of African art". He then posits the three assigned meanings of the concepts which run as follows:

> I mean it first in the sense of taking up an interrupted tradition, not out of a desire for purity, which would testify only to the imaginations of dead ancestors, but in a way

> that reflects the conditions of today. Second, *reprendre,* suggests a methodical assessment, the artist's labor beginning, in effect, with an evaluation of the tools, means, and projects of art within a social context transformed by colonialism and by later currents, influences, and fashions from abroad. Finally, *reprendre* implies a pause, a meditation, a query on the meaning of the two preceding exercises. (Mudimbe, 1994, p. 154)

It can be read through the above passage that the first meaning of the verb "reprendre" advocates postcolonial African's engagement in the excavation of African traditions which have been suffering for years from internal and external denigrations, for their appreciations have been painted of colonial and neo-colonial traits. Yet, Mudimbe thinks that while these interrupted traditional knowledge which go back to African past need to be adopted, they must be adapted to today's conditions. Brief, this first meaning imbues that the postcolonial African has to "reprendre" the "first level discourse", the popular discourse which inherently encompasses African past traditions.

This call does not differ from Soyinka's attempt to convey the same message through an allegorical image. Baroka, one of the protagonists in *The Lion and The Jewel*, asserts,

"Yesterday's wine alone is strong and blooded, child, and although the Christians' holy book denies the truth of this, old wine thrives best within a new bottle. The coarseness is mellowed down, and the rugged wine acquires a full and rounded body…" (Soyinka, 1963/1974, p. 49). Yesterday's wine refers to African traditions that Baroka acknowledges first to be already good, strong and life provider even if the Bible denies the truth. He understates that thanks to traditions, African societies outlived for years and constructed strong and balanced communities. This assertion of self-knowledge is an expression of one's culture and history as values which have allowed African communities to survive. Asante (2003) is right when he recognizes that "…We know whom we are and what we are supposed to do to the degree that we know our history. A people without an appreciation of the value of historical experiences will always create chaos…" (p. 1). It is in this range that Biruru (2022) inscribes the understanding of "identity" not only as a relation to one's history and community but also as a self-recognition, the assertion of one's identity. He also asserts that its lack may be at the basis of empathy or to some extent to violent or deviant reactions toward others (pp.3-4).

All the same, in the fore mentioned quotation, the character Baroka recognizes that this wine will only be better off if it couples with modern ideas that he denotes as a new bottle. In this metonymic scheme of thoughts, the old wine becomes the content and the new bottle the container that has to shape its image. Thus, Baroka's thought is so deep that it encapsulates the wholeness of traditional-modern ideas' interdependence. Thus, his thought can be summed up in the sense that what needs to be taught are traditional ideas but through new lenses to foster existing ideas in the light of new ones. This is so paradoxical in today Africa where Eurocentrism has been taken for granted willingly or unwillingly, forsaking the popular knowledge at its mercilessness. This paradox tries to be swept away by Banywesize (2020) who regards today's society as "ouverte ouvrant sur le future", that is, at once open and opening toward the future. It is a about a society in which identities are no longer deductible

but complex, for they are the sum of many sharing between individuals of different spheres (p. 153).

The second meaning of the verb "reprendre" pinpoints the critic's labor to assess traditional knowledge through Western eyes and tools to decide on their relevance in yesterday and today's Westernized contexts. Already, conclusions of such a Western assessment regarding the validity of traditional African knowledge are predictable, for many entrepreneurs of such an adventure have been constructed through Western scheme of thoughts. This enterprise is no longer a matter of common people but of academics who commit to produce knowledge according to predetermined norms and practices not free from colonial and neo-colonial features. Most of the produced knowledge, the case of this article, remain hidden in the "master's mighty" languages imposed underhandedly for their power conveyance. It is about a set of useful and useless knowledge produced for academics and their colonial peers, less usable in everybody's daily life. Their access by common Africans is expressively denied, for this knowledge is neither shared with all members of African communities who do not master Western languages nor translated through their native African languages. Therefore, the undertaker tackles the "second level discourse", the academic discourse underhandedly invented for and guided and controlled by the colonial and neo-colonial power systems. I assume that it is at this level of the discourse that the deferring of the welfare of the African continent is sustained, for the gap the discourse undertakes knowingly or unknowingly is complex and being complexified on daily basis, first in terms of the utility of knowledge produced and then in terms of means of communication adopted . It appears as a continuity of the imperial project. Mamadou BA (2007) who relies on Ngugi (1997) does not hesitate to assert that because of many gaps in the current Eurocentric education system, there is a necessity for Africans to revise the system, otherwise, Africans will continue to be dominated by Westerners for the unfitted education system likely to bring close to nothing.

