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## Is 'Development' a Purely Empirical Concept or also Teleological?: A Perspective from 'We the Underdeveloped'

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"What you do not see does not exist. The moment, like a raft, carries you on the luminous surface of its round disc, and you deny the abyss that lies about you. The future citadel, thanks to my son, will open its wide windows on the abyss, from which will come great gusts of shadow upon our shriveled bodies, our haggard brows. With all my soul, I wish for this opening. In the city which is being born such should be our work — all of us, Hindus, Chinese, South Americans, Negroes, Arabs, all of us, awkward and pitiful, we the underdeveloped, who feel ourselves to be clumsy in a world of perfect mechanical adjustment." — Hamidou Kane, *Ambiguous Adventure*, 1963

"And if Africa, in spite of the powerful chains which still immobilize her, should only dare (on setting out to restructure, recreate, and if needs be suppress aspects of the university system which now remain, and pervasively so, as the most subtle instruments of our present domination), to debaptize our present departments and institutes of Philosophy and to rename them purely and simply, Departments and Institutes of the Sciences of Thought, I, for my part, would see this as a first step: an insignificant first step, perhaps, yet a first step whose implications are immense." — Issiaka Prosper Laleye, *Philosophy? Why in Africa?*, 1975

The major proposal that I shall put forward in this chapter is that if Black Africa is to reinvent itself as a dynamic twenty-first-century civilization, it might very well have to get rid of the concept of "development" altogether. For the point of the title of my paper is to suggest that the "development," rather than functioning only as a purely denotative, and therefore transculturally "true" and objective term, should be recognized as a *culture-specific* one. It serves, in this context (to use the terms of the artificial intelligence (AI) theorist, Carbonnell), as a supraordinate goal.<sup>1</sup> It is a culture-systemic *telos* that orients the collective ensemble of behaviors, by means of which our present single and westernized

world system is brought into being as a specific "form of life."<sup>2</sup> It is, I shall propose from the "lay" or liminal perspective of Black Studies<sup>3</sup> that the goal of *development*, together with its related subgoal of "economic growth," functions to lay down the prescriptive behavioral pathways instituting our present world system. It constitutes a teleological complex specific to the culture that the anthropologist Clifford Geertz has identified as the "local culture" (however, now globalized), of the West. As such a term, it is therefore specific to one culture, to one local "example of the forms human life has locally taken, a case among cases a world among world's." One, however, that has come to both perceive and represent itself as the condition of its secularization, as if it were *supracultural* and its "local culture truths" equatable with an ostensibly objective reality-in-itself.<sup>4</sup> I shall further identify this "local culture" as that of Judeo-Christianity, whose foundational narrative of emancipation<sup>5</sup> and "ultimate reference point," as the ethnographer and Africanist, Marcel Griaule pointed out, has continued to govern the social systems of the West, whatever the changes in its modes of production.<sup>6</sup>

To substantiate these proposals, I shall organize my argument about several, "scriptural texts." The first is taken from V. Y. Mudimbe's 1988 book, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge*. Mudimbe argues that until now Western interpreters, as well as African analysts, in attempting to investigate the reality of pre-fifteenth-century, pre-European Africa, have necessarily had to deploy models of analysis and conceptual systems that depend on a Western epistemological order. As a result, even the most Afrocentric descriptions of traditional Africa as it was before the West's expansion, must make use of these systems, all of which are generated from a non-African epistemological locus. Any attempt, therefore, to arrive at what Africa's "traditional system of thought" were like "within the framework of their own rationality" would necessarily entail an "epistemological shift" out of our own present hegemonic mode of rationality.<sup>7</sup>

My proposal, therefore, is that the trap in which Africa now finds itself is not primarily an economic one; it is only secondarily so. Instead the primary trap is that of the epistemological order to which Mudimbe refers, an order whose conceptual systems and dominant paradigms now find themselves anachronistic in our present postindustrial situation. It is anachronistic to propose a central parallel, as was that of the scholastic epistemological order of feudal Christian Europe, before the general upheaval of the Renaissance. The intellectual revolution of humanism established the new secular bases of the *studia humanitatis* (the study of things human), out of which the discipline of economics, in a second of epistemological shift, eventually emerged at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. With it emerged the purely secular telos of material redemption, "development" or "economic growth" (as the analog of the matrix Judeo-Christian *telos* of spiritual redemption), and about which we now orient our contemporary behaviors.<sup>8</sup>

J. G. A. Pocock points out that the modern history of the West began with the rise of the modern European state. The shift from the feudal *telos* of spiritual redemption and eternal salvation in the Augustinian *civitas dei* (the City of God) to that of a new *this-worldly telos* was aimed at securing the order and expansion and so to speak the rational redemption of the state as the *civitas saecularis* (the secular city).<sup>9</sup> Hans Blumenberg makes it clear that such a shift was only effected by means of the intellectual revolution of the humanists. For it was only by means of their "counter-exertion," he argues, that the "medieval system," which had ended in one of those "phases of objectification that loose themselves from their original motivation" and thereby become autonomous, hardened, and insulated from what human was displayed. The "counter move" of the Renaissance's new "self-assertion" of human's self-interest was thereby dynamically instituted.<sup>10</sup>

If we see ourselves today, oriented at a global level by our present *telos* of "development" and our material redemption, as being as entrapped in such another phase of "objectification," then Africa's state of ongoing extreme crisis can be identified as being fundamentally a crisis of our present epistemological order. Since its underlying framework of rationality, centered on the now master discipline of economics, has also become autonomous, hardened and insulated "from what is human."<sup>11</sup> Once we identify the connection and correlations between the contemporary state of Africa and the United States' Black jobless inner cities and their correlated prison system, we can link them to the state of the Third World and its large-scale shanty-town/favela jobless *archipelagoes*.<sup>12</sup> In this context, both states can also be linked to the state of the planetary environment and its litany of woes: toxic waste, the depletion of the ozone layer, global warming, problems of garbage disposal, technological pollution, the rapid extinction of species, the poisoning of the ocean, contamination of the food chain, and so on. All of these interconnected crisis states are the law-like effects of an epistemological order whose framework of rationality is as incapable of dealing with the problems we now confront as was that of the scholastic order of knowledge at the waning of the European Middle Ages; the analogy between the challenge then and the challenge now is evident.

