



REASON AND FEELING: THE CHALLENGING JOURNEY OF PAULIN HOUNTONDJI

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Abstract:

« Hountondji ? He is a white man »ⁱⁱ (*Combats pour le sens. Un itinéraire africain*, 1997 :172). So was he described by the great Rwandese philosopher Alexis Kagame. Many other African scholars, though they do not express it, would agree with Kagame. But who is really Hountondji? What has been so far his main intellectual focus? Has his commitment to the defense of reason as universality been relevant to Africa and to the world at large? As an African, has he ever made any place for feeling and for Africa in his thought? Those are the questions which have been examined in this reflection. The analytical and deductive method we have used in this paper has led us to two main results. Firstly, though Hountondji is one of the most outstanding African philosophers, there is a lot of feeling in his life and in his thought. Secondly, far from being a Eurocentric thinker, Hountondji is really concerned and engaged with the well-being of the African continent.

Keywords: reason, feeling, philosophy, ethnophilosophy, Africa

Résumé :

« Hountondji ? Mais... C'est un Blanc » (*Combats pour le sens. Un itinéraire africain*, 1997, p.172). Telle fut la description que le philosophe rwandais Alexis Kagame a faite de Paulin Hountondji. Bien d'autres intellectuels africains, même s'ils ne s'expriment pas ouvertement, seraient tentés de dire la même chose que Kagame. Mais qui est réellement Hountondji ? Sur quoi sa recherche a-t-elle essentiellement porté? Son engagement pour la défense de la raison comme universalité a-t-il vraiment été pertinent pour le monde et pour l'Afrique en particulier ? En tant qu'Africain, a-t-il jamais, dans sa pensée, fait une place au sentiment et à l'Afrique ? Telles sont les interrogations que nous avons examinées dans cette réflexion. La méthode analytico-déductive que nous avons utilisée dans cet article nous a conduit à deux résultats majeurs. Premièrement, en dépit du fait

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ⁱⁱ The translation into English of the French quotations we have used in the writing of this paper has been done by ourselves.

que Hountondji est l'un des philosophes africains les plus importants, on retrouve beaucoup de sentiment dans sa vie et dans sa pensée. Deuxièmement, loin d'être un penseur eurocentré, Hountondji est très préoccupé et engagé pour le bien-être du continent africain.

Mots clés : raison, sentiment, philosophie, ethnophilosophie, Afrique

1. Introduction

Around the debate on African philosophy, many other issues have been, though with less emphasis, discussed. This debate has also been a debate on the questions of rationality, of the universality of reason, of objectivity, of science, of literature, etc. The criticism of ethnophilosophy has put such an emphasis on the principle of rationality that one can hardly help asking the question to know whether the reason is the only thing that matters in the intellectual journey of a good philosopher.

The Beninese philosopher Paulin Hountondji was one of the greatest critics of what he called in 1970 ethnophilosophy (1997, p.214). From that time onward, he appeared to many as the African prototype of the Western reason, as a product of the Western scholarship deprived of all his feeling towards his own, towards Africa. But who is really Hountondji? Is he really the one people consider him to be? What has been so far his main intellectual focus? Has his commitment to the defense of reason as universality been relevant to Africa and to the world at large? Has he ever made any place for feeling in his thought?

Being faithful both to philosophy as a discipline and to Africa as a homeland was a great challenge to Hountondji. A challenge is a difficult situation which needs to be faced through commitment, choice making and conviction. Defending, against the trend of ethnophilosophy, the rights of philosophy as rationality and committing himself to the defense of the rights of a marginalized Africa was not an easy task for Hountondji. Reason and love for Africa have been his life struggle. How far has he succeeded in this struggle? What is obvious today is the meaningfulness of his struggle.

2. Reason in Africa: right to philosophy and freedom of thinking

2.1. Rejection of the theoretical confusion

As a rational quest, philosophy starts with the rejection of confusion, of every theory that is not in accordance with reason. In the case of ethnophilosophy, Hountondji makes it clear from the beginning that philosophical rationality cannot be confused with the literature of ethnology. In the book he published in 1976 in Paris on the criticism of ethnophilosophy, he tried, in the first lines, to make clear the difference between philosophy and ethnophilosophy.