Finally, Mudimbe's last meaning of "reprendre" insinuates a break. It is a discontinuity with the two preceding ways of tackling African knowledge. It is a time of questioning respectively the continuity of the interrupted African traditions and colonial discourse to find out a way out toward the African continent's welfare. Such a break imbues a meditation process which reflects what Kaputu and Mwepu (2020) call at once "continuity, discontinuity, invention and re-invention". It appears as an assertive coming together of both the first exercise and the second one whose final outcome ought to be an alternative for Africa's full liberation. However, vague, here many Africans, including even Afrocentrists have "repris" the "third level discourse" which, above all, remains the product of the West. Mudimbe (1994) is clear when he puts that even the most Afrocentrists who rightly produce a third level discourse continue reflecting somehow the Western systems in their thoughts.

While stressing the "recours à l'authenticité"[resort to authenticity], the praise of the African past and present contributions were still answering the colonial masters' imperial agenda that in fact has never changed[1]. As such, they could rightly address

[1] One can only read Donald Trump's below speech about African countries and guess immediately the imperial agenda's discourse. "President Donald Trump has reportedly referred to Haiti and African countries as "hole countries" during a meeting with congressional leaders in the Oval Office". Retrieved from

these issues through Western languages to the same limited "intellectual or academic" audience, denouncing the imperial systems in different domains: cultural, religious, education, politics, economics, philosophy, psychology, medicine…Despite all these efforts, the set up imperial agenda continues freely its course until its crushes completely the head and the soul of whole a continent. Its instigators being "successful" in their project have passed the command of the "on Rushing-Turbo capitalism", a capitalism with no pity (Nixon, 2005/2007) to their African scapegoats in different domains who pretend to lead the choir, unfortunately at their own and communities' loss, sooner or later.

Worth should be mentioning that although Mudimbe's philosophy of "reprendre" was applied to African art (especially sculpture and painting) from a social perspective, the idea can be applied to many other works of art as sources of knowledge production. Thing that Mudimbe does not hesitate to acknowledge plainly when he states: "Finally, I would like to point out that my approach has a theoretical *a priori* concerning the status of a work of art: I suggests that we consider African artworks as we do literary texts, that is as linguistic (narrative) phenomena as well as discursive circuits (see Kristeva 1980)" (p. 156). In stating so, Mudimbe lets transpire the fact that a work of art is so broad that it carries more than a traits, including influent ideologies of the time. It needs to be captured as a product of its producer and also as the product of the society producing its producer. Isn't this image that a keen reader can detect from Mudimbe's *An Idea of Africa*?

Shall I wonder today "Que faire?" if Apter (1992), Kaputu (2017) among others attempted by their own to answer that question raised since the mid of 20th century whose African effective and non-effective "answers-questions" lay innocently here and there in so important essays as researches' outcomes whose practicability is far to be today's invitee. Such a question is a reflection of the third level discourse which has been striving for years to reconcile the first and the second level discourses. Both evoked writers have called for the cease fire between scholars from the South and the North to continue deepening the void that divide them, which has consisted in accusing each other. They call for mutual mobilization to put on strategies to address todays' and tomorrow needs.

My intention, far from being extraordinary, does not want to approach the problems of the three levels of discourses by extending them from the third to fourth, etc. It appears as a call for Africans' mindset to re-ajust their target in the production of knowledge. Instead of continuing producing knowledge, as it has been for years, to satisfy the need of others, encapsulating this through their imposed languages for their appreciation and trickery use, time has come to translate into African languages and share the knowledge produced susceptible to promote the progress of Africa and to continue producing much more for Africa and Africans first. It is a call for Africans to

https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/trump-shithole-countries-haiti-africa-latest-report-comments-a8154666.html

I do not want to mention here Nicolas Sarkozy's speech delivered in Dakar in 2007 to reveal the permanence of imperial discourse. "Le discours de Dakar de Nicolas Sarkozy : intégralité du discours du président de la République, prononcé le 26 juillet 2007 ». Retrieved from https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2007/11/09/le-discours-de-dakar_976786_3212.html

move away from finger pointing approach toward mutual problems solving that the Western has succeeded to impose them. And it is especially a call for sound and determined Afrocentrist actions no longer dedicated to Westerns but to Africans. To put it in simplest way, time has gone to continue proclaiming "African tigritude", for time is now to act freely as true citizens of the world through honest and dignified actions likely to enhance silently but plainly the African continent's steadiness, and per extension the world's balance.

In this vein of mindset, again I questioned what I should really "reprendre" from V.Y. Mudimbe without reproducing the same discourse revised or improved since everything seems to be 'repris', including his own personality. My reprise of Mudimbe's idea of Africa needs to be apprehended through the "re-membering" process. In fact, the expression re-membering Mudimbe's "reprendre" implies that this communication is going to put together, or if you like, to re-connect, the three meanings of the verb to 'reprendre' evoked above prior recalling the indispensable need to connect the African past and present for a potential shining future. Such is my way to connect Mudimbe's reprendre to the preoccupations of the socio-ecological discourse which entails such a re-membering process.