#### WHAT YOU DO NOT SEE DOES NOT EXIST: THE WORK OF "WE THE UNDERDEVELOPED"

The first epigraph of my chapter is taken from the Senegalese writer, Cheikh Hamidou Kane's 1962 novel, *Ambiguous Adventure*.<sup>13</sup> To understand the point that Kane makes in this citation, we need to recognize not only that the contemporary crisis of Black Africa is the most extreme expression of the overall crisis of our globally hegemonic techno-industrial way of life, but also that this crisis is itself the effect of a specific cultural logic. This fundamental cultural

logic is expressed by our ostensibly purely economically determined global distribution system in which, as of 1982, 6 percent of the world's people are allocated 40 percent of the world's globally produced resources;<sup>14</sup> and, as of 1992, one fifth of the world's peoples consume four fifths of these resources. The more material scarcity is ostensibly technologically conquered, the more world hunger increases and the more the crisis of Africa and the underdeveloped world deepens. At the same time, the phenomenon of the debt burden, whose *oracular mechanism*,<sup>15</sup> transfers wealth steadily from the South to the North, from the inner cities to the suburbs, and intensifies a systemic misallocation of resources. This accelerates the extension of poverty, and the joblessness-and-casual-labor phenomenon, and leads to overpopulation, the breakdown of all alternative "local cultures" in the Third World, and to the overconsumption of excessively affluent life-styles in the First World. The resultant ongoing degradation of our human modes of life is, therefore, inseparable from that of the physical and organic environment. The latter are seen as "natural resources,"<sup>16</sup> within our cultural logic, to be ceaselessly exploited, thereby systematically ensuring the ongoing extinction of many other forms of life at the purely organic and, therefore, nonhuman level.

It is this cultural logic, therefore, and its blindness to the abyss about which the Islamicized knight in Kane's novel warns. As Richard Rorty implies, this philosophical discourse of this logic — as indeed all our disciplinary discourses — should be seen as the "metaphysical-epistemological" prescriptions by which our present culture ensures the regulation of its members' behaviors (both cognizing — affective and actional).<sup>17</sup> This severe maldistribution of resources is caused by our global economic system only at a proximate level. The disciplinary "truths" of economics, and the reality of the global economic system are merely the mechanisms by which the systemic imperative of our present "local culture" and its telos of stable replication is dynamically enacted. In consequence, however, the strategies proposed from within the discipline of economics to correct this distributional imbalance threatening the very survival of the species itself are radical, these strategies cannot effect any fundamental distancing from the "gnostic domination"<sup>18</sup> of our present order of truth and the framework of rationality of its Foucauldian episteme.

Rather than the "objective" social sciences discipline, it is the imaginative literature of anticolonial Black Africa at its most achieved<sup>19</sup> that has found itself engaged in a process of "distancing" from our present "framework of rationality." This distancing and challenging parallels that originally effected by Renaissance humanism with respect to the then "gnostic domination" of scholasticism, and whose "local culture" order of truth was also represented as if it were transculturally applicable.<sup>20</sup>

No work of fiction has more affected this process of distancing, of what Wlad Godzich calls "sinning against the reason" of our present framework of rationality than has Kane's novel, from which the first epigraph is taken. Kane

effects this challenge most specifically in two episodes of the novel. The first episode centers on the Royal Lady, one of the members of the Islamicized ruling aristocracies of Senegal, and aunt of the novel's young protagonist, Samba Diallo. Powerful, haughty, and dynamic, the Royal Lady has still not, at the opening of the novel (which is set in the aftermath of the French invasion and conquest of Senegal), overcome the astonishment into which she had been plunged by the defeat of her people, the Diallobé. Out of her astonishment, she came to feel herself haunted by an urgent question, which became even more pressing as she saw that the colonialization of the people of the Diallobé would be even more totally imposed by the new school.<sup>21</sup> Yet it was the school her "clear gaze" also saw that would command the future. She, therefore, urges that her nephew be taken away from the traditional Islamic school and be sent to the new and foreign school in spite of the great rupture with the past that his going will entail. For she now knows that the fate of the Diallobé will depend on their learning the answer to her question, and their coming to understand "the new form of war which those who come here are waging." And it is only paradoxically, through the school, that an answer can ever be found to the question of how the foreigners could have conquered "without being in the right," without, that is, the foundational basis of a religiously and, therefore, supernaturally guaranteed "sense of right," as the only "sense of right" that she had known. The reason for the defeat of the Diallobé, as well as the prescription for their putting an end to this defeat, was revealed as the first step toward their reconquest of autonomy.