African philosophical literature rests, it hardly needs saying, on a confusion: the confusion between the popular (ideological) use and the strict (theoretical) use of the word 'philosophy'. According to the first meaning, philosophy is any kind of wisdom,

individual or collective, any set of principles presenting some degree of coherence and intended to govern the daily practice of a man or a people. In this vulgar sense of the word, everyone is naturally a philosopher, and so is every society. But in the stricter sense of the word, one is no more spontaneously a philosopher than one is spontaneously a chemist, a physicist or a mathematician, since philosophy, like chemistry, physics or mathematics, is a specific theoretical discipline with its own exigencies and methodological rules (1983, p.47).

According to Hountondji, *"the idea of a collective, immutable and definitive 'philosophy', abstracted from history and progress"* (1983, p.47) is an absurdity and a misconception (1983, p.48). He concluded that *"our ethnophilosophers were perfectly aware of the equivocation"* (1983, p.48). In other words, ethnophilosophy does not integrate conceptual knowledge and cannot be considered as a genuine philosophy. Because the ethnophilosophical literature has not managed to get rid of the civilization mission which is the main focus of the book of Placide Tempels, it keeps us *"unwittingly prisoners of Europe"* (1983, p.50).

It is quite damaging for the history of thought in Africa to have tales, legends and dynastic poems (1983, p.50) collected and presented as the collective thought of Africans. Thinking that African philosophy is still *"behind us"* while it is *"before us"* (1983, p.53) was the greatest mistake done by ethnophilosophers. As a special theoretical discipline with its own rules, philosophy cannot be *"behind us"*. It is a movement of reason permanently actualizing itself as a quest for the horizon of meaning. Out of this movement, there is no philosophy, but a collective and immutable thought. Here appears then the necessity to relearn how to think.

2.2. Relearning how to think

After rejecting the theoretical confusion made by ethnophilosophers, Hountondji declares with a lot of conviction that as Africans, *"we must relearn how to think"* (1983, p.53, 1997, p.136). To make such a strong statement in the years 1970 when the call for a return to African values was getting insistent, one needs a lot of intellectual courage and boldness. Those who do not join the main trend of this call were considered as accomplices of colonialism and enemies of African cultures. In spite of this suspicious environment, Hountondji was convinced that he has no choice, as a philosopher, to defend the rights of reason and of philosophy. *"We must therefore, he wrote, plunge in and not be afraid of thinking new thoughts, of simply thinking"* (1983, p.68). Defending the rights of reason implies a strong rejection of confusion and theoretical compromise.

This attitude, highly philosophical, is described in what Hountondji calls *"freedom of expression"* (1983, p.46) which is one of the most important rights in philosophy. Freedom of expression is intended here to *"liberate the theoretical creativity"* (1983, p.54). The fact that the words *"freedom", "free", "liberate" and "liberation"* are frequently used in the writings of Hountondji is very indicative. The question of the liberation of reason and mind is crucial in his thought. This question is also, as he said, a question of responsibility: *"The time has come for theoretical responsibility, for taking ourselves seriously"* (1983, p.68).

Therefore, the theoretical attitude of Hountondji is not the attitude of an accomplice of Western imperialism, but an attitude that shows a strong concern for the theoretical liberation of Africa. This liberation cannot become a reality without hard work and freedom of thinking:

“African physicists are not generally ashamed to use the concepts which are proper to their discipline. Likewise, the African philosophers must not shirk technicalities of philosophical language. We shall never create an authentic African philosophy, a genuine philosophy, genuinely African (that’s what I mean by the term ‘authentic’), if we skirt round the existing philosophical tradition.” (1983, p.72)

For Hountondji, it is clear that philosophy, as discipline, has its technicalities that the African philosophers cannot afford to avoid. Not every discourse can be presented as philosophy. Philosophy is characterized by *“the right to criticism and to free expression”* (1983, p.69). Our beloved ancestors cannot deny us this fundamental right in philosophy. It is unacceptable for African philosophy to have itself closed in the limited doors of a collective worldview: *“It can exist as a philosophy only in the form of a confrontation between individual thoughts, a discussion, a debate”* (1983, p.53). The concepts of confrontation, discussion and debate are very important in the thought of Hountondji. What is important for him is not to talk about Africa, but to discussⁱⁱⁱ it among Africans.