I borrowed this fabric verb "to re-member" from Ngugi Wa Thiong'o who used it in his evening lecturer at Yale University in 2014. His talk was about "Re-membering Africa: Retrieval and Exchange of African Memory"1.The term has two apprehensions. It suggests that we have to connect different parts which were harmoniously connected before being disconnected or better "dis-membered" for given wrong reasons. This first process calls to our mind good memories about different now connected or ready to be connected. And that notion of memory is the second apprehension of the term. The two permanent and complementary parts which have been dis-membered by Western modernism are the past and the present which always used to go together supporting each other. Yet, the advent of the Western modernism, especially in Africa, came expressively to suppress this long past marriage. It is this divorce between the African past and its present which has been in one way or another at the heart of all levels of discourses evoked earlier. What I simply want here is to foster any discourse which propels the re-membering of these for a better present and future of the African continent first.

Shall I wonder like Mudimbe about the price that I will get from the worldwide academics and intellectuals gathered in this international colloquium, celebrating an African continent's production of knowledge through one of the continent's child, for bringing back to light what has been buried, blurred, or simply forgotten? (Mudimbe, 1994, p.159). I firmly believe in African answers to African problems pertaining the gaze of the true interests of Africa and Africans prior extending these frankly and honestly to our brothers and sisters all over the world who above all aspire to the same acquisition of the well beings (Soyinka & Gates, 2019; Fanon,1952/2008). I assume that one way of excavating that African blurred or buried past is to put on the world road map the socio-ecological discourse as a new exorcising discourse, entailing the coming together of all beings as a way toward socio-ecological steadiness.

[1] The lecture can be found on https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nITACioIjC8

2. Socio-Ecological Discourse: Reprendre Socio-environmental Sensitivity of African traditions

With the three acceptation Sof the verb 'reprendre' discussed earlier as per Mudimbe's understanding, a very basic question would be the kind of discourse that humanity in general and Africans in particular can 'reprendre' to enhance the socio-ecological equilibrium that the world need today. I can assume that humanity needs a socio-ecological discourse, entailing social and environmental justice. It is a discourse that brings about a celebration of sameness. It propels a "**fair-dialogue-meeting**" of all beings regardless their species, races, ages, sexes, social status… (Mwepu, 2019). Arguing from Afrocentrist perspective, it is sensible to wonder in this section what does socio-ecological discourse takes up from African histories. That's a question! I am tempted to assert that socio-ecological discourse reclaims or better rescues the social and environmental sensitivities of African traditions. It is about sensitivities which served for year the muntu to live harmoniously within his social as well as environmental communities (Biruru, 2014). Mofin (2012) rightly calls such sensitivity as an "eco-ubuntu", a translation of the interdependence among humans within both their social and environmental communities.

Beforehand, let me recall the three levels of discourse, likely to be found in any society, that Mudimbe (1994) details while referring "imprudently" to Ricoeur (1974). He distinguishes primary or zero degree discourse, the second level discourse and the third level discourse.

> As for the zero degree discourse, Mudimbe regards it as
> …a primary, popular interpretation of founding events of the culture and its historical becoming. That this discourse should be qualified as conveying a body of legends and myths is of no importance since its ordinary function is to witness, naively for sure, to a historical dynamism. Silent but permanent, this discreet and, at the same time, systematic reference to a genesis marks the everyday practices of a community. Families reenact this discourse in their ordinary lives; mothers consciously transmit its rules to their children (teaching the origins of a culture as they force upon the child an internalization of a civilization, its spiritual and cultural rules, and its values), and a community as a whole – through its procedure of initiation, schooling, and socialization – will make sure it produces a citizen who has the "feel" of tradition and who thus, as an adult, will act and react normally and correctly in everyday life…(Mudimbe, 1994, p. xiii)

Referring to African context, zero degree discourse refers to African traditional discourse which primarily connects the present to its past or better its long past. It is about an African past redeeming even its genesis, recalling all myths and legends constructing this. It is a kind of discourse which has always been present since the long past and that has been conveyed from generations to generations as it has been witnessing the African history's dynamism. Here traditions need to be understood rightly in Vishwanath (2005) terms as "what we choose to retain of the past with us in the present" (p. 5).

This primary discourse being popular, it is used by whole the community through different systems of communication: initiation, schooling and socialization. These systems achieve to empower young people to behave normally and correctly according to their communities' expectations. Brief, thanks to this discourse, the trainees smell their traditions and feel better off living through these traditions consciously or

unconsciously mingled with modern values. Yet, the "On-rushing Turbo capitalism" that Nixon (2011) denounces, or better the "globalism" of the 21st century that Roos and Hunt (2010) denote, is more than ever intended to wipe the residual African values that have resisted since the inception of modernity in Africa.

One can wonder what would be better than promoting the socio-ecological discourse whose outcome is a fair cohabitation of the individual and his/her social and environmental communities. It is a traditional African community which serves the individual who can only bloom if s/he works within and for the same community in which both the foolish and the wise, the poor and the rich have the same right to participate in (Ngugi, 1972, p. 25). Here there is good communication between individuals and their community so far as the message spread, and the means of communications are common to everyone. There is no discrepancy between the message spread and the channel of communication used for the purpose. It is such a discourse conveyed through African languages which would not hinder the communication between the sender and the receiver as members of the same community whose "denominateur commun" or if you like "common ground" remains the welfare of the community as a whole.