The Royal Lady's seminal question concerning the ethics or "sense of right" that underlay the West's conquest illuminates Julia Kristeva's point about the scholastic order of knowledge and its preanalytic, culture-specific premise of the humankind's enslavement to original sin.<sup>22</sup> This premise, which once served to prescribe the supraordinate telos motivating the behaviors of the feudal order — emancipation from this sin through the pathway of "cure" of *spiritual redemption* — had prescribed the order's ethical code. The ethic-behavioral code of the feudal Judeo-Christian order had therefore functioned as a supernaturally prescribed *sense of right*, in the same manner as had that of the Koran for the peoples of the Diallobé (indeed as had the sacred texts of all other peoples). However, the West's intellectual revolution of humanism specifically effected in political thought, the rupture from the other worldly goal or the *civitas dei*, the City of God, replacing it with its new Machiavellian reasons-of-state and this-worldly goal of *political redemption*, or secular sense of right,<sup>23</sup> was to separate the post-fifteenth-century West from all earlier orders. It was this revolution that would now enable it to both conquer and legitimate conquest in terms that were now purely *epistemologically* legitimated rather than, as before, supernaturally and either mythologically or logically guaranteed.

Kristeva's point can, therefore, enable us to answer the Royal Lady's question, and do so in the terms of the title of this chapter. Her proposal makes it

possible for us to identify the two correlated mechanisms by which, in the wake of the cognitive mutation of humanism, the new and variant "senses of right" of the still "local" (even where globalizing and now purely secular) culture of the West would continue to be as absolutized and "guaranteed," if in new and secular terms. Similarly, all such earlier modes of truth had been guaranteed by the supernatural sanction systems of all previous orders — from the *egwugwu* sanction system of the Ibo ancestors of Achebe's novel, *Things Fall Apart*,<sup>24</sup> to the word of the Koran and Kane's Islamicized people of the Diallobé, as well as to the only true word of the gospel of feudal Christian Europe, as elaborated by its then scholastic order of knowledge, one from which the intellectual revolution of humanism has effected a rupture. In addition, Kresteva's proposal enables us to reveal the role that these two culture-specific mechanisms play in making it possible for the contemporary term "development" to function as a dually denotative (empirical) and "teleological" term. It is this duality that then empowers the "objective truth" generated from its *empirical* representation, to "guarantee" and absolutize the *sense of right* to which its teleological role as the behavior-orienting supraordinate goal gives rise. That is, a purely economic sense of right on whose basis our present single world system, together with its nation-state subunits, is dynamically brought into being as a self-organizing or autopoietic and languaging living system.

And it is precisely this "sense of right" that, as the ethico-behavioral code based on a new "reasons-of-the-economy" (a code that is itself fundamentally culture-systemic rather than purely economic as it represents itself to be), is the cause of the trap in which Africa — and the Black world — now finds itself today.

The first of these two mechanisms is that of the two variants on the postreligious epistemological order defined by Foucault from that of the classical episteme (up until the end of the eighteenth century) to that of our contemporary own.<sup>25</sup> The second mechanism is that of the secular reformation of the always culture-systemically instituted liminal or conceptual other categories that are common to all orders. The systemic categories that are everywhere, at the level of empirical reality, the signifier of symbolic "death" to the code of symbolic "life," embodied by the hegemonic ruling groups of all human orders, serve thereby to exemplify and actualize the notion of the truly human, or conception of the ideal self, about whose "governor" the subjects of each order orient their behaviors.<sup>26</sup> Such a notion cannot be made to signify as a criterion or value, however, without the antithetical presence of its equally embodied liminal negation: without therefore the mechanism of conceptual/existential otherness that each such category embodies as the signifier of a Laconian lack-of-being or of "death."<sup>27</sup>

It is the contemporary form of this second mechanism, as it functions at the level of our global system, that is revealed in the episode in Kane's novel, which deals with the intellectual confrontation between the Islamicized knight (who is

the protagonist Samba Diallo's father) and his French colonizer-guest, Lacroix. This mechanism of *conceptual otherness* enacted in the episode is called in question from the perspective of the liminal category itself, that of the "we-the-underdeveloped." The latter is a culture-systemically instituted variant and purely secular variant of the original category that had been that of the non-Elect, of the damned, in the terms of the matrix-Judeo-Christian narrative of lack/redemption. So that where in the feudal order, this category had been both defined, and its members made to experience themselves, as the *massa damnata* (that is, as those not elected for salvation), in the now purely secularized and biologized form of the same "local culture" and its behavior-orienting narrative of lack and redemption (affliction/cure), the non-elect are now made to experience ourselves as "we-the-underdeveloped."

The paradox here is that the category of liminality, or *conceptual otherness*, functions as the second mechanism by which the West will be able, in the words of the Royal Lady, to conquer without being in the right as traditionally and therefore religiously conceived but rather in terms of a purely secular sense of right. It also functions politically in another cognizing dimension. As the Eritrean anthropologist Asmarom Legesse argues,<sup>28</sup> the liminal category is the systemic category from whose perspective alone, as the perspective of those forcibly made to embody and signify lack-of-being, whose members, in seeking to escape their condemned statuses, are able to call into question the closure instituting the order and, therefore, the necessary "blindness" of its normative, in this case, "developed" subjects.