This discussion among Africans, according to Hountondji, should no longer remain in the stage of an oral literature. It should take the form of a written literature. Just like others philosophies of the world, African philosophy cannot afford not to be a written literature today. To fix what belongs to the domain of orality in a written literature needs a lot of work and discipline. African philosophers should not fear such a discipline. In the same line as Husserl, Hountondji thinks that science has no objective existence (1997, p.53) except through literature which becomes in the long term a collective good to which scientists adhere.

The advantage of written literature consists of the fact that once the words are written, they do not change any longer. On the contrary, there are a lot of risks to having the words and even expressions changed in oral literature. This risk is due to the specificities of individuals who recall or interpret this literature. Today almost all African philosophers agree with what Hountondji said since the years 1970: African philosophy should historically exist in the form of literature (1997, p.104), just like other philosophies.

2.3. Science as construction of the universal, method and horizon of truth

The influence of Husserl on the thought of Hountondji has been very determined in the intellectual journey of the Beninese philosopher. In most of his writings, Hountondji puts an emphasis on the principles of science or on the definition of science itself. Science starts

ⁱⁱⁱ The English translation (1983, p.54) used the word “talk” instead of “discuss” which is more appropriate according to the original French version (1980, p.49).

with the important principle of self-forgetfulness^{iv}. Without this fundamental principle, there is no access to the scientific truth. Self-forgetfulness actually paves the way for a rational construction of what could be considered science.

Science is a rational construction which starts where the evidence ends^v. It is because it is built as much as possible on rational considerations that science enjoys a universal legality (1997, p.56). This epistemological posture aims at constructing a univocity (1997, p.213) which makes possible science as rational universality. In other words, science is a “*challenge of universality*” (1997, p.228).

Since there is no “*absolute truth*” in philosophy, the universality Hountondji is talking about here is not in the evidence an absolute answer to a question. It is in the method that finds the absolute “*in the relative*” (1980, p.83). Truth is more in the methodological process than in anything else.

“(…) science cannot be reduced to a system any more than can philosophy, even if that system were to be a system of all possible forms of systems; science is an endless history, an open and unending process. The actual ‘systems’ that succeed one another in the history of sciences or of philosophy, real doctrines with their relative coherence and closure, can never achieve the status of System in the strong sense, System par excellence, Absolute Knowledge, the totality of all possible truths, which must remain the ever-receding horizon of an infinite quest.” (1983, p.75)

As “*unending process*”, the strength of science is in the method. This method is very important in the thought of Hountondji who has been influenced by Husserl. This method is what makes philosophy a rigorous science. These fundamental principles of distinction in the method of philosophy have played a key role in the development of other sciences. That is why philosophy, up to today, remains relevant to all the other scientific disciplines.

This conception of philosophy and of science is demanding because it leads the thinker and the researcher to always look for better answers to his or her questions and never get installed in definitive and unquestionable answers. It also led people to think that Hountondji was just moved by reason and had no feelings for Africa, for African cultures and for women and men living in Africa. That is what Alexis Kagame meant when he described Hountondji as a white man. Was he right or wrong? The question needs to be confronted with Hountondji’s life and writings.

^{iv} « (...) pour une éthique de l’effacement et de l’oubli de soi, comme conditions d’accès à la vérité » (Hountondji 1997, p.55).

^v « Autant dire que la science, loin d’être coextensive à l’évidence, commence au contraire là où finit l’évidence. La méthode est précisément ce qui permet une telle construction » (Hountondji 1997, p.56).

3. Beyond rational requirements: a strong African feeling

3.1. A life commitment for Africa

Although many labelled him as a white man after his criticism of ethnophilosophy, Hountondji does not consider himself as belonging fully to the western intellectual world as such. It is obvious that he shares with white thinkers such as Husserl the same understanding of philosophy: a specific, theoretical and scientific discipline. Sharing the same understanding with western thinkers does not mean that Hountondji has renounced his africanship in order to become a white man. It rather shows the universal dimension of reason. In fact, reason has no color or race. The reason is nothing but a human faculty.

Therefore, it is not fair to treat Hountondji as a white man just because he agreed with some European philosophers. Those who treat him as such still need to give us evidence that they are more attached to the African continent than he does. As far as Hountondji himself is concerned, he is strongly aware of the African ground of his intellectual struggle. In footnote number 21 of *Sur la "philosophie africaine": critique de l'ethnophilosophie*, he clearly says that his criticism of ethnophilosophy is not a negative^{vi} one. He considers his criticism of ethnophilosophers as an invitation for them to go beyond what they have already done, to improve their scientific standard. In the name of his commitment to a new Africa, Hountondji conceives as unacceptable the fact that the "black man continues to be the very opposite of an interlocutor", "a voiceless face under private investigation, an object to be defined and not the subject of a possible discourse" (1983, p.34) as it is the case in the ethnophilosophical literature.

