Africa: A Theme(s) Park

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"*Semblable à l'*obi *des nègres, au sagamore des sauvages*" (Balzac, *Louis Lambert*)

In *The History of Sexuality*,(2) Michel Foucault highlighted the prolixity of the discourse on sexuality in Western history, thereby refuting the omnipresent theme of sexual repression. The same type of reflection can legitimately be applied to Africa. Contrary to the affirmations of a large number of African and Third World specialists, Africa–or at least its representation–occupies a major place in the Western imagination. I would like to shift the focus away from the view of this continent as neglected, sick, economically anemic, and intellectually unattractive, by examining the ways in which Africa is often over-invested with affective and libidinal qualities in Western representations. To fully explore this phenomenon, I would like to shed light on the "sexual relations" that at once unite the West and Africa and mark the profound ambivalence between them.

The relationship of the West to Africa may be conceived as fitting into the order of the *sublime* according to Burke and Kant. To employ an oxymoron, the West experiences a sort of "delicious fright" that takes hold of us (as "Western" individuals) when we make reference in one way or another to Africa. This image of the African sublime (or this subliminal image of Africa) translates well the contradictory place this continent occupies in the Western subconscious: that of a degenerate entity on the one hand, and of a source of regeneration on the other.

A blood made of ink

Even if in "The Degeneration of Animals,"(3) Buffon places Blacks above the Lapons, he concludes that Africans and Caribbeans, because of the climatic conditions in which they live, are incapable of fully developing the intellectual aptitudes of Europeans. We should note that in both Buffon and Gobineau (at a later date), this idea of degeneration accompanies the emotional qualities attributed to Africans. This coupling of intellectual and emotional degeneracy has provided the basis for primitivisms of all shapes and sizes, whether in the form of Pan-Africanism, Négritude, or Afrocentrism. The general trend, however, is to view Africa as an "underdeveloped" continent, whether this

“underdevelopment” be due to the climate, to economic or historical isolation (Hegel, Braudel), or to some other factor. The verdict is clear: Africa is a “cursed” continent according to biblical exegesis dating back to the fourth century of our era that views black Africans as the descendants of Shem of the Old Testament. This prejudicial configuration taints our Western perceptions of Africa from the outset and imprisons this continent in a vicious circle of poverty, corruption, sickness, and tribal warfare.

For sponsors of all types (international organizations, great powers, non-governmental organizations) as well as for the media, Africa is the continent *par excellence* of misery, to the point that Africa and poverty have become synonymous. The representation of Africa in the media focuses on sickness and destitution evidenced by the condition of famine, hence the emaciated bodies shown *ad nauseam*. This impoverished image of Africa is crucial to the “charity business,” an enterprise that relies on mobilizing and instilling guilt in large portions of the European and North American population. Poverty in Africa results from economic marginalization (less than 2% of world trade, a global debt of $334 billion); this initial, essential poverty is complicated by a whole series of additional factors that combine to make Africa a continent unlike any other.

At the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, specialists in African politics focused on corruption (using the concepts of “neo-patrimonialism” and “politics of the belly”) as a fundamental cultural characteristic of the African continent. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank subscribe to this idea and make the attribution of international aid dependent (these organizations call this “conditionality”) on criteria of good “governance.” These criteria are supposed to regulate the public order (*res publica*) of Western state apparatuses, yet (to the great joy of African leaders) the same phenomena of corruption emerge in Western countries. When Westerners attribute the abuse of power to a specific geographical and cultural entity, they remain blind to the transcultural nature of the forms of appropriation and redistribution of resources. Most importantly, by “culturalizing” corruption, Western critics overlook its universal character. The corruption of African States and the corruption of the French State (la “Françafrique”) are related, notably through the numerous, notorious Elf Affairs.

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For Western analysts, there is little distance between corruption, and tribalism and genocide, since the same political analysts consider corruption to be tied to, or even engendered by, tribalism. These analysts reason that Africans, incapable of providing themselves with civil societies clearly separated from State apparatuses, are therefore condemned to live within political structures dependent on clientelist forms of appropriation and redistribution of wealth. Following this line of argument, the income from petroleum and mining–notably the diamond trade, source of the famous *gemmocraties*–as well as income resulting from international aid is said to circulate only within familial, tribal, or

ethnic networks that constitute the veritable driving force behind the ethnic conflicts affecting the region.