"What you do not see," the knight warns the normative subject of our present order, Lacroix, "does not exist. The moment, like a raft, carries you on the luminous surface of its round disc, and you deny the abyss that lies about you."<sup>29</sup>

Asmarom Legesse has defined this category as the liminal category common to all human orders, and whose ascribed attributes (as in the case of the *underdeveloped*) must in every case violate the accepted attributes of social classification. This violation, he further explains, is essential to the "structured community" of each human order, since it serves as the empirically embodied conceptual antithesis, the symbolic "death" or lack of being to its represented code of symbolic "life." It is, therefore, by reference to the liminal category as the negation of its normative self-conception that each structured community can alone not only define and understand itself, but is also enabled to experience itself as that "value" of which the liminal category is the embodied metaphysical lack, or anti-value.<sup>30</sup>

Consequently, such a category, because it served to "trigger" and motivate each order's subjects behavioral adherence to the pathway or the "cure" prescribed by the supraordinate telos and "sense of right" generated from the mode of lack that it empirically incarnates, is the indispensable condition of the autopoietic functioning of each system. It is also the indispensable condition as

well of the truth of its order of knowledge coming to be experienced by the subjects of each order, as if this culture-systemic truth were isomorphic with truth in general — whether that of the divine truth of the scholastics or of the objective truth of our present disciplines of the humanities and social sciences.

The liminal category of each order (and specifically that of the knight's "we-the-underdeveloped") can therefore be here recognized as a transcultural, and therefore humanly universal, function of the artificial motivation system (AMS), which takes the place for human forms of life, that the species-specific genetic motivation systems take for purely organic forms of life.<sup>31</sup> In this context, the fact of its empirically negated presence, can as in the case of Kane's "we-the-underdeveloped," provide cognitive access to the rules that govern the processes of the specific system of which it is a function. It also provides access to knowledge of the reality of the system as it is, as distinct from how it must be represented by the structural models of its "public language" behavior-orienting order of cognition. Given that each liminal category is made to embody the represented mode of Kristeva-defined abjection or of metaphysical lack (as in *underdevelopment* as the *lack of development*) it is then made to function so as to induce the motivation of the subjects of the order to seek to "cure" this lack (or "affliction") by behaving (i.e., willing, valuing, preferring, choosing, knowing, acting) according to the culturally prescriptive "sense of right" or ethic. These motivated behaviors then serve to bring each such order as a dynamic system into being. The terms in which each such category is negated (the terms, in effect, of *abjection*) can provide the data able to tell us *how* each such order must be known, perceived, and acted on.

The fact that Kane's knight was able to foresee from as early as 1962 the dimensions of the "hidden costs" to which, until recently, the mainstream thinkers of the West have been blind has to do with the liminal nature of the perspective from which Kane makes his knight speak — that is, from the conceptual other perspective of *we the underdeveloped*. From that of the category, signifying *metaphysical lack*, that is, that of humankind represented enslavement, not now to original sin, as in the matrix narrative but in now purely biologized form. This new form represents metaphysical lack, that of humankind's potential subordination to the dysselected genetically defective aspects of its own human nature on the one hand; and on the other, to that of its potential material overcoming by the Ricardo-defined threat of an external natural scarcity.<sup>32</sup> For in the same way as the liminal category of the *lepers*, prescribed and segregated outside the walls of the town, signified for the feudal-Christian order the *massa damnata*, condemned to their then believed to be incurable fate, so the knight's category of the we-the-underdeveloped equally functions for the now barely secularized and global form of the original Judeo-Christian "local culture" of Western Europe. The *underdeveloped*, proscribed like the medieval lepers outside the gates of the attained, *civitas materialis* of the developed enclaves, function as the empirical proof of subordination to natural

society, and therefore of the affliction of the Malthusian "iron laws" of nature. Consequently, its "underdeveloped" state is an indispensable function of our present behavior-orienting projection. The only "cure" is that of the specific behavioral pathways prescribed by the represented supraordinate *telos* of development and economic growth; of therefore *material redemption* and the *civitas materialis* as the now transmuted form of spiritual redemption and the *civitas dei*, as the *telos* that institutes our contemporary global order.

In the same way, therefore, as the earlier category of the *laity*, and its ontological and empirical subordination to that of the category of the clergy, had been an indispensable function of the supraordinate *telos of spiritual redemption* so the knight's "we-the-underdeveloped" serves as a parallel function with respect to the prescribing of the normative behaviors of our present world systemic order. It serves to circularly verify the orthodox economic policies (or "cures"), which, hegemonically overseen by the economists of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), function to ensure that the "underdeveloped" areas of the world continue to "develop" only along the prescribed lines that are needed to enable them to continue as noncompetitive reserve areas of the overall global system.<sup>33</sup> These areas are essential to the "development" of the enclave areas or islets, all of which are represented as within our present culture logic: having been bio-evolutionarily selected for economic growth and material redemption, which are thereby designated within our present mode of subjective understanding to embody the criterion of the *truly human*.

V. Y. Mudimbe points out that Western culture knows all other human orders only in reference to itself. In consequence, this perspective enables contemporary scholars to measure all other human societies according to the single yardstick of technoscientific accomplishment that is defining the contemporary West's "mechanical perfection."<sup>34</sup> This is done by the logic of a linear evolutionary schema mapped on the nonlinear and branching histories of human *forms of life* — or cultures — all of which had been, when autocratic, the expressions of specific solutions that had been originally of adaptive advantage within the differing biogeographical and geopolitical environments in which they had found themselves, and, therefore, nonmeasurable, noncomparable each to the other. These cultures, therefore, that would not become "primitive" until confronted with an invading culture whose aggression, until now adaptive behaviors, oriented by their local cultural logic, were unable to check. In a similar manner, therefore, all at once, our contemporary Western culture now finds itself "primitive" in that the ensembles of collective behaviors that it hitherto oriented through the economic mechanisms of the free market, as well as through the mode of adaptive truth of our present epistemological order, are now quite incapable of checking, as the knight warns Lacroix, the invading chaos to which the effects of these behaviors have led — that is, the crisis of

global poverty as well as the ecological crisis to which the latter is inseparably linked.