At this very stage, Hountondji looks more African than those he called ethnophilosophers. In the foreword of *Combats pour le sens: un itinéraire africain* Hountondji says that his main concern has always been a political concern: the future of Africa^{vii}. Beyond his demands on rationality, he was very aware of his African roots and wanted the continent to be free and better than what it is today. Recalling the fact that he was criticized by some students in France in the years 1960 because he was not engaged in communist movements, he explained his stand at that time: "My battlefield was elsewhere: in Africa. Very early, I came to the consciousness of this reality"^{viii}. This statement portrays the strong link or feeling between Hountondji and Africa, the mother continent. This link is so deep that it can be said that Africa constitutes the starting ground of Hountondji's intellectual struggle. He even went further by recognizing African ethnophilosophers, who thought they were mistaken somehow, and what they have done to defend their cultural identity.

^{vi} « Notre critique, encore une fois, n'est pas négative ; mais, comme il est normal, nous exigeons davantage de ceux qui nous ont déjà apporté, parce que nous savons qu'ils pourraient faire mieux » (Hountondji 1980, p. 34).

^{vii} « On le voit : d'un bout à l'autre du parcours se profile, à l'arrière-plan des problématiques dominantes, pour devenir finalement tout à fait explicite, une préoccupation constante quant au devenir de l'Afrique : une préoccupation *politique* au sens le plus strict du terme » (Hountondji : 1997, p. xviii).

^{viii} « Mon champ de bataille était ailleurs. J'en ai pris conscience très tôt » (Hountondji 1997, p.27).

“True, we must grant African ethnophilosophers the merit of having tried, with the means at their disposal, to defend their cultural identity against the avowed or cryptic assimilationist designs of imperialism. But we must add this ethnophilosophical argument, which they have used as a means of cultural resistance, is one of the most ambiguous ever to have been invented and that, having failed to perceive its ambiguity, they have unwittingly played their opponent’s game.” (1983, p.53)

In spite of his criticism, Hountondji does praise the merit of those he called ethnophilosophers. He said himself how much he recognizes not only the existence, but also the unsuspected value^{ix} of pre-colonial African thought. He feels very sorry for what we have done to our cultures which we have emptied of their genuine values: *“We have betrayed our original cultures by showing them off, offering them as topics of myths for external consumption. In doing so we have unwittingly played Europe’s game- the Europe against which we first claimed we were setting out to defend ourselves”* (1983, p.50).

Our cultures are so important that they cannot be reduced to topics of myths destined for the consumption of the Western world. For the Beninese philosopher, Africa deserves more ambition and more quality. *“We must, he says, be ambitious for Africa and for ourselves”* (1983, p.107). He pleads for a strong and respectable scholarship standard in Africa.

“Thus, our critique of ethnophilosophy leads us to question unanimism in all its forms. Conversely, it highlights the need to promote in our countries a philosophical and scientific tradition of the highest quality, made up of a plurality of conflicting researches. Force will never bring unity of thought to our peoples. What is needed is the recognition of everyone’s right to self-expression, criticism and even error.” (1983, p.182)

The quality Hountondji is talking about here has a lot to do with theoretical, methodological and scientific standards, but it also implies moral standards. With Plato and Husserl, he dreams of the day when Knowledge will lead spirits to agree on virtue, justice, peace and whatever is good. The value of science dwells not in itself, but in its meaning for the human being and for life^x. Life is a core concept in African cultures. By insisting on this key concept, Hountondji gives us proof of how much he is attached to his African roots.

3.2. Colleagues and family members

Hountondji’s strong commitment to meaning (Kiti, 2021) in Africa is also manifested, at a lower level, in his relationship with his colleagues and his family members. Though

^{ix} « J’étais d’accord à cent pour cent avec mes critiques pour reconnaître “non seulement l’existence, mais la valeur insoupçonnée, la richesse multiforme de cette pensée africaine précoloniale que nous connaissons encore si mal” » (1997, p.198).