Besides, the second level discourse appears as a critical level. This discourse seems to apprehend critically the cultural founding events as per Western overt or covert guidelines. Mudimbe (1994) states:

> These deploy themselves critically and actualize themselves as intellectual disciplines – History, sociology, economics – of the culture, that is, as disciplinary knowledge transcending the first-level discourse and, by their critical power, domesticating the domain of popular knowledge and inscribing it in a rational field. It is at this level that the identity of a culture and its dynamics manifest themselves as project and invention, as construct claiming to hold in a regulated frame the essentials of a past and its characteristics…The rupture from the level of founding events is neat. In fact, what this discontinuity renders is a question mark opening up other discursive practices…(p. xiii).

The second level discourse, as a domain of "intellectual" disciplines influenced by Western perception, does not only mark a turning point from popular discourse and its founding events but also and especially it imprints a rupture with this. It is a complex rupture which could not be perceived as such at the very beginning of the process. Initially, the constructors of the discourse, may they be Africans or non-Africans, tended to view things through the modernist perspective of complete rupture with traditions. Using Westerners' methodologies and theoretical frameworks that they assumed reasonable and therefore "intellectual"[1], they regarded African knowledge in general and its products as non-intellectual as if these were not produced by humans' intellects.

[1] Here the concept «intellectual» is used in a restricted form rather than in the large form as per Ki-Zerbo's understanding. By intellectual, we would adhere to Ki-Zerbo's enlargement of the term that can be apprehended either in the narrow sense of the word (a producer of scientific, literary or artistic works) or in the broad sense (the collective intellectual as everyone who earns a living from intellectual activities seeing the relationship between the physical and the intellectual activities, that is between "Homo faber and Homo Sapiens") (Ki-Zerbo, 2005, pp. 78-9).

Henceforth, the Western colonial or better imperial agenda remains present within this discourse regardless the domain from which one argues, for the imperial anthropocentric-racist spirit is even the contractor of the second level of discourse. It is an imperial construction that invents and disembowel Africa. It is such an imperial spirit that widens the gap between the African holistic apprehension of the world and the Western individualist world conception. Whereas, Tempels (1962) does not even hesitate to assert that the holistic apprehension of the world would be one of the greatest contributions of the Bantu to the world culture, especially to the Western individualist world. He states, " Je crois que le grand message de l'âme bantoue au monde entier et au monde occidental individualiste en particulier, est précisément cette aspiration fondamentale à la vie pleine et totale, à la fécondité intense interpersonnelle et à l'union vitale dans l'amour» (p. 40).

The first discourse, despite being intelligently constructed in African languages – therefore expressing the very fundamentals of the community's welfare – is regarded as producing disinterested knowledge susceptible to be rejected for their awkwardness and irrelevance. Yet, the second one, being cunningly constructed through the colonizers' languages imposed underhandedly to Africans, is considered as productive of interested knowledge, intellectual and scientific, and therefore reliable. It is this discourse which will claim to only retain from the African past what the constructors assume to be essential. The very fundamental questions would be the eyes through which they perceive this "essential" and the true objective criteria that allow them to keep selectively only 'this' in stead of 'that' within a culture or if you like across cultures which have ever lasted for centuries. Finally, it is unfortunately this discourse which will domesticate for more than a century the primary discourse until a black out is expected on the long past African traditions. In my understanding, the second level discourse is simply a mere expression of modernism in African context which has pertained the idea that Africa being a void, it had nothing to contribute to human history, for it had neither history nor culture.

It is finally the third level discourse which will attempt to excavate in one way or another the African past in order to come out with a possible 'history of histories' although again painted somehow with Western features. The discourse appears as a criticism of the first and second level discourses. As it becomes mostly an enterprise of African scholars, it sounds itself as an auto-critique. It consists in putting in question either what Africans have argued about their own cultures due to their Africanist or Western perspectives or what Westerners have asserted about Africa. However, as Mudimbe rightly puts it, " It must be clear that the deviation between the second and the third level is in practice a spurious one, as witnessed to, say, by Hegel's philosophy, which subsumes magnificently all the a prioris of the second-level discourse in the European experience and history…" (p. xiv). That is to say, even though the third level discourse presents itself as an auto-critical discourse, it does not in fact differ from the second level, for both are conceived and produced almost through the same Westernized contexts. It appears, above all, as a continuation of the second level discourse, for its selective eyes are still wearing in one way or another Western modern glasses due to a great influence of Western disciplines through which the constructors of this discourse have been themselves invented. The only difference is that already at this level, the need to come back or better to resort to African sources become obviously asserted as if the salvation announced by the Western modernism has failed,

for it has only led to social and environmental calamities that humanity has ever experienced. It is somehow an expression of postmodernism which wants to see things differently beyond the modern realm (Mpala, 2015a).