Where is then our counter, and utopian impulse, that, as Paul Ricoeur proposes, is always carried in human orders by the categories Legesse defines as liminal? It is proposed here that the calling of this very colloquium and its multidisciplinary focus has made possible the bringing together of the range of questions being put forward by economists of Africa and the Black world (as in the case of the Lagos Plan),<sup>35</sup> together with the fundamental challenges to the framework of rationality of this order, that had been implicit in the 1960s call for the instituting of Black Studies.<sup>36</sup>

Given the fact that within the logic of our present "native" cultural model, all Africans and people of African descent have been made to serve, as Jacob Panadian has pointed out, as the global human *other* to the West's how purely secularized (and biologized) form of the original feudal Judeo-Christian notion of the *true self*.<sup>37</sup> This means that the new global and cultural category of the Black now serves as the analog of the laity. That is, therefore, as the embodiment of the defective *other* to the Western self-conception of the *true self*, a conception embodied at the level of race in all people of European descent and at the level of *class*, in the global middle classes. It is, therefore, this conceptually other perspective that makes it possible for the practitioners of Black Studies to now put forward, on the basis of a parallel counter-assertion, that the original lay humanists had effected at the end of the medieval order, a new framework of rationality, of a higher explanatory power along the lines prefigured by what C.L.R. James has identified as the long line of "Black independent thinking."<sup>38</sup>

In his book *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages*,<sup>39</sup> R. W. Southern shows that it was only with the challenge made by the political state to the Church's hegemony, together with the lay intelligentsia's replacing of the discourse of scholastic with the new discourse of civic humanism, that both the ontological and intellectual subordination of the lay intelligentsia to the then mainstream intellectuals, the clergy, was brought to an end. For the intellectual subordination of the lay intelligentsia to the clerical, as charted by Southern, reveals the way in which for many long centuries these lay intellectuals of Europe had found themselves dominated theoretically by the scholastic paradigms, as elaborated from their normative perspectives by the then mainstream clergy. These paradigms, by the very nature of their preanalytic premise — that is, that of humankind enslavement to original sin, as an "affliction," could only be cured through the ritual of baptism presided over by the voluntarily celibate clergy as well as by the strict adherence of the newly baptized laity to the behavioral pathways prescribed by the regime of truth and its other-worldly telos of spiritual redemption.

The analogy is that the liminal status imposed on us as members of a Third World (or neo-lay) intelligentsia and as the dually ontological and empirical

subordination of the interests of the "underdeveloped" areas of the world to those of the "developed" enclaves, are also themselves, the direct effects of our theoretically represented mode of metaphysical lack, as that of the threat of natural scarcity and, therefore, of its correlated supraordinate goal, or telos of development, and of economic growth.

Consequently, in the same way in which the lay intelligentsia of pre-Renaissance Europe found themselves constrained to think (before the epistemological rupture of the Studia) within the limits of the then hegemonic paradigm of *theology*, so we too have found ourselves in a parallel predicament. For it is proposed here that we too must confront a paradigm whose telic structures<sup>40</sup> function to ensure the continued hegemony of the interests of the "developed" enclaves over those of the underdeveloped, in the same way as the telic structure of the scholastic paradigm of theology had served to ensure the interests of the church over the laity, as well as of the ruling feudal aristocracy over those whom they ruled, and most securely of all over the heavily exploited peasantry.

As Mudimbe makes clear, within the logic of what would be called the "sacred instructions" of the later 1493 Papal Bull that granted the New World to pain (instructions that called for the "overthrow of paganism" and for the further establishment of "the Christian faith in all barbarous nations"),<sup>41</sup> what was being imposed was that of the political sovereignty of the new secular state over non-Christian peoples on the basis of the represented single truth of the West; and, therefore, on the basis of an epistemological sovereignty, in the terms of whose conceptual framework the emergent world system was to be put in place. If the earlier transnational feudal order had been based on a relation of dually ontological and epistemological supremacy, between the clergy and the laity, the new discourse of civic humanism, that of reasons-of-state, was to legitimate, and, most totally, that of the dominance of the West over the first two major groups that it incorporated, the peoples of Black Africa and the indigenous Americas. Consequently, as in the case of the scholastic order of knowledge, which had legitimated the earlier supremacy of clerical interests over lay interests, the ontological dominance of the West over Africa from the fifteenth century on was also in terms that were to be specific to the later variants of the Judeo-Christian epistemological system. This system would secure, first the political interests of the Western state and, second, the economic interests of the Western nations and their peoples.

Hence it is proposed here that the "strategy" that we must now elaborate is an epistemological (and therefore culture-systemic) rather than merely economic one. That, in addition, the challenge that now confronts us is, at one level, one of the same dimensions as that which confronted the lay or liminal category of the laity intelligentsia of feudal Europe at the end of the Middle Ages and, second, if to a lesser extent, that which confronted the new intelligentsia of the bourgeoisie of England toward the end of the eighteenth century and during the

early decades of the nineteenth, and who had met this challenge by redefining the new goal as that of economic growth rather than that of the stability of the political order. Consequently, "strategy" can be no longer that of attempting to attain to the goal of "development" (i.e., of the *civitas materialis*) and of "economic growth," as prescribed by our present culture-systemic order. Rather, as these earlier intelligentsia did in their times, it must be that of reconceiving the goal or supraordinate telos that is overrating our present global behaviors, by the rewriting of an order of knowledge whose "regime" categories of our present world system order; and, therefore, against the "lay" interests of Africa and of "we-the-underdeveloped."