^x « (...) la science n’est pas valorisée pour elle-même, mais pour sa signification humaine, son sens pour la vie. Elle est donc subordonnée, comme toute autre production culturelle, à l’éthique (...) » (Hountondji 1997, p.47).

there are many existential denials on the black continent, Africans are generally known to be very attached to life. In other words, life matters a lot in African cultures. What Hountondji calls meaning can, to some extent, be simply described as life. His struggle for meaning is a struggle for genuine life in Africa. In fact, life only has a meaning where there is reason, dignity, freedom and love.

Though he criticized ethnophilosophers, Hountondji was also very friendly and respectful to them. In his *Combats pour le sens: un itinéraire africain*, he has dedicated a whole subchapter to Cheikh Anta Diop, Alexis Kagame, Alioune Diop, Louis-Vincent Thomas and Alassane N'Daw. He entitled this subchapter "The elegance of fathers"^{xi}. He clearly called ethnophilosophers fathers. The question we are faced with here is about their fatherhood. If they are not biological fathers, what are they fathers of?

According to the context of the subtitle, Hountondji was talking about African philosophy. In other words, Hountondji, though he thinks that they must improve their methodological skills, was giving them the great name of fathers of the African philosophy. This is a strong recognition of their efforts. As he said in the same book, "*ethnophilosophy has its reasons, which are sometimes good reasons. It was important to learn how to listen to them (...)*"^{xii}. Kagame who called Hountondji "*white man*" was described as a great and wonderful elder (1997, p.172).

Hountondji also knows how to express his anger against ethnophilosophers whom he thought to have attacked him instead of criticizing his thought. He responded "*punch by punch*"^{xiii} to those, such as Koffi Niamkey and Abou Touré who have written sarcasms (1997, p.212) against. On the intellectual ring, Hountondji has also learned how to respond to punches. It can be deduced from this observation that he reacts according to the emotional posture of his counterparts. Nevertheless, most of his reactions are made of care, compassion and respect. On the occasion of the burial ceremony of Marcien Towa, this is what he wrote: "*A great spirit has gone, an engaged philosopher. We used to admire him and we still admire him for his intellectual courage, his requirement*"^{xiv}. The feeling and the compassion behind these words are huge and witness to the great heart behind Hountondji's reason.

Two weeks before the death of another great Cameroonian philosopher, Fabien Eboussi Boulaga (Kiti 2020, p.19), Hountondji sent him^{xv} a very touching letter^{xvi}:

^{xi} « L'élégance des pères » (1997, p.169).

^{xii} « L'ethnophilosophie a ses raisons, qui sont parfois de bonnes raisons. Il fallait apprendre à les entendre (...) » (1997, p.210).

^{xiii} « (...) poing par poing (...) » (1997, p.211) ; « (...) coup pour coup (...) » (1997, p.200).

^{xiv} « Un grand esprit s'en est allé, un philosophe engagé. Nous l'admirions et l'admirons toujours pour son courage intellectuel, son exigence » (Hommage à Marcien Towa, Inédit, Cotonou, Juillet 2014).

^{xv} I am the one who, from Cotonou (Republic of Benin) to Yaoundé (Cameroon), took this letter to Fabien Eboussi Boulaga two weeks before he passed away. When I saw him on his hospital bed, he was already weak and could not read himself the letter. I then read it for him while he was shaking slowly his head.

^{xvi} The letter was written on september 28th, 2018 and Eboussi Boulaga died on October 13th, 2018.

*“My friend,
My brother.*

This short word to greet you warmly and to wish you, from the bottom of my heart, a good health.

Paul Christian Kiti will talk to you, in case you are interested in it, about what we do or trying to do here. But, for now, what is important for us is your health.

*Yours, very warmly,
Paulin J. Hountondji.”*

When I was reading this letter to Eboussi Boulaga on the evening of September 30th 2018, he felt very emotional and did not say anything apart from shaking slowly his head. With Paulin Hountondji, he has struggled against ethnophilosophy since the years 1960ies and it was quite touching for him to realize that this scientific companionship will last beyond death. When I finished reading to him the letter of Hountondji, I could not add a word. There are in life, in fact, times when silence speaks better than words.