Mudimbe, who honestly inscribes the quest of the idea about Africa in the third level discourse, does not refrain from asserting that this level is just "a first step in an indefinite critical and autocritical enterprise" (p. xiv). It is in this specific vein that socio-ecological discourse inscribes itself in the primary discourse to propel the social and environmental consciousness of the African traditions that both the second and the third level discourses tended to forget or blur. It is a "new-old" discourse which served Africans for years to maintain their harmonious relationships among themselves as members of a common human community whose final destiny ought to be the promotion of every member. It also helped them to preserve good relationships with their environment within which they used to be part of rather than masters of it, for they acknowledged both their belonging to the Almighty God to whom they referred to differently.

In fact, I regard the socio-ecological discourse not as a final discourse, but rather a body of discourses which tend to narrate differently human's anthropocentric history by fostering the coming together of all beings likely to bring about social and environmental justice. It is about all discourses calling humans to experience an 'old-new' meeting with other beings which will generate new narrations likely to promote social and ecological justice. It is what I have permitted to call a '*fair-dialogue-meeting'* that goes beyond humans to embrace also nonhumans (Mwepu, 2019). It needs not to be confused with the meeting with the Lamb preached in Christianity that insinuates the end of the world and the coming down of a new world. The meeting is qualified as fair dialogue because it is a nondiscriminatory meeting which propels the communication in all senses between different beings that meet. It is no longer a one direction communication where feedbacks are contradictory to the sent message. Both protagonists have to share the same understanding since they treat each other fairly.

In African philosophy, such meeting is not new since it inscribes itself in a long past African tradition of holistic apprehension of cosmic relationships where humans used to communicate correctly with God and other cosmic forces through different rites (Senghor, 1970/2007). The proof is that they used to get appropriate answer to raised questions. It is a matter of feelings and believes.

I qualify the meeting of «old-new» for two main raisons. First of all, I abide with Mpala's understanding of the concept "rencontre" (e.i. meeting) that would mean simply "re-cum-essere, être–avec –pour – la seconde fois" (Mpala, 2015b, p. 9). To my understanding, for humans to experience this meeting with other beings, they have to "re-establish" already primordial existing fair relationships among them. In other words, the coming together is not new. It offers a second possibility to all beings to come together and connect one another as it was at the beginning, but this time, with more ambitions to stay tightly as long as possible.

Then, the new meeting is old, for it is about a questioning of all possible humans' discriminate claims that favored humans' separation from their relatives (humans and nonhumans) whose consequences are no other than evoked socio-ecological issues. Thus, the «old-new» meeting requires nothing else than the positive change of

attitudes toward oneself and others which would bring about the new narration of humans and nonhumans' history, praising the "living harmoniously together" through love, mutual respect, sympathy, gratitude…

In African context, the particularity of this discourse, that I silence the level, is its ambition to bring to light or to memory the socio-environmental sensitivity of the African traditions that need to be promoted through sound discourses and actions. As pointed out earlier, the discourse that I largely term "socio-ecological" call for actions. It boosts the '**fair-dialogue-meeting**' that I will permit to designate as '**thunder-coup-meeting**'.

Practically, the meeting can be made possible thanks to the ***'re-membering'*** of all beings. The first process starts by *'summoning up'* different beings by '*re-connecting'* them in the understanding of the complexity, the harmony and the completeness of their existence and coexistence. The process passes by '*connecting oneself'* to the rest of the body and '*realizing'* one's vulnerability outside of it. Then, it ends with '*remembering*' or better '*thinking of and about', 'admiring'* all beings regardless their constructed meaning or importance. It is such positive change of attitudes toward oneself and all beings that naturally arises mutual gratitude, love, sympathy, respect, etc. and the awe toward the Almighty God. Consequently, it becomes the matter of the '**lover beloved**', and the meeting becomes then '**a thunder coup**' wherein there is neither lover nor beloved but an expression of the shared love. Uzoji (2014) qualifies that complicity as "a certain mystic union which encourages amicable coexistence of all forces both spiritual and physical…" (p. 135).

As one can understand, it is such a socio-ecological discourse that African ecocriticism propels. I wonder if this discourse is not inscribed in Mudimbe's understanding of Africanism. The following point will make an account of.

3. African Ecocriticism at the Fork of Mudimbe's Africanism and Asante's Afrocentricity

To locate African ecocriticism or better African postcolonial ecocriticism[1] in the range of African discourses pushes me to evoke Mudimbe by convocating especially his understanding of Africanism first before tackling Asante's afrocenticity. Such an approach will allow me to discuss Africanism and Afrocentricity before negotiating their interconnection through African ecocriticism.

Inspiring from Foucault (1973) about "the figure of madness as the truth and the alterity of modern Western experience", Mudimbe (1994) argues that in general the aim of Africanism as a set of "discourses on and about Africa" is the truth (p. 39). He considers Africanism as "a new vague body" of disciplines which address knowledge about Africa (p. 38), or better "the larger body of knowledge on Africa" (Mudimbe, 1988, p. ix). He points out fusing disciplines, such as anthropology, economics, geography, history, literature, etc. Most importantly, Mudimbe shows that at the early stage of these disciplines, "The African figure was an empirical fact, yet by definition it was perceived, experienced, and promoted as the sign of the absolute otherness"

[1] For more details on postcolonial ecocriticism, one can read Mwepu, Kipata, Ulombe & Mwelwa (2019) who attempts to construct the epistemological basics of this trend.