The proliferation of the “ethnicist” vulgate has done much to accredit the idea of “tribal” Africa, in step with views of India as “the continent of castes” and the Arab-Muslim world as the home of fundamentalism. This prejudiced vision of Africa treats lightly the diversity of civil wars joined under the label “ethnic conflict” and begs the following questions: Is mono-ethnic Somalia the theater of a tribal war? Are the Tutsis and the Hutus of Rwanda and Burundi ethnically distinct if they speak the same language? The limited vision expressed in such inquiries remains so deeply in denial with respect to the deeply ethnic nature of the European State–as witness the *limpieza de sangre* of the Inquisition–that one has the right to wonder whether the tribal characteristics attributed to Africa are not simply projections of Europe on exotic societies. Such projections are destined to comfort, by purification or elimination, Europe’s own identity.

This projection on the part of Europe, initially accompanying colonization, has had a lasting impact because it contributed to shaping and solidifying ethnicities on this continent. When the European colonizer left, these new tribal entities launched an attack on African State apparatuses. This colonial tribalism–as a mode of political management of territories under European influence–thus constituted a veritable time bomb whose effects are still felt in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Rwanda, and the two Congos.

This question of tribalism in African societies is closely tied to that of genocide. The theme of genocide cannot be dissociated from the comparison established between Nazi genocide and the massacres of the people of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo beginning in 1994. Did Africa–as Hannah Arendt has claimed–serve as a trial ground for Nazi geneticists, on the example of E. Fischer whose training took place in the German colony in Southwest Africa (Namibia) during the early years of the twentieth century? Is genocide a “tropical Nazism” or is it, because its massacres are perpetuated by its own population, totally different from the extermination of the Jews during the Second World War? This lively debate among Africanists masks the deeper question of Western representations of Africa as a continent of absolute horror, a theater of primordial savagery only temporarily interrupted by European colonization and threatening to start up again once independence has been gained.

The question of genocide is essential to the expression of humanitarian doctrine, that is, to the right of intervention, as a means by which non-governmental organizations identify, and exclude, the Other (the humanitarian is always destined for Others)–at the risk of finding themselves embarrassed when genocidal horror makes a comeback among white Europeans (ex-Yugoslavia). This return of the repressed is itself reappropriated by African genocidal perpetrators who use European labels (Bosnia, Kosovo, etc.) in carrying out their fratricidal combats.

Finally, *last but not least*, we must not forget the connotations of genocide envisioned as a label, or as a floating signifier, of planetary scope. This question emerged, or rather reemerged, during a recent conference on racism organized by the United Nations at Durban, South Africa. On this occasion, the African delegates reiterated their demand, which was finally accepted, that the Atlantic Slave Trade be recognized as a crime against humanity. This demand, first expressed by the Nigerian billionaire politician Moshood Abiola and then by African Americans, constitutes a new way of turning the tables by attempting to show that the *real* genocide is not the one that usually comes to mind–that of the Jews–but rather that constituted by the deportation of Africans to the New World, a genocide claimed to be in large part the work of Jewish traders.(4)

The theme of AIDS and its proliferation–omnipresent in discussions of Africa–is another way of making reference to genocide. A particularly strong symbol of the dereliction into which the African continent has plunged, the global AIDS epidemic is represented differently in European and African perspectives. Whereas for Europeans, AIDS, or at least certain forms of this illness, originated in Africa where it was transmitted from monkey to man, African representations are exactly the opposite. According to them, the Whites contracted AIDS through zoophilic practices and then contaminated Africans.(5) Whatever truth may exist in these representations (they may be based on actual practices followed by certain Africans during the colonial period or afterward), one cannot help comparing them with the recent comments by South Africa's President M'Beki. By denying responsibility for the HIV retrovirus as a transmitter of AIDS and attributing this disease to underdevelopment and poverty and thus, in the final analysis, to European colonialism, M'Beki once again put the ball in the European court by making this interpretation a major identity label of Africa in this phase of globalization.

The heroes are tired

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In contrast to this representation of Africa as a degenerate continent, a haven for the cursed descendants of the sons of Shem whose blood is polluted, we find a completely opposite image that presents this region of the world as a fountain of youth and source of regeneration for all of humanity. It is important to note that these two representations are not contradictory and that they effectively translate the profoundly ambivalent status of the "delicious fright" that takes hold of Westerners when they think of this continent. Africa has a place in the mind of every Westerner, especially the French whose collective and individual histories are often tied in almost visceral ways to the African continent. Who among our compatriots has not had an ancestor or near relative living in Africa in the past, or even in the present?