Our present world system, as a culture-specific "form of life," must necessarily institute itself on the basis of a binary opposition between the *underdeveloped* (as the embodiment of the metaphysical lack of the supraordinate goal of "development") and the *developed* (as the exemplar realization of this goal). In addition, Black Africa has been made to embody the extreme form of the category of lack. Within the logic of our present behavior-orienting telos of "development" and "economic growth," any "strategy" designed to secure the material basis of Black Africa as a viable, unified and geopolitically nonvulnerable, multiethnic, multiracial in Kenya, Zimbabwe, and South Africa, multiracial, civilization must paradoxically move conceptually beyond our present hegemonic conception of economic agencies, as the primary agencies, to those of culture-systemic ones. This strategic move would call for an epistemological transformation as, and even more far-reaching than, that effected by the West during the Renaissance.<sup>42</sup>

Franz Fanon has pointed out — in his book *Black Skins, White Masks* — that Freud oversaw the fact that at the level of human life, the organic process of ontogenesis, is always accompanied by the culturally instituted processes of sociogenesis. It is this rupture with the purely organic processes of ontogenesis and its correlation with the always culture-systemic processes of sociogenesis that can be defined as the first emergence. For this was a process by which all human forms of life, and their languaging living systems, can now be seen to have come into being only on the basis of their rupture with the genetically regulated circuits of organic life, therefore, for the narratively instituted symbolic circuits that were to orient our socialized modes of subjectivity and of interaltruistic symbolic conspecificity, or non-genetically determined variant forms of "kin" recognition and misrecognition that are defining of human "forms of life."

The first emergence saw the rupture effected by humans with the constraints of primarily genetically oriented behaviors; the second emergence, which now confronts us, can be defined in parallel terms. In that this emergence will, therefore, entail a rupture with our nonconscious subordination to the narratively instituted culture-systemic symbolic circuits by which we are aggregated as human subjects; symbolic and to the *tekhne* of their represented modes of lack

and their correlated supraordinate teloi or goals by means of which we have oriented our behaviors in culture-systemic rather than genetically determined terms.

Consequently, if, as the biologists Riedl and Kasper argue, the emergence of the cognizing mechanism specific to the human, the *mind*, would occur only late in bioevolutionary time and is therefore the least tested and the most at risk of all such mechanisms. As they further propose, it is only with the emergence of the natural sciences that this risk factor has been reduced.<sup>43</sup> What they have overseen, however, is that while such scientific knowledge has been gained with respect to the two nonhuman levels of existence (i.e., the physical and the biological), "no such" scientific knowledge has as yet been won with respect to the third level of human existence that was brought into being by the event of singularity of that first emergence.

What is being proposed here is that it is precisely the presentation of this "objective" order of truth as in the case of economics as if it were equatable with the natural-scientific order of truth that is the primary problem that we are now, as intellectuals of Africa and people of African descent, confronted with. The African economists, attempted by means of their counter-proposal of the Lagos Plan, to call in question the orthodox prescriptive policies of the World Bank and the IMF, and necessarily came up against the closure of an epistemological order whose behavior-orienting function is to secure the well-being of the developed enclaves vis-à-vis the well being of "we-the-underdeveloped" or of the majority of the world's peoples — in the same way as the order of truth of the scholastic epistemological order also necessarily functioned to secure the hegemony of the Church over the state of the clergy over the laity — until the revolt of the latter against their own conceptually legitimated subordination.

Hence the paradox of the title of this chapter. What is proposed here is that, precisely by means of the prescriptive categories of our present epistemological order and its encoding of our present behavior-motivating mode of metaphysical lack, and of the "cure" for this lack, as that of being inescapably the supraordinate *telos* of material redemption/development or as economic growth (together with its correlated bottom line economic ethic or sense of right, that Africa and the Africans and people of African descent from its Diaspora) now finds itself immobilized. Since, in the situational case of Africa, unlike the case of the West, and the Pacific Rim, there is no necessary correlation between the goal of "economic growth" as a dually metaphysical and empirical goal, and the concrete material provisioning as well as the unifying of its peoples and their societies.

## CONCLUSION

Any strategy to deimmobilize Africa will, therefore, necessarily entail a move, beyond our present epistemological order. Specifically, beyond its foundational premise that the truth of the human lies in its biogenicity as a natural organism rather than in the culture-systemic and, therefore, meta-organic processes by which it auto-institutes itself as specific modes of subjectivity and sociality and, therefore, as specific "forms of life." Any such strategy will, therefore, call for the displacement of the economic goal/telos of "development" and "material progress"/"growth" and the counter-positing, from the neo-lay or liminal perspectives of "we-the-underdeveloped," of the jobless poor, and of the peoples of Africa and of African descent of the hegemony of social goals based on reciprocity; will therefore call for Laleye's proposed sciences of human thought to be put in place as the sciences of the culture-systemic, and therefore of the laws of culture, which govern all human behaviors, from those of the traditional Ibo peoples of Achebe's Umuofia to those of Kane's Islamicized "people of the Diallobé" to those of our culturally Westernized global and temporary bourgeois and techno-industrial own.