(p. 38). Here otherness needs to be understood in Smith, Kabir and Felicia (2015) term as

> used to describe the idea that a group is inferior and therefore such group should be marginalised or looked down on. In literary theory, "Otherness" is constructed in binary opposite to 'Centre' or 'Self'. 'Centre' or 'Self' implies the dominating group that has absolute control of power within a society… (p. 2)

In the African context, the African figure is perceived as the other, but the colonizer as the self, the centre of everything. In other words, the African is the part of the "out-group", but the colonizer as part of the "in-group". Therefore, the paradoxical task of Africanism consisted in "teaching Africans how to read their otherness and of helping them in the formulation of modalities that might express their own being and their vocation in the world" (Mudimbe, 1985, p. 206). In all these forms of discourses supposedly dedicated to account for the African realities in an almost "intellectual" modes, the African preoccupations had always been at the periphery, for the constructors' editorial lines were intrinsically racists and anthropocentric. Such Africanist discourses fall under the second level discourses.

Thus, it is in such a range of thoughts that one might not well grasp the quintessence of Mudimbe's Africanism if this concept is not inscribed in a realm of others, such as Edward Said's orientalism (1978).

It can be deduced that it is from this range of discourses on and about Africa that Afrocentricity or better Afrocentrism will raise to advocate the centrality of the African continent and its interests. Asante (2003) puts pertinently that

> Afrocentricity is a mode of thought and action in which the centrality of African interests, values, and perspectives predominate (…). In terms of actions and behaviors, it is a devotion to the idea that what is in the best interest of African consciousness is at the heart of ethical behaviours (…). (p. 2)

Afrocentrism calls for the welfare of Africans without compromising ethically to the one of other people. It is indeed the self-confidence of Africans, the rehabilitation of their traditional modes of life: political, philosophical, economic, religious, ecological, cultural, etc. that will bring about Africa's stability and prosperity. Mbembe (2023) does not somehow reflect this scheme of thoughts when the need to resort to African traditional myths to excavate past valuable knowledge to be updated in order to save or orient today's world marked by a certain number of calamities both humans and ecological? Here African solutions are convoked to both Africa and the world issues.

While centering African ethical position in the appropriation of their glorious history and culture, Afrocentrism rejects any form of oppression. It is neither "Anti-racist" nor "Anti- European movement" (Radja, 2015b, p. 16). Anyone belonging to the African continent, who for one reason or another cannot admit the centrality of African interests, values and perspectives, is considered by Afrocentrists as a non-Afrocentric person whose ways of operating is already negatively predictable. The fact is that "he or she will attack mothers and fathers, disparage the very traditions that gave them hope in times of hopelessness, and trivialize their own nobility" (Asante, 2003, p. 3). Asante makes of Afrocentrism a mandatory attitude of any African who wants either to put African knowledge, skills, wisdom, etc. at the world road map or to liberate

his/her people from the shameful constructed image they have suffered from since their contact with white people.

It is from this scheme of thoughts that African postcolonial ecocriticism arose in the first decade of this century to call for action by bringing to the world road map socio-ecological consciousness of African traditions likely to bring about social and environmental justice – indispensable for the re-establishment of Africa's and the world's steadiness. As a response to different Western discriminate discourses tending to set the world apart, African ecocriticism prevails an exorcising socio-ecological discourse. It answers the need to find solutions to African problems first and the world then from African perspectives. It advocates to re-member fair relationships which existed for years among different members of both human and non-human's communities. It is about the relationships which were preserved thanks to the traditional holistic apprehension of the world in which the Muntu used to identify him/herself as co-members of the universe.

African ecocriticism appears as a miscarriage delivered at the junction, made of Africanism's path and Afrocentrism' one. It has to yield its own discourses that I have vaguely termed socio-ecological, for the balance that it advocates stems for both social and environmental welfare, or better the celebration of sameness. It arose as a reaction to climate change issues as logical outcomes of Western dualistic perception of the world at the basis of the capitalist system. In other words, African ecocriticism came up as a response to the socio-ecological crisis of the late 20th and the early 21rst centuries, which indeed is the crisis of imagination (Buell, 1995).

African ecocriticism comes to "reprendre" the first level discourse in order to address properly the crisis from African perspectives and find out African cures. This Afrocentrist perspective dreams no more than to foster the socio-ecological discourse embedded inherently in African traditional narratives as well as through written second level narratives, for it considers both the pre-colonial, the colonial and the postcolonial contexts to deploy its strategies. It appears as multi-voiced discourse tending to banish any form of discrimination likely to enforce the gap that always exists among people and between them and non-humans. That is why Mwepu (2019) rightly denotes it as an [African] exorcizing discourse.