This repulsive fascination for Africa, this libidinal and viral way of thinking about it is, of

course, merely the inverse of our representation of Europe, and of the West in general, as a sterilized, anemic, disembodied continent. At bottom, and this is a vision whose origin can be found in the thought of colonial administrators like Faidherbe, Europe is felt to suffer from a hypertrophy of intellectual functions and an underdevelopment of physiological ones: the loss of the body has been the price to pay to obtain supremacy in the area of cold reason.

From this type of representation emerges a whole philosophy that permeates economic, political, social, cultural, and religious domains. In the economic field, first of all, the ingeniousness of the informal African sector stands out in opposition to strict economic rationality and the utilitarianism of the market. The informal sector consists of an entire economy of resourcefulness and recycling–we will encounter this theme again with respect to art–capable of providing a valuable counterexample to our ossified economy. This system of thought is inscribed within anti-utilitarian thinking in the social sciences that emphasizes the principles of reciprocity along the lines of the gift/counter-gift at work in our "local systems of exchange," for example, and that, more generally, valorizes small businesses that create work at the expense of deterritorialized multinational corporations. Once again Africans–making a virtue of necessity–show themselves to be "good savages" with respect to the economy, an example to their denatured colleagues to the North. In this respect as well, the vigor of African civil society would have something to teach the bureaucratized and dehumanized economy of the West.

We find in the face-to-face negotiations (the *palabre*) of the political domain the same human qualities that are attributed to the informal sector in Africa. Just like the economy, the field of political relations in the West and in Japan is subject to the power of contract and tied up in the corset of "public space." Western politics could revive its vigor by adopting the deliberation techniques of African village assemblies that come to a decision only after having heard the opinions of all their members, emphasizing consensus rather than drawing an opposition between "losers" and "winners." As a model of equilibrium for small communities that respect the status of their members, the reign of consensus and *palabre* would provide a useful complement to the bureaucratized and contractual procedures that rule the behavior of decision-makers in developed countries.

We can slide imperceptibly from the economic and political to the social domain by highlighting the principle of solidarity at work in the background of African society. This principle is only a rehash of the old division between sociology from anthropology–community/society, holism/individualism–and thus between "Us" and "Others," which serves as a narrative schema for the film *Little Senegal,* where the "warmth" of relationships among Africans is contrasted to the "cold" interactions among westernized African Americans.(6)

That African economics and politics are collective and marked by solidarity in accordance

with Durkheim's conception of consciousness, Western representations explain by the fact that the African psyche is still dominated by magic and the sacred. When Balzac presented himself by reference to Africa in the guise of a writer-sorcerer in *Louis Lambert*,(7) it may be because he felt that the sacred had already deserted Christianity. One century later, Pierre Gaudibert, the former director of the Museum of African Art in Grenoble, only reconfirmed this abandonment when he declared: "The sacred disappeared when we put Christ in the museum."(8)

From Picasso to Jean-Hubert Martin (the curator of the exhibitions *Magiciens de la terre* and *Partage d'exotismes*),(9) without forgetting Bataille and Artaud, we find the theme of the desertion of the sacred, of body and blood, visibly at work in the art and literature of the first half of the twentieth century. This theme, subsumed under the notion of primitivism, continues to play an essential role in the renewal of French intellectual life.

The Franco-Congolais *métis* writer Henri Lopès's formula for Francophone literature as a mixture of "the language of Sévigné and the balls of the black man" serves as a logo for the collection entitled "Dark Continents," under the direction of Jean-Noël Schifano at Gallimard. Lopès's formula was chosen because of the preconception that French literature is withering and drying up as a result of its overly cerebral nature. In this view, French literature is no longer able to produce the likes of Malraux, Camus, and Sartre. Michel Le Bris, promoter of the travel literature of the 1920s and 1930s and organizer of the Festival "Surprising Travelers" at Bamako, Mali, made the same observation last year when he declared: "French literature will regenerate itself from the peripheries and the margins."(10) Africa will thus be there to provide our tired gentlemen of Arts and Letters the needed new blood. The need for this new blood was never clearer than in the inglorious episode in which our venerable French Academicians were so titillated that they stuttered while searching for words to justify the contested attribution of their institutional prize to African author Calixthe Beyala. In the same vein, Stéphane Zagdanski's latest novel, *Noire est la Beauté* (Pauvert, 2001), proposes an "exploration of the sexual and pictorial universe of the doubly dark continent of woman." The work revels in the specific charms of African female sexuality with accents that would not have been disavowed by the colonial administrators of yesteryear.