"The starving fellah," Fanon wrote, "does not have to inquire into the truth. He is the truth."<sup>44</sup> As indeed are the state and condition of "we-the-underdeveloped" of Africa and its Black Diaspora, the inner cities, the global jobless archipelagoes, the deteriorating planetary environment. Fanon's seminal point here, therefore, enables us to correlate the knight's projected new citadel/city (*citivitas humanitatis*) with the possible strategy for an Africa now caught in the interlocked web of the technological revolution of the information age, and confronted with the urgent question of which and whose truth the new post-print technologies will now serve; whose interests. For it is in the context of the now imperative need to move toward a new human-species interest and ecosystemic sense of right, and therefore, toward a new order of *culture-scientific truth*, that Africa now finds the dynamic of its own urgent thrust to escape the condemnation imposed on it by the logic of our present "local culture" order of knowledge, to be linked to that of the securing of the well being of the species; of universal individual human welfare.

I propose that the only possible viable strategy is an epistemological revolution and epochal second emergence by which "we-the-underdeveloped" intelligentsia who feel ourselves "clumsy" in a world of "mechanistic" explanatory models transferred reductively form a natural-scientific order of truth to a culture-systemic order of being/reality, will seek to complete the only "partial truth" of the West's science by means of the third "true victory." This means a victory of our autonomy, as humans, with respect to the culture-specific and always narratively instituted purposes of teloi (including that of "development"), that have hitherto governed our behaviors outside, hitherto, the limits of our conscious awareness. Our autonomy, therefore, with respect to the

world-systemic yet "local culture's" teleological goal or material redemption, now governs our global collective behaviors. The results to which it leads include, on the one hand, the ongoing deterioration of the planetary environment and rapid species extinction and, on the other, the intensifying agony of Africa, the expanding impoverishment of the "underdeveloped" areas of our single global social reality, and the ongoing death-in-life holocaust of the "captive populations" of the jobless archipelagoes, the shanty-towns of the Third World, the "inner cities" and their prison-extension of the first.<sup>45</sup> All constitute "hidden costs" of the dynamic institution and stable replication of our present global and Westernized "form of life" as a biocentric, culture-systemic and languaging living system — of whose nonarbitrary, rule-governed, and law-like processes of functioning we have hitherto had, as a species, no knowledge, and have thereby as a species remained unable to govern the narratively enshrined purposes that have governed us.

"What you do not see," the knight warns Lacroix, "does not exist. The moment like a raft carries you on the luminous surface of its round disc, and you deny the abyss that lies about you."

## NOTES

1. See Jaime G. Carbonnell, *Subjective Understanding: Computer Models of Belief Systems* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: LMI Research Press, 1979). See for a useful discussion of his concept of "subjective understanding," in the context of A. I. Mitchell Waldrop, *Man-Made Minds: The Promise of Artificial Intelligence* (United States: Walker Publishing, 1987), 82–85.

2. As Professor St. Clair Drake not long before his death reminded me apropos my original presentation at the 1990 colloquium, although Marx and Engels had placed great emphasis on the economic aspect, they had always been aware that the latter aspect was part of a more comprehensive entity — that of "ways of life."

Along the same lines, I have made use of Wittgenstein's concept of "forms of life: to make conceptualizable the entity or phenomenon to which Engels referred as that of "ways of life." See for a discussion of Wittgenstein's use of this construct Samuel Wheller, "Wittgenstein as Conservative Destructor," *New Literary History* 19, no. 2 (Winter, 1988).

3. The *Conceptual Other* as the boundary figure which is instituting of the closure of each human order and, as such, its condition of stable aggregation is defined by Zygmunt Bauman, with specific respect to the *Jew* as the other to the Nazi's Aryan Order, in his *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Polity Press, 1989).

4. See for this Asmarom Legesse, *Gada: Three Approaches to the Study of an African Society* (New York: The Free Press, 1973).



5. For this concept, see Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Post-Modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Trans. G. Bennington and B. Massumi, Foreword by F. Jameson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

6. Cited in V. Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1988).

7. Ibid.

8. See Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1983).

9. See in this respect the seminal study by J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Political Tradition* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971).

10. Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1983).

11. Ibid.

12. I borrow the term from that of the *Gulag*, the acronym of the name for the hidden archipelago of forced labor concentration camps, which as C. L. R. James (the Caribbean Marxist) was the first to note, was the "hidden costs" of the Stalinist system of Soviet Russia. My argument is that the global archipelago of the shanty-towns of the jobless and semi-employed, should be seen as the parallel "hidden costs," which enabel our present disciplinary discourse of economies to "count as true." See in this respect both C. L. R. James, *Notes on Dialectic; Hegel, Marx and Lenin* (Westport, Conn.: Lawrence Hill & Co., 1980, first published in 1948), and my essay, "After the New Class: James, the Damnes, and the Autonomy of Human Cognition," presented at an International Conference hosted by Wellesley College, April 20, 1991, proceedings publication forthcoming.

13. Cheikh Hamidou Kane's novel was first published in its original French in 1962 by Rene Julliard. The edition used here was translated by Katherine Woods as *Ambiguous Adventure* (London, Nairobi, Ibadan: Heinemann, 1986).

14. See the essay by the economist, Sarvepalli Gopal, "Images of World Society: A Third World View," *International Social Science Journal* 34, no. 1 (1982): 71-78. Gopal gives the 1982 statistics and points to the impossibility of a stable planetary society continuing to exist on the basis of the scandalous nature of these systemic enequalities.

15. I have used the term *oracular* here to emphasize the systemic (rather than the purely economic) nature of this transfer — with the latter serving as the proximate mechanism of the form; to emphasize also that these inequalities are predetermined by the a priori premises of the discourse of economics itself.

16. This perception is of course one specific to our present culture and its representation of the human as a purely natural organism. See Michael Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Random House, 1973).

17. Richard Rorty, "Solidarity of Objectivity," in J. Rachman and C. West., eds., *Post-Analytic Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press), 15.