So, speaks to us about the discrete face of the life of Hountondji. There is also a lot of feeling manifested in his relationship with his family members. He has special feelings for his father and for his mother. He remembers them as those who taught him humility, hope and dignity^{xvii}: Paul Hountondji and Marguerite Dovoédo. His father died on August 20th 1983. Recalling this difficult moment, Hountondji wrote that the world, for him, had fallen apart. Even for one of the greatest philosophers of the African continent, the death of a loving father is not first a question of reason. When, in his hotel room in Montreal on the 21st of August 1983, he was informed about the death of his father, he was devastated. He later wrote that he cannot say what he did just after the information^{xviii}. It can easily be guessed here that he wept just like a beloved son weeps when his beloved father dies. In fact, his love for his father led him to believe that he will never die^{xix}.

The same thing happened to Hountondji when his mother died a few years later. He said that he cannot forgive himself for having remained far^{xx} from his mother when she was sick and wanted him to pay her a visit to Porto-Novo. When he managed to see her a few days later, their discussion was made with more silences (1997, p.271) than words. They spent half an hour together. This was the last time they saw each other. Hountondji did not go back to see her as he promised. The Beninese philosopher was full of sadness when he announced her death: *“Mum did not wake up. I will never know what she*

^{xvii} « Et avant tous ces maîtres, ceux qui m’ont enseigné l’humilité et l’espérance, la dignité dans le dénuement : le premier de mes instituteurs, Paul Hountondji, pasteur de l’église protestante, qui ne rêvait que d’ouvrir des écoles partout où il passait, et a eu parfois maille à partir avec ses supérieurs, les missionnaires britanniques ou français ; la première de mes éducatrices, Marguerite Dovoédo, elle-même fille de pasteur, d’une sévérité qui n’avait d’égale que son immense tendresse » (1997, p.263).

^{xviii} « Je ne dis pas ce que j’ai fait juste après. Mais ce matin du 21 août devait s’ouvrir au Palais des congrès de Montréal le dix-septième congrès mondial de philosophie » (1997, p.204).

^{xix} « Je n’ai jamais cru sérieusement que mon père fût mortel » (1997, p.203).

^{xx} « Je ne me pardonne pas d’être resté si loin de ma mère, alors qu’elle me réclamait depuis son lit de malade à Porto-Novo » (1997, p.270).

wanted to tell me. (...). I have not even told her that I was writing a poem for her. And I have not even told her that I love her. (...) I did not know that you could die. Mum: forgive me!"^{xxi} These words speak enough for themselves. They need no comment.

4. Conclusion

Criticized and treated as an enemy of Africa, Hountondji still is one of the greatest defenders of the African continent. It is true that his criticism of ethnophilosophy (Ndoye, 2022, pp.13-14) has been very strong and could make him look like somebody who has no consideration for African endogenous knowledges and cultures.

Meinrad Hebga was right when he criticized Hountondji's stand in his famous paper published by *Présence Africaine* in 1982: "Praise of 'ethnophilosophy'"^{xxii}. Hebga did acknowledge the relevance of the criticism of Hountondji as far as the philosophical method is concerned; nevertheless, he strongly defended the position according to which we cannot really philosophy in Africa out of our endogenous ground. Today the evidence is there that both Hountondji and Hebga are complementary to each other.

Only a superficial reading of Hountondji can lead to the conclusion that he is a white man. Behind the strong deployment of reason in his writings, there is a great and loving African heart. It can even be said that his reason is grounded in this great and loving heart. Loving Africa is dreaming for the best for its inhabitants and this best has a lot to do with reason today. Africa must also, through reason and dialogue (Wiredu 1980, p.189), be opened to the universal (Hountondji 2007, p.2) today.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

About the Author

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^{xxi} « Maman ne s'est pas réveillée. Je ne saurai jamais ce qu'elle avait à me dire. Ou plutôt, si ! Je le sais, je l'ai toujours su. Mais encore ! Ses dernières instructions, ses recommandations, ses *ultima verba*? Je l'aurai privée d'une présence qui était son droit, et qu'elle réclamait. Je ne lui ai même pas dit que je lui écrivais un poème. Et que je l'aime. Mais elle devait s'en douter : elle devinait tout. Je ne te savais pas mortelle, maman : pardonne-moi ! » (1997, p.272).

^{xxii} « Éloge de l'«ethnophilosophie » » (*Présence Africaine*, n°123, 1982).

Editions Terroirs, 2019), *La quête du sens: mélanges offerts à Paulin Hountondji à l'occasion de ses 80 ans* (Cotonou, Star Editions, 2021).

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