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But let us be assured, the African virus is not unique to Western machismo; women artists are also plunging into deep Africanism. To begin with, Mathilde Monnier, director of the Choreographic Center of Montpellier, left for Africa in 1992. Having spent her childhood there, she thought she might recharge her batteries: "I realized that I was heading straight for the wall. . . I didn't know where I was going, I was just repeating what I had already learned. Thanks to African dancers, I finally had access to the internal necessity of my dance, my deep truth."(11) Renowned cinematographer Claire Denis (*Chocolat*, *Beau*

Travail) has placed her most recent film, *Trouble Every Day*, under the sign of cannibalism. Like Monnier, Denis spent her childhood in Africa, and she makes reference to the diminished drives of the European male in contrast to the primal force of his Black counterpart.(12) As against an emasculated, deodorized Europe, Africa stands out as deliciously nauseating, peopled with leopard-men who devour body and soul. Such depictions remind us of *Les Hommes-Tigres,* composed by Jean Giroudoux in 1926 on the basis of the accounts of colonial administrators. This vision of a Jurassic, feline Africa (in the sense of Jacques Tourneur's *La Féline*)(13)–that of the animal lurking within us, of the growling of wild beasts launching the call of the jungle–is certainly the ultimate point of the positive fantasies projected onto the continent. But it also testifies to the deep ambivalence that presides over psychological and economic investments affecting this geographic entity.

It may be true that the African-connoted art known as "*gore-trash-crash*" only holds interest for a small Euro-American elite–those, for instance, who attend the annual International Fair of Contemporary Art(14) in order to contemplate African "Self-Hybridations" by Orlan, digitized mixings of African photos and self-portraits that take off from the artist's surgical performances. The same cannot be said for the Africa-concept in marketing, which reaches a much larger clientele, including those who haunt the ethnic boutiques in Paris or the African expositions in the Galeries Lafayette.

The globalization of Africa is not as much about the fascination for tribal art (as seen in the popularity of *Arts premiers* and the construction of the Museum of the Quai Branly) as it is about the recycling of African kitsch, as seen in the promotion of the work of Malian photographers Seydou Keita or Malick Sidibé, saved from oblivion by the magic of curator-experts; in the "Ethno-chic" fashion lines that remix old-fashioned items from our imaginary constructions of Africa; and in the transubstantiation into artists of naïve prophets and designers such as Frédéric Bruly-Bouabré–whose works occupy a prominent position in the gallery owned by collector and clothing designer Agnès B.

The production of African primitiveness can no longer be reduced to the discovery of ancient African artifacts: it consists more and more in recalling technical procedures and antiquated European objects whose regeneration is assured by passing through the prism of African freshness ("African" plastic kettles made in China, miniature model cars fashioned with the help of old cans, etc.). African "primitiveness" at this stage in the globalization process is no longer characterized by throwing Africa back into an immemorial past of pre-historical savagery, but by throwing Africans back into the *Western* past, as if their works testified in the Westerner's stead to a world we have lost. In this sense, Africans are thought of as Westerners' immediate ancestors, benevolent Uncle Bens who will hold down the fort in the absence of its members, busy with other tasks in our high-tech era.

The African Time Lag

If the West creates primitiveness by recycling African kitsch, it remains to be seen how Africans produce their own modernity or post-modernity, whether in the economic, political, or cultural domain. Even if several discordant voices have been raised here and there that attempt to think beyond the intellectual givens, it is scarcely surprising that most African thinking, encouraged by post-colonialism, cannot manage to extricate itself from the circle of victimization.(15) Based in the anti-imperialist discourse of the 1960s and 1970s–that of the Algerian and Vietnam Wars–the dominant African economic and political attitude is to denounce colonialism and neocolonialism as fundamentally responsible for African underdevelopment. No doubt the impact of European colonization in molding the economic and political structures of contemporary African governments should not be played down, but are the constant references to the torments of colonialism and the slave trade anything but a convenient way for African leaders to keep on the right side of public opinion? Although we should not allege "cultural specificity"–simply a new variant of the old refrain of "obstacles to development"–to account for the marginalization of Africa at the heart of the global *ecumene*,(16) we must insist that recognizing the slave trade as a crime against humanity–whether or not this recognition carries with it reparations from European powers–will change nothing in the lives of millions of Africans.