4. Conclusion

From the above on-going discussion, I speculate what should be definitely kept to move forward the African continent's start off after a so long productive meditation. In other words, what is next? In trying to locate human culture within the context of progress, Bhabha (1994/2004) believes that to foresee a successful future, humans must change not only their biased historical narratives but also their own perception and the one of their life (p.367). In this respect, to dissipate any misunderstanding, I firmly believe that to enhance the start off of the African continent toward the welfare of its inhabitants, we [Africans] have to "reprendre" the relevance of African primary discourse, that popular discourse always silent but present within everyday discourses, in any educational system (formal and informal) in order to train new African generations to be aware of their societies' valuable traditional knowledges and practices. It is in such a way that tomorrow's Africans, who of course start today, will be able to act proudly, correctly and normally in everyday society (Mudimbe, 1994).

Here, the primary discourse needs not to be regarded as wrongly painted through Western lens as a naïve discourse, a construction repeated in many Africans' second discourses.

Such conception to my understanding has nothing else to do with the fate of the African continent, but rather it was constructed expressively to defer forever the continent's progress. The proof is that it is actually the primary discourse or the traditional popular African knowledge wherein lays whole the gist of the African soul, intelligence, "savoir", "savoir-être", "savoir-faire" without which nothing better is expected to come from the African continent despite numerous contributions deriving from the second and the third level discourses on Africa. [1]Such a 'reprise' would make the African scholar appear no longer as the Western's follower and servant but as true blacksmith of his/her continent and the world's welfare. Kaputu (2022), after discussing Apter's "Que faire?", concluded that "It is high time to figure out different African contributions to the world and its future with local specificities" (pp. 182-3). Mudimbe (1985) does not refrain from qualifying that African knowledge as gnosis, "power-knowledge system" which "refers to a structured, common, and conventional knowledge, but strictly under the control of specific procedures for its use as well as transmission" (pp.149-150).

Besides, it is time to 'reprendre' those genius constructed ideas by African scholars, laying here and there either in the second or in the third level discourse which put forward effective weapons that the first level discourse disposes for Africa to move forward its definite progress. It is crucial to point out that since the last century many Africans have produced so valuable knowledge, although reproducing somehow the imposed Western's scheme of thoughts, likely to be implemented and to orient the African continent's efforts toward its full liberation. What is true is that such a "reprise" does not mean a mere " reproduction" yet a critical assessment of given knowledge on basis of which I am, at the image of Mudimbe, likely to yield new orientations or paradigms guided also by my own sensibilities, experiences and knowledges. Banywesize (2024), while alluding to Mudimbe, does not refrain from asserting that when the subject comments an existing text or discourse, he inscribes himself within the text/discourse's tradition, while assessing and departing from it to express his originality based on his experience in the world (p.116). Thus, by re-reading and assessing Mudimbe's "Reprendre", I have come to launch a "**socio-ecological discourse**", entailing a "**re-membering process**" likely to bring about a "**a fair dialogue-meeting**" which leads to "**the celebration of sameness**", the indispensable condition for the advent of " **the world other**", better and fairer.

Thus, time has come[2] to stop for a while and make an inventory and assessment of this set of knowledge for their progressive implementation. Such a process is likely to

[1] Maathai (2010) is right when assuming that for Africa to enhance its true and effective development, Africans have to take into account the missing link, namely African cultural identity that is the source and the strength of everything. She believes that "Culture is the means by which a people expresses itself, through language, traditional wisdom, politics, religion, architecture…collective identity". She then posits that culture gives people self-identity and character. It allows them to be in harmony with their physical and spiritual environment, to form the basis for their sense of self-fulfillment and personal peace…" (p. 161)

[22] By emphasizing on the pressing needs of the African continent today, Mwepu (2015) tries to oppose yesterday's preoccupations and current ones through two seeming opposing poems, namely "Time Has Gone" and "Time Has Come" before envisaging possible future challenges through the poem, entitled "Time Will Come".

save time, for many good things have already been said but still non implemented because of multiple dependence of African systems (linguistic, economic, cultural, political, artistic, etc.) on cunningly constructed Western's ones. Instead of implementing valuable recommendations from many African scholars' studies, most African leaders and governments are absent minded, for they are overtly or covertly embarked on a "wrong bus"[1] driven by their Western masters. Such a distraction delays more and more the African continent's progress.

These good ideas have either been hidden, confiscated or forgotten. They are hidden in books through foreign languages accessible only to a limited number of people. They are confiscated by a few people who, although conscious, are afraid to be punished economically and politically by their Western masters who want to see them propelling their own ideas and interests instead. Also the ideas are forgotten by the collective unconscious because of being blurred for years and cannot attract the "politique" to enhance their implementation, for the "politique" will never get support from their Western peers who see in those ideas the true liberation of a continent. Hence, in the light of the " Africa we want: Agenda 2063", to 'reprendre' selectively these ideas as per their finalities, socialize them for effective and progressive implementation would not be alien in today's world wherein the fate of Africa sounds than ever as the only appanage of Africans and Africans only.