18. See Godzich's Foreword to Michel de Certeau's *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985).

19. Not to be confused with the present faddist and deceptive term of "postcolonial," one that conflates the ending of political colonialism with that of the more proud and continuing cultural, and therefore epistemological, "imperialism" as enforced by academia and its disciplinary apparatuses.

20. See Godzich, op. cit.

21. Kane, *Ambiguous Adventure*, 37.

22. Julia Kristeva, *Power of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, Trans. S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

23. See in this respect the seminal study by J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Political Tradition* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1975).

24. Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (London: Heinman Press, 1958).

25. Foucault, op. cit.

26. See for this formulation, John Davis, "Exchange," in Frank Parkin, ed., *Concepts in Social Thought Series* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992).

27. In this essay "Understanding a Primitive Society," *American Philosophical Quarterly* (1964), Peter Winch makes the point that representations of symbolic life are the only lives that humans live. The point made here is that these representations of symbolic life are the only lives that humans live. The point made here is that these representations can only be experienced as life if they are antithetically counterposed by a *liminal systemic* category that is made to signify symbolic death. See in this respect my essays "Rethinking 'Aesthetics': Notes Toward a Deciphering Practice" In Mbaye Cham, ed., *Critical Perspectives on Caribbean Cinema* (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 1991) and "Beyond the Word of Man: Glissant and the New Discourse of the Antilles" in Special Issue on Edward Glissant, *World Literature Today* (Autumn, 1989).

28. Asmaron Legesse, *GADA: Three Approaches to the Study of an African Society* (New York: The Free Press, 1973).

29. Kane, *Ambiguous Adventure*, 80.

30. Legesse's concept of the *liminal* would therefore correlate with Lacan's *lack-of-being* and with Bauman's *conceptual otherness*; with all three being recognizable as indispensable "mechanisms" that are instituting of each culture's "form of life" of its mode of *subjectivity* and therefore of *symbolic conspecificity* or *sociality*.

31. See in this respect, Joseph Nuttin, *Theorie de la Motivation Humaine: Du besoin au projet d'action* (Paris: Presses Universitaire de France, 1980).

32. Gary Gutting and Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Scientific Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

33. Mark L. Winston, *Biology of the Honey Bee* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1987).

34. See Legesse's analysis of the *techno-cultural* fallacy by which the West evaluates degrees of "humaness" according to its cultural criterion of technology capacity

and efficiency, and is therefore unable to recognize the immense failure of its social institutions, op. cit.

35. Robert S. Browne, "The Lagos Plan: Reviving Africa's Last Hope," *Emerge: Black America's News Magazine* (September 1992): 12–13.

36. See the following works: Huston A. Baker, *Blues, Ideology and Afro-American Literature: Vernacular History* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1984); Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

37. Jacob Panadian, *Anthropology and the Western Tradition: Toward an Authentic Anthropology* (Prospect Heights, Ill.: Waveland Press, 1985).

38. See the pamphlet of C. L. R. James, *From DuBois to Fanon* (East Lansing, Michigan 48823: PLSI East Lansing, no date).

39. R. W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (Hammondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1970).

40. The proposal here is that whereas the telic structures were carried by the discipline of theology in the matrix feudal form of the Judeo-Christian grand narrative of emancipation, it is now carried by that of the disciplinary paradigm of economics — one that must function both empirically and metaphysically, in the same way as did theology for the earlier order.

41. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa*.

42. This term is taken from the emergence of humans from the animal kingdoms in Africa about 2,500,000 years ago. See John E. Pfeifer, *The Creative Explosion: An Inquiry into the Origins of Art and Religion* (New York: Harper and Row, 1982).

43. See R. Reidl and J. Kasper, *Biology of Knowledge: The Evolutionary Basis of Reasons* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1984).

44. Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Preface by Jean-Paul Sartre, Trans. Constance Farring (New York: Grove Press, 1963).

45. In this context the prison writings of Black America during the 1960s as in the case of George Jackson's *Soledad Brother* and Eldridge Cleaver's *Soul on Ice* should be read as the precise analog, if in different terms, of Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*. The same holds, if somewhat less overtly, for the Native American reservations, which are themselves the analog of South African apartheid's Bantustan homelands.

## Part VI

### CONCLUSION

The deterioration in Africa's economic development crisis was precipitated by the 1973–1974 oil shock. Other factors include the recurrent increase in oil prices in 1979–1980 after the Iranian revolution. Stagnation of industrialized countries resulted, reducing their imports from African nations. There were also higher prices for the imports that are necessary for the survival of developing countries. Other factors are lower Third World commodities prices, the scarcity of technology, and the need for large loans to fund development projects.

Still other major causes for Africa's economic deterioration include the government's domestic policy shortcomings and the lack of many high-quality leaders in top position. At the same time, the African economies are hurt by a worsening international economic environment and problems integrating into the world economy. One should not overlook the effects of devastating weather patterns and environmental degradation.

The 1980–1982 world recession compounded the crisis for Africa, where the effect was more strongly felt than in any other region of the world. Many parts of the globe experienced a reversal of the recessionary trends beginning in 1983; but this recovery was not general. World recession had a more negative impact on Africa, because of the historically weak base of Africa's economy and its weak position in international trade as a supplier of primarily raw materials. A fall in world market shares for most cash crops and minerals started in the 1970s and continued into 1986. This led to overall declines of Africa's export earnings. Given the low level to begin with, decreases in output and employment caused great hardships. There was less industrial development, less food production and consumption.

One analysis of the situation is contained in *Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: Agenda for Action*, which was issued by the World Bank in 1981. This study emphasized internal political and economic problems. It