By continuing to stigmatize colonialism and neocolonialism, the self-proclaimed spokespersons of Africa–whether white or black–are doing Africans a disservice. They effectively keep Africans in a state of intellectual dependency that refuses to cut the ties between Africa and the West and prevents Africans from viewing their continent as capable of evolving on its own. For African politicians, adopting a mature attitude would consist in giving priority to internal matters over external relations. It is above all on the internal political scene of each African state that the future of democracy must be decided. It is there as well that the conditions of sustainable economic development can be put in place. Paradoxically, the very conditions of economic globalization require the determination of internal choices that alone make possible an optimal adaptation to the new international division of labor. The African countries that are the most engaged in the worldwide economy are those that complain the least about the past and consequently that reap the fewest secondary benefits from colonial trauma.

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We find similarities in the artistic domain, where Africans still practice a self-serving esthetic dating from the 1970s and the 1980s. This esthetic builds on a base of genocides, AIDS, famines, national liberation struggles against dictatorships, pillage of African resources, and denial of emigration. Even if this esthetic employs–much to the displeasure of Western sycophants of traditional art–modern media such as videos and installations, it nonetheless ties African artists to the victimization syndrome and demonstrates their inability to define themselves through a macabre esthetic of their own that would intensify the real or imagined savagery of the continent. True contemporary art might consist–if an

African example is needed–in showing photos of scarified, mutilated bodies from Sierra Leone that would testify to the symbolic assumption of the current violence in that country. Yet the works of contemporary African artists continue to engage a certain number of "politically correct" themes in a resentful mode, demonstrating thereby that they have not yet left behind the esthetic of domination.

Taking on savagery in contemporary art would mean grafting it, encrusting it, or skewering it–this would be the sign of true *Africanité* in this period of late modernity. Incapable of this, African artists continue to recycle an image of Africa that the West conceived during the *belle époque* of the wars of national liberation. Or perhaps these artists privilege these themes in response to the presumed expectations of their clients, playing–consciously or unconsciously–on the guilt of their public. This would only be one more proof that they have not yet gained autonomy, that they are still caught in the mirror the West holds out to them. In this sense, no matter how modern African art seems to be, it is still an annex or a tropical dependency of Western art. This dependence can only come to an end if African art ceases to be presented as such, if artists of African origin exhibit their works as emanating not from Africans but rather from members of the global art community. For the moment, few African artists fit this criterion. Perhaps only Ousmane Sow, in "clicking" on or attaching his work to the Nuba of Leni Riefenstahl, manages to extricate himself from the mirror-play of Africanism. He is joined in this by the American photographer Robert Mapplethorpe, whose perfectly scandalous plastic "Greco-Negro" strikingly illustrates the general circulation of signifiers within the hermeneutic constellation of "African" art.

In Africanizing its own impulses, the West has extended a mirror to Africa. Africans today are compelled to see themselves in this reflected image. In this sense, Africa represents the self-development of Europe; the continent is a pure fantasy of archaic primitivism that provides the point of departure for globalized Western postmodernity.(17) Could we not affirm, paradoxically, that Africa is late in arriving on the scene of its already "tardy" image in Western consciousness? But taking refuge in the the West's guilty conscience toward the Third World will not aid in overcoming this gap. On the contrary, the key to surmounting Africa's "tardiness" lies in consciously assuming Europe's fantasy of primitivism and "customizing" it. Only by turning this fantasy to its own use in a process of abreaction will Africa gain access to a mature consciousness.

Africa Outside of Africa

What if this savagery attributed by the West but not accepted by Africans were the factor that determined the Africa-concept in its full scope? Wouldn't the return of *instinct* paradoxically provide the leitmotiv for our globalized modernity at the heart of which Africa would be only *one* of the "mobilizable" elements? An instinctive constellation is currently emerging on the artistic-intellectual and political scenes in which reference to Africa is either minor or nonexistent. What logical connection exists between the erotic, militant saga

of Catherine Millet (incidentally, a major artistic literary figure in Paris); the porno-trash of Virginie Despentes; the zoophilia and taste for blood of playwright and plastic artist Jan Fabre; the eugenics of the human park of Peter Sloterdijk; and the novelistic ethology of Michel Houellebecq, if it isn't precisely this slightly sulfurous return of savage impulses to the artistic and intellectual center stage? Where is Africa in all this? Never very far off, to tell the truth.