To move forward, we need to 'reprendre' specifically traditional African ways of thinking, the ontological and philosophical holistic apprehensions. Such scheme of thoughts is a way to move away from dualistic Western thinking scheme (that has succeeded to torn the world a part, bringing more and more socio-ecological problems) toward a "new-old" way of looking at ourselves and others. It is this new outlook which will become the focus of our children's initiations and schoolings. This vision will lead us to look at our communities, nations and continent as a whole that one is not allowed betraying for self-interest for fear to be excluded as it used to be.

We have to 'reprendre' actively those natural and cultural features, including values that deserve Africa to be peculiar vis-à-vis other continents, then develop them as per African context outside of Western constructions. Although this Afrocentrist reflection might reflect somehow the Western scheme of thoughts embedded in the mind of the postcolonial African, the leading figure or better the common ground must be an Afrocentric guideline. This process to be better off, we need not to reprendre the complaining for known evils perpetuated expressively by the Western world since the 15th century, for the second level discourse as well as the third one have done so much though differently, lasting then either the same imperial discourse or Westernized Afrocentrist discourses.

In this respect, one needs to understand that we Africans have no longer time waste to implement what is needed now; otherwise, new generations will have no other choice than to weep. Manzueto (2015) does not assert differently while evoking urgent actions needed for Congo. He states : "Cependant, la diligence de l'action est essentielle, car le temps a cessé d'être notre allié. Il faudrait agir dès maintenant ou subir durement, car laisser la situation évoluer telle qu'elle est condamnerait des générations à venir à l'ignorance, à la misère et à la soumission esclave… » (pp. 9-10).

1 When Wangari Mathai (2010) evokes the idea of "The wrong bus", she does not mean a damaged one though implicitly this may be; she actually refers to a bus that goes in a wrong direction instead of the one expected. She implies that in many initiatives that Africa undertakes under the implied Western organisms' "support" always go in the opposite direction than the one expected by Africans and for Africa's progress.

We need to 'reprendre' effectively and affectively African languages and promote them with neither fear nor disinterest. Through their uses in different domains as effective weapons, we will achieve the socialization of both traditional practices and values besides sound and Afrocentrist outcomes of both the second and the third discourses. We have to reprendre the oral transmission of African traditional knowledge and relevant academic and scientific knowledge likely to promote the welfare of the African continent. Such an exchange would facilitate a cross-pollination of both kinds of knowledge: traditional and academic through fair communication between scholars and non-scholars, leaders and leaded, brief governors and governed.

In doing so, African scholars, politicians, griots, artists, philosophers, historians, linguists, sociologists, lawyers, physicians, etc. would change their messages' target or audience. The first audience must be the African to which all messages and produced knowledge will be addressed through their own native, national and regional languages. The produced and conveyed knowledge will no longer be intended for Westerners' appreciation, but for the sake of Africans' first. The world being global, the need to share with others will still be permanent but not as it has been prioritized. Here translation in different languages, as eloquently sustained by Kasongo Tshinzela (2021), Souleymane Bachir (2022) among others, would have to play a major and complex role, the one of facilitating both the mutual comprehension and the spreading of our languages and their cultures over the world.

As it can be understood, to move forward the welfare of Africa consists also of moving away from the Western world as the target of our African produced knowledge, to address effectively and affectively to Africans first. Although the first approach was important in the colonial and postcolonial contexts where Africans were striving to demonstrate to the Western world the importance and greatness of the African past and present, it has deferred the progress of Africa. The second level discourse continued somehow the colonial discourse, for the most of African scholars, as their master's spokesmen, perpetuated in one way or another slave, colonial and neo-colonial discourses, confining themselves in developing "ism-to-ism-for-ism" (Soyinka, 1967/1974). Hence, time has gone to keep on conceitedly promoting African literatures through Western languages as if these were drugs that African scholars have been "accro" off.

Also, isn't it time to reprendre the exploitation of our natural resources in our own benefit first? Let us reprendre the production of Mikuba, millets, rubbers, cobalts, coltons, maizes, rices, cassavas, bikanda,…besides different forms of knowledge for Africans' first. Yet, to achieve this reprise, we need the full implication of both the politics and the civil society to work for the true sustainable and integral development of their respective countries rather than the politicians' and their Western masters' current self-interests (Mbembe, 2010/2013; Green ,2008 & Lagito, 2009).

Last but not least, we have to reprendre all artistic oeuvres that Westerners had either stolen or robbed from Africa which constitute our values. The cases of France-Senegal and Bénin are eloquent examples as a starting points (Voaafrique, November 2018). In this vein, we have to reprendre in time whole that African intelligentsia that the Western world uses or serves as scapegoats or as lemons to perpetuate obliquely their implied supremacy over Africa. It is such a reprise that we are celebrating today by

paying reward to one of the most prominent thinker of the African continent, I cite Vumbi Yoka Mudimbe.

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