Michel Houellebecq expresses himself through the mouth of Bruno, one of the characters in the book that catapulted its author to success, *Particules élémentaires*: "We envy and admire the Negroes because we wish to follow their example and become animals again, animals endowed with a large dick and a small reptilian brain, annex to their dick."(18) If these comments are taken from fiction, and if Michel Houellebecq is closer to the parody and pastiche of Josephine Baker than to the veritable provocation of Baudelaire or Zola,(19) it is nonetheless true that his discourse is part of an intellectual climate that vastly exceeds the microcosm of the media. How can we not see an echo of these comments in those made by former Minister of the Interior Jean-Pierre Chevènement who referred to Blacks and Beurs from the difficult suburbs as *sauvageons*, or "wild ones," indicating the closeness of this so-called "republican" ideology to the eugenics of the philosopher Peter Sloterdijk?(20) How can we not see in this new ethnic vision of "dangerous classes"–a vision tied to governmental forms of surveillance and continuous tracking (video, anti-criminal brigades)–a final form of the globalization of Africa? How can we not see in the curfew for minors–initiated by certain mayors of areas deemed "sensitive"–the entry point of a repressive apparatus destined to tame a reptilian libido welling up from the depths of the past? But isn't it, first and foremost, in the framework of this "hexagonal" Africa threatening the Republic that we form our definitive representation of Africans?

6

Notes

1. This article initially appeared in French as "L'Afrique: un parc à thèmes" in a special issue of *Les Temps Modernes* ("Afriques du monde") 620-621, août-novembre 2002, pp. 46-60. (back)

2. Originally published as *La volonté de savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976). (back)

3. Originally published as *De la dégénération des animaux* (Paris: Parent Desbarres, 1868) by Georges Louis Leclerc, comte de Buffon. (back)

4. On this subject, see "The Nation of Islam" in *The Secret Relationship between Blacks and Jews*, v. 1, Latimer Associates, 1991. (back)

5. See A. Le Palec's article on "silencing" AIDS, "Bamako, taire le SIDA" in

Psychopathologie africaine, XXVI (2) 1994: 211-234. (back)

6. *Little Senegal* is a French film directed by Rachid Bouchareb (Alamode Film, 2001).(back)

7. See the quotation in the epigraph. (back)

8. Cited by Hassan Musa in "Partage d'exotismes," *Catalogue de la 5e Biennale de l'Art contemporain de Lyon* (2000): 15-16. (back)

9. These exhibitions for which Martin was the curator could be rendered in English as *Magicians of the Earth* and *The Sharing of Exoticisms*. *(back)*

10. *Le Monde*, February 23, 2001. (back)

11. *Télérama* 2685 (June 27, 2001). (back)

12. *Libération*, July 11, 2001. (back)

13. The use of the adjective "*féline*" here is a play on words that simultaneously refers to "catlike" qualities and evokes the cinematographic work of Federico Fellini. (back)

14. The most recent "Foire Internationale d'Art Contemporain" took place in Paris in October 2002. Over 900 artists from 19 countries displayed their work at the 29th annual event of the FIAC. (back)

15. On the victimization in which a number of African intellectuals take pleasure, see Achille Mbembe's article "A propos des écritures africaines de soi" ("About African Writings of the Self") in *Politique africaine*, 77 (septembre 2000): 16-43. (back)

16. This term is taken from Ulf Hannerz's *Cultural Complexity: Studies in the Social Organization of Meaning* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991). (back)

17. "The Black man is the fear that the White man has of himself" is what Octave Mannoni wrote in *Prospéro et Caliban, Psychologie de la colonisation* (Paris: Editions Universitaires, 1984): 191. (back)

18. Michel Houellebecq's *Les Particules élémentaires* (Paris: J'ai lu, 2001) is translated into English under the title *The Elementary Particles* (Vintage Books, 2001). This quotation is translated from page 195 of the French original. (back)

19. *Libération*, September 7, 2001 (back)

20. See Peter Sloterdijk, *Règles pour le parc humain* (Paris: Mille et Une Nuits, 2000).(back)